



Many other Mall walks are both gravel (on left) and concrete (on right). (CLP file “9th St axis and pavement BW” May 29, 2006)

Buildings and Structures

The Mall has no contributing buildings or structures. On the Mall, the landscape itself and its major view have primacy. Large buildings help define the edges, but within the park's boundaries, the only buildings are small utilitarian structures. The Joseph Henry statue stands in front of the Smithsonian Castle. The Smithsonian carousel is located in front of the Arts and Industries Building.

Joseph Henry Statue

Scientist Joseph Henry served as the first Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, from 1846 to 1878. Henry was the "first individual to have a statue in Washington who had not served as president or in the military" (Barsoum 2005). The bronze statue of Henry, completed by sculptor William Wetmore Story in 1883, has had at least two locations near the Castle. The statue originally faced the Castle's west wing. It stood in the route of the planned South Mall Drive, so in 1934 it was moved out of the roadbed and located in the tree panel, facing the entrance of the Castle. Finally, in May 1965, it was rotated to face the Mall, at the request of Smithsonian Secretary S. Dillon Ripley. (Information from historian Peter Penczer, citing article by Rick Stan in "Smithsonian Preservation Quarterly," Winter 1995, also NARA photograph caption, and Penczer's own manuscript for book on Mall. A draft National Register of Historic Places nomination has been prepared for the statue by Eve Barsoum, as part of the multiple property nomination "Memorials in Washington, D.C.," but has not been moved forward.)

The statue stands on an octagonal red-and-gray granite pedestal facing the Mall, just off the sidewalk along Jefferson Drive at the top of a low slope. On each side, triple flights of granite steps lead from the sidewalk down to the Mall walk. The stairs, and the area of sidewalk immediately behind the statue, have a polychrome design made of red granite diamonds and bands on a field of buff limestone. These stairs have been installed since the mid-1960s since different stairs appear in a photograph from 1965 ("Mall Flowers 9060-A 1965" in MRCE). The stairs are maintained by National Mall & Memorial Parks staff.

The small area between the stairs is planted and maintained by the Smithsonian. Yews (*Taxus* sp.) spread around the base of the pedestal. The sloping ground below is planted with flowers; in the summer of 2006, yellow-foliaged plants formed the Smithsonian Institution's sun logo, surrounded by a field of blue flowers. This planting bed also does not appear in the photograph referenced above.

Smithsonian Carousel

The small carousel, owned by the Smithsonian and operating in front of the Arts and Industries Building, probably dates from the 1940s and was manufactured by a firm in Pennsylvania. It was placed on the Mall in 1967 at the behest of Smithsonian Secretary S. Dillon Ripley; this may be the second carousel since that time. A small, square wood "sentry box" with a shingled roof serves as a ticket booth.

Food Service Buildings

Four small structures designed by Oehrlein & Associates Architects were built on the Mall in 1993. They stand in front of the National Museum of American History, the National Museum of

Natural History, the Arts and Industries Building, and the National Air and Space Museum, and replaced earlier temporary concession stands. In these buildings, employees of Concessionaire Guest Services, Inc., sell snacks and light meals.

The buildings are identical and Greek cross in plan. Exposed wood structural members, painted dark brown, frame cream-colored panels covered with stucco. Standing-seam metal roofs have a slight convex curve.

Tourmobile Kiosk

A small, hexagonal ticket kiosk, painted blue and white and surmounted by tall convex pyramidal roofs, stands on the Mall along Madison Drive in front of the National Museum of American History. Another, disused, kiosk, painted white, is located on the Mall, on Jefferson Drive in front of the Arts and Industries Building. (This type of kiosk, with a roof suggesting a park ranger's hat, was designed in the 1960s and have been used for a variety of purposes; larger versions are located at the Vietnam Veterans and the Korean War Memorials.)

Metro Escalator

On the Mall, a short distance northwest of the Freer Gallery of Art, three escalators lead underground to the Smithsonian stop on the Metro's Orange and Blue Lines. A wall surrounds the escalators on three sides, and the wall, in turn, is surrounded by a hedge and a chain-link fence.

Hirshhorn Sculpture Garden

The sunken Hirshhorn Sculpture Garden occupies the tree panel between 7th Street and the 9th Street axis. It is not related to the Mall landscape and is non-contributing.

