

CHRONOLOGY

Year	Event	Description
1790	Land Transfer	The three city commissioners appointed by President George Washington were given jurisdiction over city reservations.
1791-1792	Planned	<p>Maj. Charles Pierre (Peter) L'Enfant created the grand plan for the City of Washington. The Mall was called the Grand Avenue. After Washington fired L'Enfant in March 1792, the plan was modified by his successor, surveyor Andrew Ellicott.</p> <p>Planner: Charles Pierre L'Enfant Planner: Andrew Ellicott</p>
1802	Land Transfer	Responsibility for the reservations was transferred from the three commissioners to a Superintendent of Public Buildings, also appointed by the president.
1815	Engineered	<p>The Washington City Canal was begun along the route of Tiber Creek, on the north side of the Mall.</p> <p>Engineer: Benjamin Henry Latrobe</p>
1816-1849	Land Transfer	The Superintendent of Public Buildings was replaced by a Commissioner of Public Buildings, also under the authority of the president.
1822	Land Transfer	A Congressional Act of May 7, 1822, allowed the District to lay out and sell lots on four new squares between 3 rd and 6 th Streets. The lots were bounded by the new Maine and Missouri Avenues, built to separate the private land from the federal Mall.
1849-1850	Built	The Smithsonian Building (now the Castle), designed in the Norman Revival style, was built on the south side of Reservation 3, on axis with 10 th Street. Adolf Cluss rebuilt the structure after a fire in 1865. Architect: James Renwick
1849	Land Transfer	The office of the Commissioner of Public Buildings was transferred from the authority of the president to the new Department of the Interior.
1851	Designed	<p>Landscape gardener Andrew Jackson Downing was appointed in 1850 by President Millard Fillmore to create a landscape plan for the Mall (also Lafayette Park and the Ellipse). His picturesque, romantic vision of curving walks and clustered trees was carried out piecemeal over the next 30 years.</p> <p>Landscape Architect: Andrew Jackson Downing</p>
1855	Built	<p>The Washington (Columbian) Armory was built at 6th St. and Independence Ave., SW. It held the munitions of volunteer militia companies. During the Civil War, the Armory became the core structure of a large hospital complex.</p> <p>Architect: Maj. William Haywood Bell</p>

1855	Built	Congress authorized the Alexandria & Washington Railroad to lay tracks across the Mall along 1 st St. leading north to the Baltimore & Ohio Depot at New Jersey Ave. and C St., NW.
1856	Built	A marble urn honoring the memory of Andrew Jackson Downing, who had drowned in 1852, was designed by his former partner and placed on the Mall in front of the Castle, along an elliptical walk. Sculptor: Calvert Vaux
1867	Land Transfer	The D.C. reservations were transferred from the Department of the Interior to the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, War Department, inaugurating an era of rapid park development.
1868	Built	The first Department of Agriculture building was built at Independence Ave. and 14 th St., SW. Architect: Adolf Cluss
1868	Planted	The Department of Agriculture gardens were laid out with drives, walks, trees, shrubs, flower beds, pavilions, and greenhouses. The gardens lay between 12 th and 14 th Streets and extended north from the USDA building to the City Canal.
1870	Destroyed	Because of siltation and odors, the Washington City Canal was filled in.
1870	Built	B Street North (now Constitution Ave.) was built on top of the main length of the filled-in Washington City Canal.
1872-1873	Developed	Water pipes were laid in Armory Square, 6 th to 7 th Streets. A road was built through the square and then through the adjoining reservations, from 3 rd to 4½ Streets, NW and SW.
1873	Built	The Baltimore & Potomac Station was completed on the Mall at 6 th St. NW. Its trainshed and tracks ran across the Mall. The depot obstructed views of the Capitol and the trains caused much noise and pollution. Architect: Joseph Miller Watson
1873-1874	Graded	Armory Square (6 th -7 th Sts.) was graded and sown with bluegrass seed. The reservation to its east, bounded by 3 rd and 6 th Sts. and Missouri and Maine Aves. – the future Seaton Park – was also graded.
1874-1875	Graded	Further grading was done on the reservation between 3 rd and 6 th Sts. to raise the ground level to match the adjoining streets.
1874-1875	Developed	Further improvements were made to the Smithsonian Grounds. Gravel roads and walks were built and 63 gas lights were installed. Benches were moved there from a park on Capitol Hill (probably Lincoln Park), along with a music stand from the Capitol Grounds.
1874-1875	Planted	Some deciduous trees were planted in the 3 rd -6 th Sts. reservation.

