

UNION SQUARE

CHRONOLOGY

| Year | Event | Description |
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| 1790-1802 | Land Transfer | The three city commissioners appointed by President George Washington had jurisdiction over the reservations in the District of Columbia. |
| 1791-1792 | Planned | Charles Pierre (Peter) L'Enfant created the plan for the City of Washington. The Mall was called the "Grand Avenue" on L'Enfant's so-called "Manuscript Plan." The plan was somewhat modified by surveyor Andrew Ellicott. Planner: Charles Pierre L'Enfant Planner: Andrew Ellicott |
| 1802-1816 | 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 | The Washington City Canal was begun, following the route of Tiber Creek and crossing over the Union Square site. Engineer: Benjamin Henry Latrobe |
| 1816-1849 | Land Transfer | The Superintendent of Public Buildings was replaced by a Commissioner of Public Buildings, also under the president. |
| 1820-1837 | Established | The Botanic Garden was founded and placed under the oversight of the Columbian Institution. |
| 1842 | Established | The Botanic Garden was reinstated and moved to the a new greenhouse at the Patent Office. |
| 1849 | Established | The Botanic Garden was moved back to the Mall site. |
| 1850 | Built | A new octagonal greenhouse was built in the Botanic Garden. |
| 1855 | Built | Congress authorized the Alexandria and Washington Railroad to lay tracks across the Mall along 1 st Street, next to the Botanic Garden, leading north to the Baltimore & Ohio Depot at New Jersey Avenue and C Street. |
| 1856 | Land Transfer | The Botanic Garden was transferred from the authority of the Commissioner of Public Buildings to the congressional Joint Committee on the Library. Construction was overseen by the Architect of the Capitol, also under the Joint Committee on the Library. |
| 1867 | Built | An iron fence was erected around the Botanic Garden. |
| c. 1872 | Destroyed | The Washington City Canal was filled in. |

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| 1870 | Built | The greenhouse in the Botanic Garden was enlarged by the Architect of the Capitol. Architect: Edward Clark |
| 1877 | Moved | The Bartholdi Fountain, built as an exhibit for the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition of 1876, was moved to the Botanic Garden. Sculptor: Auguste Bartholdi |
| 1879-1882 | Planted | Trees and shrubs were planted in the reservations extending from Armory Square (6 th to 7 th Streets, N.W. and S.W.) to the Botanic Garden. |
| 1885-1886 | Developed | A road lined by cobblestone gutters was built through Seaton Park (6 th to 3 rd Streets, N.W. and S.W.), from the 6 th Street bridge to the Botanic Garden. |
| 1901-1902 | Planned | The Senate Park, or McMillan, Commission developed a landmark plan for the city. Focusing on the Mall area, the plan sought to recapture the spirit of the L'Enfant Plan through the elimination of discordant elements while allowing for the development of new buildings and parks designed on City Beautiful principles. It envisioned the construction of a "Union Square" on the Botanic Garden site. Architects: Daniel Burnham and Charles McKim Landscape Architect: Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. Sculptor: Augustus Saint-Gaudens |
| 1908 | Built | The marble platform for the Grant Memorial was built in the Botanic Garden, at the east end of the Mall, along 1 st Street. Architect: Edward Casey |
| 1922 | Built | The Grant Memorial was completed in the Botanic Garden at the east end of the Mall. It was dedicated on April 27, the centennial of Grant's birth. Sculptor: Henry Merwin Shrady |
| 1927 | Built | The Major General George Gordon Meade Memorial was erected in the Botanic Garden near the intersection of 3 rd Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., and dedicated on October 19, 1927. Sculptor: Charles Grafly |
| 1927 | Removed | The Bartholdi Fountain was removed from the Botanic Garden and placed in storage. In 1932 it was relocated outside Union Square, to a site two blocks south, at Independence and Maryland Avenues, S.W. |
| 1932 | Demolished | Demolition of the structures on the Botanic Garden site began in the fall of 1933; the last demolitions probably occurred in 1937. A new Botanic Garden conservatory was built in 1937 immediately south of Union Square, and was designed by the architectural firm Bennett, Parsons, and Frost. |

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| 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 | Transfer of the Botanic Garden property to the National Park Service was arranged with the Treasury Department and the Joint Committee on the Library. (Nolen to Cammerer 10/13/33 p. 2 FRC3) The transfer was made under Land Transfer Order No. 69, April 6, 1934, for Union Square. |
| 1934-1935 | Designed | Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. prepared a new landscape plan for Union Square. Landscape architect: Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. |
| 1934 | Planted | Trees were removed and transplanted within Union Square in the summer (see p. 29). |
| 1934 | Removed | The sidewalks of the old Botanic Garden were removed in August. |
| 1935 | Removed | Trees were cut in Union Square in April. |
| 1935 | Planted | Tree moving was completed in the fall. |
| 1935 | Built | Road construction was completed in the fall. |
| 1936 | Planted | More yews (<i>Taxus cuspidata</i>) were installed, completing the plantings at the ends of the Grant Memorial. |
| 1945 | Planted | Additional landscape planting was carried out in Union Square in the summer. The nature of this work is not known. |
| 1966 | Removed | The Meade Memorial was removed from Union Square and placed in storage (in 1969 it was moved to a new location on Pennsylvania Avenue, outside of Union Square). |
| 1969-1971 | Built | Because of construction of the Inner Loop Freeway, the Capitol Reflecting Pool and its surrounding walks were built in Union Square, requiring the removal of much of the Olmsted landscape design. Architects: Skidmore, Owings and Merrill |

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: 1908-1922
Historic Context Theme: Expressing Cultural Values
Historic Context Subtheme: Painting & Sculpture
Historic Context Facet: Realism 1850-1926

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

List of contributing features:

U.S. Grant Memorial

Vista from Union Square to Washington Monument

Vista from Union Square to Capitol

Views from within Union Square to Grant Memorial

Vista to Botanic Garden

granite plaza at east side of Grant Memorial

concrete plaza around north, west, and south sides of Grant Memorial

older trees

trees that replaced older trees (1935 or earlier) in species or location

yew and boxwood plantings

grass panels

Bacon Twin-Twenty lights

benches

concrete curbs around Grant Memorial plaza

granite curb along 1st Street

granite curbs around Grant Memorial plaza

List of non-contributing features:

Capitol Reflecting Pool

Views from within Union Square to Capitol Reflecting Pool

Views to governmental buildings to north

Views to governmental buildings to south

View of staging or work areas adjacent to Botanic Garden

View of parking lots on Pennsylvania and Maryland Avenues

steps and sunken walk around pool

plaza at west side of pool

two asphalt walks

social trails

planting beds of crape myrtle and holly

trees that have not replaced older trees (1935 or earlier) in species or location

trash receptacles

bollards
grates
locational sign
retaining walls
circular metal grates