List of contributing features:

None

List of non-contributing features:

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



In front of the National Museum of American History stand a food service building, a Tourmobile kiosk, and a locational sign. (CLP file “snack bar and kiosks crop clr” Feb. 18 2005)



The Mall entrance to the Smithsonian station on Metro's Blue and Orange Lines is located on the axis of 12th Street, between the Freer Gallery of Art and the Department of Agriculture. (CLP file “Metro entrance on Mall BW crop” Feb. 18 2005)



The statue memorializing Joseph Henry, first Secretary of the Smithsonian, stands on the Mall in front of the Castle. (CLP file "Henry statue BW reduced 200" Feb. 18 2005)

Small-Scale Features

The Mall has only a few types of small-scale features. Contributing features include benches, street lights, and trash receptacles. These features conform to the standards published in the *Streetscape Manual: Interagency Initiative for National Mall Road Improvement Program* (1993). The manual covers several types of small-scale features for the greater Mall area: benches, trash receptacles, light standards, drinking fountains, fire hydrants, post-and-chain barriers, and bike racks. It also discusses standards for features mentioned under Circulation: curbs, sidewalks, and wheelchair ramps.

There are no plans to change the type of light, trash receptacle, or bench used on the Mall, though the possibility of making the historic park bench ADA compliant through the addition of arms is being considered, if compatibility become necessary. (McLarty & Kennealy 3/06)

Benches

All benches used on the National Mall are the standard style developed for the National Capital Parks in 1934/35 with Public Works Administration funds. It is not known whether the purpose of this design was to have a standard bench design for the Mall specifically or for all of the National Capital Parks. What proportion of the current benches are replacements in kind, or include replaced materials, is not known; probably most of the wood slats have been replaced over the years.

The benches have cast-iron frames and wood-slat backs and seats. Curved struts join front and back legs, and the struts terminate in simple scrolls. The iron frameworks are painted black, and the slats are stained black.

The benches are located along the Mall's east-west axes: along the Mall outer walks running beside Madison and Jefferson Drives and along the inner walks (the former Washington and Adams Drives), next to the inner row of elms. All benches face towards the center of the Mall, except for seven, set on either side of the carousel-food pavilion grouping, which are perpendicular to the main axis. All benches are bolted to concrete pads or blocks set into the walks next to the lawns or within the walks along the curbs. The curb-side benches are placed singly, spaced evenly between trees, with trash receptacles or street lights between them. The benches along the central lawn are arranged in pairs, aligned generally with elm trees and with single or paired trash receptacles and street lights between them. Since the elms are planted fifty feet apart, all these features are spaced at roughly twenty-five-foot intervals along the grass panels.

There are no benches or trash receptacles directly in front of the Freer Gallery or the Castle, because of the narrowness of the tree panel in this area, or in front of the Hirshhorn, because of the Sculpture Garden. There are no benches on the cross-axial walks or streets (this was not always the case; photographs from the 1960s show benches along the walk that followed the 10th Street alignment between the Castle and the National Museum of Natural History). The arrangement of benches and other features reinforce the Mall's dominant east-west axis. Because of their placement, they are sometimes in full sun, sometimes in partial or full shade, depending on the season and time of day.

All benches along the inside boundaries of Madison and Jefferson Drives face in, towards the center of Mall. No benches are located on the 8th Street axis, and there are few benches along the inside boundary of Jefferson Drive, from the Department of Agriculture building to 7th Street.

Light Standards

The street lights used on the Mall were designed especially for this area as part of the 1930s reconstruction. Though commonly referred to as the “Olmsted light,” the light was designed by J. W. Gosling, a designer employed by General Electric laboratories. The design was approved by the CFA and the lights were installed in mid-1936. Street lights were to be aligned with the Mall lights and there were to be no lights directly in the vista. According to a contemporary press release, the “lamps are considered by engineers to be the most efficient type of street light yet produced.” (Press release, author unknown, “Federal Public Works Project for Development of the Mall Is Nearing Completion.” c. Sept. 1936 p. 5 FRC1)

Little information has been found regarding the planners’ overall intent for the Mall lighting scheme. In April 1934, C. Marshall Finnan, Superintendent of National Capital Parks, stated that “The major objective of the Mall plan is to keep open an unrestricted vista from the Capitol to the Monument.” (Finnan to D.C. Commissioners, April 26 1934 FRC14) Finnan also noted that “the intensity of the light will not be so great as to make it visible at a distance and the arrangement of the posts will be such that one will not see a line of lights up and down the Mall.” (Finnan in CFA Minutes May 28 1934 p. 9) (See also the discussion under History.)