1874-1875	Developed	Gravel roads and walks were built in Armory Square. An iron post-and-chain fence was installed along B St. South (now Independence Ave.).
1874-1875	Planted	Trees were planted in Armory Square along B and 7 th Sts.
1874-1875	Planted	Trees were planted in the Smithsonian Grounds along B St. between 7 th and 12 th Sts.
1875-1876	Developed	In the Smithsonian Grounds, iron post-and-chain fencing was installed along B St. and two more gas lights were added. In Armory Square, a gravel carriage road and several walks were built, and 27 gas lamps were erected. The reservations between 3 rd and 6 th Sts. were graded, pipes were laid, gravel walks were built, and six gas lamps were installed. An iron post-and-chain fence was placed along Missouri and Maine Aves. from 4½ to 6 th Sts.
1875-1876	Planted	500 more deciduous and evergreen trees were planted in the Smithsonian Grounds. In Armory Square, 190 trees were planted and a row of deciduous trees was planted along the main road. Evergreen and deciduous trees and shrubs were planted in the reservation between 3 rd and 6 th Sts; two large evergreen trees were moved there; sod was laid along walks and grounds were sown with bluegrass seed.
1875-1876	Removed	Iron gates and a pair of stone pillars were removed from the entrance to the Smithsonian Grounds at 10 th and B Streets.
1876-1877	Developed	The banks along the main road in Armory Square received additional grading. Soil and sod were laid and gutters built along each side.
1878-1881	Built	The Romanesque Revival National Museum (today the Arts & Industries Building) was erected by the Smithsonian Institution on Res. 3 between 9 th and 10 th Sts. Architect: Adolf Cluss
1878-1879	Graded	In the Smithsonian Grounds, gravel was added to roads to raise the grade and improve drainage. The reservation between 4½ and 6 th Sts. and Maine and Missouri Aves. was graded.
1878-1879	Developed	A main gravel road was built from 6 th St. and Missouri Ave. to 4½ St. Some walks were built in this reservation.
1878-1879	Planted	Mature trees were moved from the site of the National Museum and transplanted within the Smithsonian Grounds. Evergreen and deciduous trees were planted in the reservations between 3 rd and 7 th Sts.
1879-1880	Planted	More trees and shrubs were planted in the reservations extending from Armory Square to the Botanic Garden.

1880	Planted	Landscaping of the National Museum grounds was completed in the summer of 1880.
1880-1881	Developed	New gravel roads and walks were built around the National Museum.
1881-1882	Developed	A new asphalt walk was laid along the south side of the main road through the Smithsonian Grounds. This road extended from 7 th to 12 th Streets, running in front of the Castle and the National Museum.
1881-1882	Planted	Trees and shrubs were planted in the Smithsonian Grounds to replace those killed by a flood in Feb. 1881. Trees and shrubs were also planted in the reservations from Armory Square to the Botanic Garden, but these do not seem to have been replacements for storm-damaged plants.
1882-1883	Developed	In the Smithsonian Grounds, hundreds of feet of new brick and cobblestone gutters were laid along the roads. New sewer pipes were also laid.
1882	Memorialized	The Joseph Henry Statue, a bronze portrait statue honoring the first Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, was unveiled during ceremonies on April 12, 1882. Moved during construction of the Mall roads in the 1930s, it now stands in front of the Castle. Sculptor: William Wetmore Story
1883	Built	The Baltimore & Potomac Railroad built an iron bridge to carry carriages and pedestrians over the 6 th St. railroad tracks in Armory Square. Work was overseen by the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds. The bridge opened on Dec. 1.
1883-1884	Developed	Additional gutters made of granite, cobblestones, and marble chips were laid along roads and walks in the Smithsonian Grounds, along with hundreds of feet of new drain pipes.
1883-1884	Removed	Dead and dying trees were removed from densely planted groups in the Smithsonian Grounds.
1885-1886	Developed	Many improvements were made to the Smithsonian Grounds, including the regravelling of main roads and the addition of gutters and drain pipes. In Armory and Seaton Parks, old walks were replaced with new walks following the routes of social trails. A road with cobblestone gutters was built through Seaton Park from the 6 th St. bridge to the Botanic Garden.
1886-1887	Developed	One-hundred new benches were placed in Smithsonian, Armory (now called Henry), and Seaton Parks.
1886-1887	Built	The Baltimore & Pacific Railroad built a stone wall along the west boundary of the area used by the depot. A watchman's lodge was built in Seaton Park, near Maine Ave. in the southwest section.

