



Paving composed of limestone and concrete, contrasting in color and texture, articulates the wide sunken walk surrounding the reflecting pool. View looking west. (CLP file "plaza and walk along S side pool" Feb. 24 2006)



A concrete plaza extends west of the Capitol Reflecting Pool. View looking north. (CLP file "plaza west of pool" Feb. 10 2006)



Two asphalt walks lead across the lawn in Union Square, ending at 3rd Street, just off the alignment of the Mall walks. View looking west. (CLP file "US walk looking W 3 BW adjusted" Feb. 10 2006)



The irregularly patched sidewalk along 1st Street contrasts with the dignity and formality of the entrance to the Grant Memorial. The Architect of the Capitol will be resurfacing it. (CLP file "GM entrance view along 1st St." Feb. 24 2006)



Two odd steps are located next to the sidewalk northwest of the pool. View looking west. (CLP file "granite step along N edge pool plaza, slope" Feb. 24 2006)



Social trails have been worn into each of the grass panels flanking the west plaza in front of the Grant Memorial. View south to the Botanic Garden on left; Health and Human Services building is behind on right. (CLP file "social trail to S" Feb. 24 2006)

Buildings and Structures

The Ulysses S. Grant Memorial demarcates the east end of the Mall. It complements thematically the Lincoln Memorial at the Mall's west end, with the Union general facing his commander-in-chief, and underscores one of the chief symbolic themes of the Mall, the preservation of the Union. (see Thomas 1990:366) The Peace Memorial and the Garfield Monument mark the northeast and southeast corners of Union Square, respectively, standing at the intersections of Pennsylvania Avenue and 1st Street, N.W., and Maryland Avenue and 1st Street, S.W., but they fall under the jurisdiction of the Architect of the Capitol. (see Jacob, 36-50, and Goode 1974:243-8)

The enormous Grant Memorial, its platform measuring 252 feet long by 71 feet wide, is the second largest equestrian monument in the world, after the Monument to Victor Emmanuel in Rome (1895-1911). Sculptor Henry Merwin Shrady (ironically, the son of one of the physicians who attended Grant in his final illness) devoted most of his adult life to this commission, dying just two weeks before its dedication.

Regarded as a poor president because of the scandals which plagued his administrations (1867-77), Grant was still revered as the savior of the Union. His genius for military strategy led to his being appointed Lieutenant General and Commander of all Union Armies during the war, the first to hold this rank since George Washington.

In 1895, the Society of the Army of the Tennessee, Grant's former command, succeeded in having congressional legislation passed that awarded \$250,000 for the design and construction of a memorial statue. The Grant Memorial Commission sponsored an open competition in March 1902, which was awarded, after great contention, to Shrady in February 1903. After consideration of a few other sites, including the Ellipse, the old Botanic Garden was chosen so that the memorial could act as a companion to the Lincoln Memorial, planned for the Mall's opposite end (officially West Potomac Park). Objections were raised to the Botanic Garden site and the probable loss of trees there, leading to a congressional inquiry and a public campaign, led by the *Washington Star*, against its use; this delayed initial construction of the statue's platform until 1908.

The McMillan Plan had presented Union Square as a site for a grouping of equestrian monuments, with a central figure of Grant flanked by William Tecumseh Sherman and Philip Henry Sheridan, his two leading generals. The three statues would have been located in a plaza between 1st and 3rd Streets, standing on a raised platform surrounded by grass panels with walks and fountains, all symmetrically arranged around the Mall's central axis. However, in the years immediately following publication of the McMillan Plan, equestrian statues to Sherman and Sheridan were built elsewhere in the city – Sherman (1903) on a site south of the Treasury building and Sheridan (1908) in the eponymous circle on Massachusetts Avenue.

Shrady's figure of Grant on its tall pedestal resembles the statue lightly sketched by the McMillan Commission (the design was by Charles McKim). Shrady replaced the two other generals with bronze groups of soldiers representing groups of cavalry and artillery, set at the north and south ends of the raised marble platform (designed by Edward M. Casey). Both groups feature several struggling men and plunging horses engaged in violent action. Their intensity and wild movement contrast sharply with the central figure of Grant, shown mounted on a standing horse, in characteristic garb and pose, quiet, still, and observant. The Grant

statue lacks the customary grandiloquence of military portraiture, which lends his figure eloquence.

Pedestals for the two statue groups and marble parapets define the ends of the platform. Four bronze lions recumbent on marble pedestals create a precinct around the Grant statue. The lions act as guardian figures, or representations of strength and courage. Bas-relief plaques set in the north and south faces of the Grant figure's pedestal represent the army infantry. Formerly, eight small cast-iron lampposts were arrayed along the edge of the platform, four on either side of the Grant statue; these have long since been removed.

For many years, the Grant Memorial, especially the two end groups, has suffered from damage inflicted by visitors. Features such as swords and portions of the horses' harnesses have often had to be repaired or replaced. For example, the upraised sword in the Cavalry group often needs repair. It has a "T"-shaped tang at the base which fits into the soldier's hand and is held by two set screws. The sword is typically broken off at the base, in which case the park metal craft shop mills a new tang in the same sword and reinstalls it. Each time it is remilled the sword is shortened slightly, with the result that one sword typically lasts one-two years; since 1974, the full sword has been replaced more than twelve times. (Information from Jennifer Talken-Spaulding, Cultural Resource Manager, NAMA, and Billy Gibson, NAMA Metal Craft Shop Supervisor) The marble pedestals have been stained by the bronze. Marble surfaces are cracked, chipped, and deteriorating. The bronze figures have weathered, causing streaking of the marble with copper oxide. Marble is also stained by water running off unprotected bronze. Some bronze statue parts have been replaced with iron, causing rusting and further streaking. (PMIS 43447, updated 2/18/05)

List of contributing features:

U.S. Grant Memorial



The Grant Memorial creates a dramatic foreground for views of the Capitol. (CLP file "Union Square from across pool" March 6 2005)