The lights have cast-iron bases. A twenty-one-foot high steel fluted post is topped by a cylindrical cast-iron luminaire, or lamp, suspended from two supports, which branch from the top of the post and are attached to either side of the entablature or cap. The cap has a domical top crowned by an acorn-like finial. A finial surmounts the post, directly beneath the cylindrical lamp. (undated c. 1980s “Specifications for Mall lighting units,” NAMA CR files, folder “National Mall – Description/Research”) With its simplified geometric ornament abstracted from classical motifs, the street lights are late Art Deco in style.

The lights are placed along Madison and Jefferson Drives, and along the inner walks of the Mall, next to the inner row of elm trees, spaced about 100 feet apart. It appears that, in the 1930s, the light poles along the two Vista drives (now the inner walks) were aligned with alternate north-south lines of elms, and placed only a few feet in front of the trunks (see photo “Mall from 7 St. 8879-D 1964,” MRCE). This placement has been changed, perhaps when the Vista drives were converted into walks in 1975. The poles are now located between the alternate north-south lines of elms. The typical arrangement along the inner walks is a lamp post, two benches, one or two trash receptacles, two benches, and another lamp post. Some posts along Madison and Jefferson Drives have cross arms attached for hanging banners.

Traffic lights (at least on 14th Street) are supported on the Washington standard post, a fluted classical post developed for the city’s street lights in the 1920s. Traffic lights are not contributing features.

The existing lighting system consists of high-pressure sodium lamps and mercury bulbs on the outside roads (multi-vapor type lamps), as well as incandescent on the inside walks. New lamps on the Madison and Jefferson Drive sides consist of 28 miser-type lamps, equal to 100-

watt output. Incandescent lamps are still used on the inside walks. (Information from Sean Kennealy, Sept. 2006)

Trash Receptacles

All trash receptacles on the Mall are the “tulip” type, with vertical wood slats connected by steel bands containing a removable plastic trash can liner and supported on a steel post. They are placed between benches along the curbs of Madison and Jefferson Drives and along the outer edges of the inner Mall walks. The receptacles date to 1966-68.

Barriers

Few barriers of any kind are used on the Mall. Varying lengths of post-and-chain barriers are erected in certain areas to discourage trespassing on the grass – for example, at the corners of some grass panels, along the walk leading to the Metro entrance from the Jefferson Drive sidewalk, along walks leading to food service buildings, and along the parking strip on 14th Street.

The post-and-chain barrier is currently used in many of the downtown parks and reservations. It is composed of simple steel posts surmounted by acorn caps, with chains attached to steel loops beneath the tops of the posts. The posts are coated with black vinyl and the chain is vinyl-coated steel. Some of the aluminum caps surmounting the posts are somewhat pointed, others are low and slightly rounded, but they are all called “acorn caps.”

Sections of chain-link fence surround the walled escalator entrance to Metro, located just outside the hedge that runs along the wall. This fence was installed after an incident one year on the 4th of July, when, following the fireworks, long lines of people were waiting for escalators and some people jumped off the walls down into the crowd. Temporary snow fencing is erected to protect lawns when newly seeded or sodded, and for other purposes, such as channeling pedestrian traffic.

National Grange Plaque

One of the few anomalous features on the Mall is a small bronze plaque on a granite base, set on the west side of 4th Street, and marking the general location of the historic Department of Agriculture propagating gardens, where the National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry was founded in 1867. The plaque dates from 1951.

Signs

There is a relatively small amount of signage on the Mall. All signs are confined to the edges of streets and walks or are set within the elm panels so as not to disrupt the view along the main axis. Parking and traffic signs stand along Jefferson and Madison Drives and the cross streets. A Metro pylon stands near the station, along with a tall locational map that depicts the entire Mall area. The locational sign is in the form of a large narrow box on four legs, which have scrolled brackets. The structure rises above head height and is covered with a pyramidal roof. A few other such signs are located on the Mall. (There are currently plans to replace these locational signs.)