1886-1887	Paved	The main road through the Smithsonian Grounds, extending from 7 th St. to the National Museum, was paved with asphalt.
1886-1887	Planted	Evergreen trees were planted in Henry Park. A willow tree and flowers were planted in a circle in front of the Armory Building.
1886-1887	Removed	In Seaton Park, a "dilapidated" brick house near 4½ St. and Missouri Ave. was torn down. The bricks were reused in the parks.
1887	Built	The Army Medical Museum, a three-story brick Romanesque Revival structure, was built at Independence Ave. and 7 th St., SW. Architect: Adolf Cluss
1887-1896	Built	A berm was built in Armory Square to hide the tracks of the B&P Railroad.
1887-1888	Paved	In the Smithsonian Grounds, concrete pavement was laid from the B St. sidewalk to the Medical Museum, and a new road was built from the main road to the museum's south front. Asphalt replaced gravel on the main road from the National Museum to the Castle's west end.
1887-1888	Planted	Twenty-one old and dying trees were removed from the Smithsonian Grounds. In Henry Park, 27 evergreens damaged by smoke from trains were transplanted to other parks in the city.
1887-1888	Removed	Old shanties built by the Smithsonian that stood east of the National Museum were destroyed. Post-and-chain fencing was removed from the south sides of Smithsonian and Henry Parks and reused around other city parks. A "substantial" iron railing was installed around Henry Park this year or soon thereafter.
1888-1889	Paved	In the Smithsonian Grounds, the main gravel road from the west side of the Castle to 12 th St. was repaved in asphalt. Belgian block pavers were placed at intersections with gravel roads. A new gravel road was laid from the west side of the National Museum at B St. South to the main drive. Other new asphalt walks were built.
1889-1890	Paved	Gravel walks and roads around the National Museum were repaved in asphalt. Asphalt was laid around the Army Medical Museum. In Henry Park, the road around the Armory Building – now housing the U.S. Fish & Fisheries Commission – was widened.
1890-1891	Paved	Gravel roads and walks from the west end of the Castle to the Smithsonian Park entrance at 10 th and B St. North were repaved in asphalt. In Henry Park, asphalt replaced gravel on the walk from the U.S. Fish & Fisheries Commission Building to 7 th St.
1891-1895	Paved	More gravel and board walks in Smithsonian Park were repaved with asphalt. By 1893, about a third of all roads and walks in the park were asphalt.

1893-1894	Planted	More deciduous and evergreen trees were planted in Henry Park. Violent storms in August 1893 and Feb. 1894 damaged many trees and shrubs.
1894	Built	The General Noble Redwood Tree House, the trunk of a 2000-year-old giant sequoia from California, was placed east of the Dept. of Agriculture building.
1894-1895	Paving	In Henry Park, a new gravel walk was built from the main drive to 6 th St. In Seaton Park, a stone sidewalk was laid along the south side of the main drive running between 3 rd and 6 th Streets.
1901-1902	Planned	The Senate Park (McMillan) Commission developed a plan for the city. Focusing on the Mall area, the plan sought to recapture the spirit of the L'Enfant Plan through elimination of discordant elements while allowing for development of new buildings and parks designed on City Beautiful principles.
1904	Built	The new National Museum (now the National Museum of Natural History) was built on the north side of Reservation 3 between 9 th and 12 th Sts., Constitution Ave., and Madison Dr., NW. Architects: Hornblower & Marshall
1904-1908	Built	Two wings of the new Department of Agriculture building were built behind the original building. Architects: Rankin & Kellogg
1907	Removed	The Baltimore & Potomac Railroad Depot and its tracks were removed from Henry Park and 6 th Street.
1913-1923	Built	The Freer Gallery of Art was built on the south side of Reservation 3, east of 12 th St., between Independence Ave. and Jefferson Dr., SW. Architect: Charles A. Platt
1918	Built	When the U.S. entered World War I, temporary concrete structures, known as "tempors," were built on the east end of the Mall to house the offices of federal war workers. Other structures, such as a power plant, were also built.
1921	Built	The foundation was laid for the George Washington Victory Memorial Building on the north side of the block between 4 th and 7 th Streets. Architects: Tracy & Swartout
1923	Built	By this year, the Department of Agriculture had built many new greenhouses along Constitution Ave.
1925	Land Transfer	The name of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds was changed to the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, and the office was transferred from the Army Corps of Engineers to the office of the U.S. President.