Other

Circular edgings of tan-colored bricks flush with the ground are used around some elm trees, if they are growing in gravel walks rather than lawn. Such edgings also surround some features along curbs. Handicap-accessible drinking fountains (Haws Manufacturing Co. "Frostproof") are placed along Madison and Jefferson Drives. The steel fountains have cylindrical basins extending on rectilinear arms from square posts and conform to the standards in the *Streetscape Manual*.

Some old metal bicycle racks, of a style different from what is currently required in the *Streetscape Manual*, can be found by the street curbs on the Mall sides of Madison and Jefferson Drives. Movable metal café tables and chairs are placed along the wide concrete walks leading to the food service buildings. Various utility boxes are located throughout the Mall, generally in grass strips along roads. Several Metro ventilation grates are set in the Mall walks near the station entrance and at other locations. There are also manhole covers and abandoned post holes. Inconspicuous black steel edging is placed around grass panels. Parking meters are set along the inside edges of the north-south cross streets.

Four Verizon pay phones are placed along the inside boundaries of the outer Mall drives, in front of Department of Agriculture, Air and Space Museum, West Building of National Gallery of Art, and National Museum of Natural History

List of contributing features:

benches (1930s design)
street lights (1930s design for Mall)

List of non-contributing features:

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



Benches are placed in pairs along the east-west Mall walks. The design dates from the 1930s. (CLP file “benches 1 BW” May 29, 2006)



Small sections of post-and-chain barrier are used on the Mall to direct traffic and protect lawns. Grass panels are worn by pedestrian and vehicular traffic, particularly at the corners. (CLP file “post and chain at corner of lawn BW crop” Feb. 18 2005)



The Mall lamps were designed by General Electric especially for the Mall. (CLP file “lamp 200 BW” Feb. 18 2005)



The plaque on the west side of 4th Street commemorates the founding of the National Grange of the Patrons of Husbandry in 1867. (CLP file “grange plaque BW” May 29, 2006)

Management Information

Descriptive and Geographic Information

Historic Name: The Mall, The National Mall, The L'Enfant Mall
Current Name: The Mall
Management Unit: National Mall & Memorial Parks
Tract Numbers: Reservations 3, 3A, 3B, 4, 5, 6
State and County: Washington, D.C.
Size (acres): 135.05

Boundary UTM's

Source	Type	Datum	Zone	Easting	Northing
GPS-Differentially Corrected	Point	NAD 83	18	323781	4306571
GPS Differentially Corrected	Point	NAD 83	18	323779	4306385
GPS Differentially Corrected	Point	NAD 83	18	325209	4306559
GPS Differentially Corrected	Point	NAD 83	18	325206	4306378

GIS File Description:

National Register Information

National Register Documentation: Entered – Inadequately Documented

Explanatory Narrative: The Mall is listed on the National Register under the nomination “The National Mall” (1981) and “The L’Enfant Plan of the City of Washington, D.C.” (1997). Neither document adequately describes the current condition or the physical features of the Mall landscape.

NRIS Information:

NRIS Number: 97000332
Primary Certification: Listed in the National Register
Primary Certification Date: May 19, 1981
Name in National Register: “The National Mall”

NRIS Number: 97000332
Primary Certification: Listed in the National Register
Primary Certification Date: April 24, 1997
Name in National Register: National Mall

National Register Classification: Site

Significance Level: National

Contributing/Individual: Contributing

Significance Criteria: A – Inventory Unit is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history
B – Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past
C – Inventory Unit embodies distinctive characteristics of type/period/method of construction; or represents work of master; or possesses high artistic values; or represents significant/distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction

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

Areas of Significance

Category: Community Planning and Development
Priority: 1

Category: Landscape Architecture
Priority: 2

National Historic Landmark Information

National Historic Landmark: No

Date Determined Landmark:

Landmark Theme:

World Heritage Site Information

World Heritage Site: No

Cultural Landscape Type and Use

Cultural Landscape Type: Historic Designed Landscape

Current and Historic Use/Function:

Use/Function Category: Landscape
Use/Function: Leisure – Passive (Park)
Detailed Use/Function: Leisure – Passive (Park)
Type Of Use/Function: Both Current and Historic

Use/Function Category: Landscape
Use/Function: Plaza/Public Space (Square)
Detailed Use/Function: Urban Park
Type Of Use/Function: Both Current and Historic

Use/Function Category: Landscape
Use/Function: Plaza/Public Space (Square)
Detailed Use/Function: Assembly Area
Type Of Use/Function: Both Current and Historic

Use/Function Category: Landscape
Use/Function: Scenic Landscape
Detailed Use/Function: Vista
Type Of Use/Function: Both Current and Historic

Use/Function Category: Transportation
Use/Function: Road-Related
Detailed Use/Function: NPS Class VII Urban Parkway
Type Of Use/Function: Both Current and Historic

Ethnographic Information

Ethnographic Survey Conducted: No

Adjacent Lands Information

Do Adjacent Lands Contribute?: Yes

The buildings occupying adjacent lands are vitally important to defining the character of the central landscape of the Mall. For the purposes of this Cultural Landscape Inventory, the Mall landscape has been defined as limited by the outer curbs of Madison and Jefferson Drives and by 3rd and 14th Streets. The entire Mall occupies the land bounded by Constitution Avenue, 1st Street, Independence Avenue, and 14th Street. The Mall was built because of its location between the Capitol and the Washington Monument, with its central axis serving as an open vista between the two monumental buildings. Buildings lining the Mall axis, referred to by L'Enfant as the promenade or the Grand Avenue, played an important role in the L'Enfant Plan. The McMillan Plan called for structures along the Mall axis to be symmetrically disposed, defining walls that would shape and contain its space. These buildings were to house government and cultural institutions.

In the years following the publication of the McMillan Report, in 1902, former commission members Daniel Burnham and Charles McKim worked strenuously to ensure that new buildings would be set at the correct distance from the Mall's center line so that the mistake represented by the placement of the Smithsonian Castle, too close to the center line and encroaching on the space and vista of the Mall, was not repeated. They succeeded in securing President Theodore Roosevelt's approval to have the site of the new Department of Agriculture moved to the correct distance, even after foundations had been laid. This established the precedent that, with the oversight of the Commission of Fine Arts and other groups, has been observed by all construction since.

The succession of these monumental facades along the Mall, rising behind the lines of elms, further emphasizes the primary vista. The institutions they house attract millions of people annually from all over the world, making the Mall the lively center of the nation's capital city.

General Management Information

Management Category: Must be preserved and maintained

Management Category Date: April 24, 1997

Explanatory Narrative: The Mall is the key component of the greater area called the National Mall, encompassing the Mall, the Washington Monument Grounds and West Potomac Park (which includes Constitution Gardens, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Lincoln Memorial, the National World War II Memorial, the Korean War Veterans Memorial, the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial, the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, and the George Mason Memorial). The Mall was the central area of the city in the L'Enfant Plan, and it maintained this importance in the expanded Mall designed by the McMillan Commission Plan (Senate Park Commission Plan) of 1902.

The National Park Service is currently developing a management plan for the National Mall, *The National Mall Comprehensive Management Plan*. This CLI will provide background information for the plan. The Management Category Date for the Mall is the date the nomination for the L'Enfant Plan was listed on the National Register.

Condition Assessment and Impacts

The criteria for determining the condition of landscapes is consistent with the Resource Management Plan Guideline definitions (1994) and is decided with the concurrence of park management. Cultural landscape conditions are defined as follows:

Good: indicates the landscape shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The landscape's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Fair: indicates the landscape shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character-defining elements will cause the landscape to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the landscape shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

Undetermined: not enough information available to make an evaluation.

Condition Assessment: Fair

Assessment Date: May 16, 2006

Date Recorded: May 16, 2006

Park Management Concurrence:

Level of Impact Severity: Low

Stabilization Measures:

Impacts:

Type of Impact: Adjacent Lands
Internal/External: External
Description: The Smithsonian museums lining the Mall attract huge numbers of visitors.

Type of Impact: Deferred Maintenance
Internal/External: Internal
Description: Trash receptacles and benches show signs of age and wear; some need replacement or repair of parts.

Type of Impact: Erosion
Internal/External: Internal
Description: Because of heavy foot and vehicular traffic, the edges and corners of grass panels are worn and eroded so that bare ground is exposed or covered by gravel from adjacent walks. Social trails are eroding on slope in front of Smithsonian Castle.

Type of Impact: Improper Drainage
Internal/External: Internal
Description: Water sometimes pools on gravel walks.