1930	Removed	The original Department of Agriculture building was razed.
1930	Built	The central pavilion of the Department of Agriculture was constructed on the site of the original building and connected with the two wings of 1904-1908. Architects: Rankin & Kellogg
1930s	Designed	Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. was the primary designer of the revised McMillan Plan scheme for the Mall. In the new design, wide lawns bordered by two rows of American elm trees extended between 3 rd and 14 th Streets, allowing a clear sightline between the Capitol and the Washington Monument. Landscape Architect: Frederick Law Olmsted Jr.
1931	Removed	The Mall began to be cleared of most gardens and structures from 1 st St. to 14 th St., including Union Square from 1 st to 3 rd Sts., and Madison to Jefferson.
c. 1931-late 1930s	Removed	Most of the World War I tempors were demolished.
1932-1936	Built	The majority of construction work on the Mall, from 3 rd St. to 14 th St., was carried out in these years, including grading, laying utilities, removing trees, planting American elms, laying sod, and constructing roads and sidewalks. Olmsted worked with numerous prominent planners to adapt the McMillan Plan design for modern requirements. Landscape Architect: Frederick Law Olmsted Jr.
1933	Land Transfer	Under Executive Order #6166, June 10, 1933, all public lands and buildings were transferred to the Office of National Parks, Buildings, and Reservations, Dept. of the Interior. On March 2, 1934, the name was changed to the National Park Service. The Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks became National Capital Parks.
1934	Land Transfer	The USDA Grounds, Res. 3B, south of the North Mall Drive was transferred to the Dept. of the Interior about April 7, 1934.
1935	Planted	333 American elms were planted on the Mall in June, July, and August.
1937	Destroyed	The foundation of the George Washington Victory Memorial Building was destroyed when the site was reserved for the construction of the National Gallery of Art (the West Building).
1937-1941	Built	The National Gallery of Art was built on Reservations 4 and 5 (formerly Henry Park and Seaton Park West) between 4 th and 7 th Sts., Constitution Ave., and Madison Dr., N.W. Architect: John Russell Pope
1940	Destroyed	The Department of Agriculture greenhouses along Constitution Ave. were demolished.

c. 1941	Built	Tempos to house federal war workers for World War II were erected on the west end of the Mall on Res. B, at the north end of the block between 12 th and 14 th Streets.
1942	Land Transfer	The north part of the USDA Grounds, Res. 3B, was transferred to the Dept. of Interior on Feb. 3.
1962	Built	The World War II tempos were removed and the National Museum of American History (originally The National Museum of History and Technology) was built on Reservation 3B, between 12 th and 14 th Sts., Constitution Ave., and Madison Dr., NW. Architects: Steinman, Cain & White
1964	Destroyed	The former Washington Armory, the home of the U.S. Commission of Fisheries from 1881 to 1932, was demolished. The site is now occupied by the Air & Space Museum.
1966	Planned	The "Washington Mall Master Plan" was developed by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill. Architects: Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM)
1969	Destroyed	The Army Medical Museum was razed to free the site for the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden.
1971	Removed	The final tempo on the Mall, tempo C, between 4 th and 6 th Streets, SW, was removed.
1972-1976	Built	The National Air & Space Museum was built on Reservations 4 and 5 between 4 th and 7 th Sts., Independence Ave., and Jefferson Dr., SW. Architect: Gyo Obata of Hellmuth Obata Kassabaum (HOK)
1973	Planned	The "Washington Mall Circulation Systems" plan by SOM was issued, adapting and enlarging on ideas presented in the 1966 "Washington Mall Master Plan." This serves as the current Mall Master Plan. Architects: Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM)
1974	Built	The Hirshhorn Museum of Art and Sculpture Garden was built on Reservation 3A between 7 th and 9 th Sts., Independence Ave., and Jefferson Dr., SW. Architect: Gordon Bunshaft of SOM
1974-1975	Paved	The asphalt Inner Mall Drives (Vista Drives) were removed and replaced with gravel walks.
1975	Planted	The final tree panel on the Mall was planted with elms; this was probably where tempo C had stood. Plantings since then have been replacement elms.