Type of Impact: Operations on Site
Internal/External: Internal
Description: Intensive use from setting up and taking down exhibitions, etc., especially on the center panels, wears grass, gravel walks, soil; NAMA is aware of potential damage to root systems of elm trees and should continue to protect against soil compaction and below-grade intrusions.

Type of Impact: Pests/Diseases
Internal/External: Internal
Description: Dutch elm disease and bacterial scorch are the main diseases afflicting the Mall elms. These conditions are monitored and controlled by NAMA staff.

Type of Impact: Removal/Replacement
Internal/External: Internal
Description: Years ago an inappropriate elm cultivar, 'Augustine Ascending,' was purchased as a replacement for elms on Mall and other parks. It is highly susceptible to Dutch elm disease; when these die, they are replaced by trees of more appropriate variety.

Type of Impact: Soil Compaction
Internal/External: Internal
Description: The many visitors and vehicles that travel the Mall compact the soil. Annually, between Sept. and March, NAMA takes half the Mall tree and lawn panels out of service to aerate and reseed. See Vegetation for details.

Type of Impact: Vandalism/Theft/Arson
Internal/External: Internal
Description: Painted graffiti was recently (May 2006) noted on the trunks of several elm trees southeast of the National Museum of Natural History. Park removes graffiti on Mall as part of regular maintenance.

Type of Impact: Visitation
Internal/External: Internal
Description: Heavy visitation to the Mall throughout the year wears gravel off walks and results in large amounts of trash. NAMA annually installs c. 500-1000 tons of material on gravel walks, about 5% of total square feet of walks; trash collected at least twice daily every day.

Agreements, Legal Interest, and Access

Management Agreement:	concession contract/permit
Expiration Date:	12/31/2010
Explanatory Narrative:	Agreement with GSI to sell refreshments from food service buildings to Mall visitors
Management Agreement:	Memorandum of Agreement
Expiration Date:	agreement under negotiation in September 2006
Explanatory Narrative:	The Smithsonian Folklife Festival is held on the grass and tree panels of the Mall each summer
Management Agreement:	concession contract/permit
Expiration Date:	12/31/2007
Explanatory Narrative:	Agreement with Tourmobile to operate tourist buses on Mall streets; agreement can be extended to 12/31/2008
NPS Legal Interest:	Fee Simple

Public Access: The Mall is open to the public at all hours with no restrictions. The Smithsonian Institution museums and the National Gallery of Art, which are under separate jurisdiction, have daily hours.

The following information is now optional.

Treatment

Approved Treatment:

Approved Treatment Document:

Document Date:

Explanatory Narrative:

Approved Treatment Completed:

Approved Treatment Cost

**LCS Structure Approved
Treatment Cost:**

**Landscape Approved
Treatment Cost:**

Cost Date:

Level of Estimate:

Cost Estimator:

Explanatory Description:

Stabilization Costs

LCS Structure Stabilization Cost:

Landscape Stabilization Costs:

Cost Date:

Level of Estimate:

Cost Estimator:

Explanatory Description:

Documentation

This field is now optional.

Appendix

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Supplemental Information

Title: Federal Record Center Files

Description: These boxes containing historic records on the Mall and Union Square were requested from the Federal Records Center in October 2005. The author developed this key to assist in making parenthetical references.

64 – A – 42, Box 46 – The Mall

FRC1	1460/Mall, Nov. 1917-April 1955
FRC2	1460/Mall – 5 Admin, Main, & Prot, #1
FRC3	1460/Mall-5, Admin. Main. & Protection
FRC4	1460/Mall – 5, Adm. Main. & Prot. Supl.
FRC5	1460/Mall – 95 Traffic & Parking Facilities

66A – 1097, Box 25 – The Mall

FRC6	1460/Mall – 5 Adm. Main. & Protection #2
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66A – 1097, Box 26

FRC7	1460/Mall – 20 Grading & Drainage
FRC8	1460/Mall – 25 Land
FRC9	1460/Mall – 50 Plant & Landscaping #2
FRC10	1460/Mall – 60 Public Utilities
FRC11	1460/Mall – 70 Roads & Walks #2
FRC12	1460/Mall – (Buildings & Structures)
FRC13	1460/Mall – (Land Transfers)
FRC14	1460/Mall – (Lighting)

68A -3201

FRC15	Box 16 – The Mall Master Plan, 1/1/65 (copied one letter)
FRC16	Box 22 – The Mall 1963-1965 (not found)

Title: Letter from Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. to Frederick A. Delano on use of elms on Mall

Description: Letter included in Appendix H to CFA Minutes, Nov. 17-19, 1932

CFA Minutes
Appendix H
November 17-19, 1932
Meeting.