1978	Built	The East Building of the National Gallery of Art was constructed on Reservation 6 in the trapezoidal block formed by Pennsylvania Ave., 3 rd and 4 th Sts., and Madison Dr., NW. Architect: I.M. Pei
1987	Built	Two underground museums, The Museum of African Art and The Arthur M. Sackler Gallery of Asian Art, were built beneath the southeast quadrant of the Smithsonian Quadrangle behind the Castle in Reservation 3, just north of Independence Ave., SW. Architect: Jean Paul Carlhian
1987-1989	Built	The National Sculpture Garden concession building was completed on Reservation 3A between 7 th and 9 th Sts., Constitution Ave., and Madison Dr., NW. Architect: Charles Bassett of SOM
1994	Built	Four new food service buildings were built on the Mall. Architect: Oehrlein & Associates
1999	Built	The National Sculpture Garden was built on Reservation 3A. Landscape Architect: Olin Partnership
2004	Built	The National Museum of the American Indian was erected near the east end of the Mall between 3 rd and 4 th Sts., Jefferson Dr., and Independence Ave., SW. Architects: Douglas Cardinal, John Paul Jones & GBQC Architects

THE MALL

List of contributing features:

grass panels

tree panels

Ulmus americana planted in 1920s-1975

Ulmus americana cultivars, such as 'Jefferson' and 'Princeton,' planted to replace original elms

vista, Capitol to Washington Monument

views to elms from walks & grass panels

views to building facades from Mall

views up cross streets

views from Mall to Union Square

Historic circulation system from the 1930s, including the following:

Roads and sidewalks (north-south roads predate 1930s):

Jefferson Drive

Madison Drive

3rd Street

4th Street

7th Street

14th Street

East-west walks:

North Vista Walk (formerly Wash. Drive)

South Vista Walk (formerly Adams Drive)

sidewalks along Madison and Jefferson Drives (Mall side of drives – south side of Madison and north side of Jefferson)

Cross-axial walks:

5th Street axis

6th Street axis

8th Street axis

9th Street axis

10th Street axis

12th Street axis

13th Street axis

benches (1930s design)

street lights (1930s design for Mall)

List of non-contributing features:

Ulmus americana 'Augustine Ascending' cultivar
European elms along 12th St. axis
bald cypresses (*Taxodium distichum*)
two oak trees (*Quercus rubra*) along 14th Street
other street trees under D.C. jurisdiction
hedge around Metro entrance
landscaping of Hirshhorn Sculpture Garden

social trails
curving walks in front of Castle
polychrome paving & steps, Henry statue

Metro entrance
four food service buildings
Tourmobile kiosks
Smithsonian carousel
ticket booth for carousel
Hirshhorn Sculpture Garden

trash receptacles
signs
utility boxes
post-and-chain barriers
chain-link fence around Metro entrance
grates and manholes
parking meters
traffic lights
bicycle racks
National Grange plaque
pay phones
fire hydrants

Periods of Significance

Time Period: 1791-1792
Historic Context Theme: Expressing Cultural Values
Historic Context Subtheme: Landscape Architecture
Historic Context Facet: The Early National Period

Time Period: 1901-1936
Historic Context Theme: Expressing Cultural Values
Historic Context Subtheme: Landscape Architecture
Historic Context Facet: The City Beautiful Movement

Time Period: 1933-1936
Historic Context Theme: Expressing Cultural Values
Historic Context Subtheme: Landscape Architecture
Historic Context Facet: The 1930s: Era of Public Works

Time Period: 1901-1975
Historic Context Theme: Expressing Cultural Values
Historic Context Subtheme: Landscape Architecture
Historic Context Facet: Urban Planning in the Twentieth Century