18th October 1932

Mr. Frederick A. Delano, Chairman,
National Capital Park and Planning Commission
Hibbs Building
Washington, D.C.

Subject: Mall Treatment; trees.

Dear Mr. Delano:

I have read with much interest your memorandum of October 7th to the members of the Park and Planning Commission. I am still unable to spend any considerable time in active work, but for the moment and until I can discuss the matter more at length I should like to make two remarks in regard to points raised in your memorandum.

First, in regard to the design for the Mall, when the Planning Commission took over this problem it endeavored to bring out in discussion all obtainable facts and opinions, so that the final decision should be based on the widest possible study. In this sense there has been much difference of opinion on the design of the Mall. But the design of the Mall as it now stands in essence is the design of the McMillan Commission, and was accepted unanimously by the Planning Commission. I personally approved of it and I still have no reason to believe, taking the situation as a whole, that any change since suggested would be a change for the better.

The second point I take up now, since I understand you would be glad to have at least a tentative opinion upon it from the Commission within a short time. It is proposed that the four rows of trees on each side of the open center of the Mall, stretching from the Capitol to the Washington Monument, be of different kinds. It seems to me that this is a very unfortunate suggestion. The essence of this part of the scheme is its reasonable formality. The McMillan plan contemplated American Elms, and even went so far as to consider carefully choosing these trees to avoid as much as possible individual variations.

The situation is not at all comparable to that, for instance, at Versailles where the allees appear to be cut through a bosquet of considerable extent, and where the view does not penetrate the bosquet and the trunks of the trees are not an element in the design. There are but four rows of trees on each side of the Mall and these are intended to form a sort of colonnade which is visible not only from the Mall but from the buildings along the Mall and to a very real extent in transverse and diagonal glimpses through the colonnade from the four roadways of the Mall. It

was considered therefore, at the beginning, that the similarity of these trees, their high canopy of foliage and the gothic arch effect of their branching were all essential parts of the design. Plainly it is undesirable to plant trees of different kinds and then spend money to give them a similar form by pruning and large scale topiary work.

I do not consider that there is any appreciably greater likelihood of a loss of good appearance through insect attacks if these trees are all of one kind than if there were of several kinds. This is not a case of forestry over a large area. It is possible on the Mall to give the trees such attention as will minimize any ordinary insect or fungus attack. Certainly there can be no question that in the past in Washington, even without very much care, elm trees have on the whole done well, and have reached a size where they can be studied as examples of the general scale of tree colonnade which was contemplated when the design for the Mall was first made.

I cannot see, therefore, that the suggestion of the use of trees of different kinds produces any considerable good result either aesthetic or economic, and to my mind it would produce a very distinct aesthetic loss to the design.

Sincerely yours,

(Sgd) Frederick Law Olmsted

Title: Letters from William A. Delano and Henry Hubbard to Ulysses S. Grant III on use of elms on Mall

Description: Two letters among several included as Appendix in Dec. 1932 minutes of NCPPC

Delano and Aldrich, Architects
126 East 38th St.
New York

Nov. 25, 1932

Dear Colonel Grant:

May I ask that the opinions I expressed at our last meeting on November 19 and 20th, regarding the choice and manner of planting trees on either side of the Mall, be placed on our records.

I feel strongly that the Commission made a mistake in voting the adoption of elm trees at fifty foot intervals for this screen of trees. I base my opinion on the following reasons:

Practical considerations:

(a) That to gain the effect desired, these elm trees must be carefully selected to match, which means that they must be trees old enough to have assumed their final shape – say trees of at least ten to twelve inch caliper.

(b) Allowing for replacements, it will require approximately one thousand trees from the Capitol to the Washington Monument, and it will be almost impossible, at any reasonable cost, to find so many matched and shaped trees of this size.

(c) That even if found, at reasonable cost, these trees may be stricken at any time with a disease or attacked by a pest, as the chestnut trees have been, which might wipe them all out or entail constant and expensive treatment to preserve them.

(d) All these trees cannot be planted at the same time so some will almost inevitably be smaller than others and the planting will not give the continuous effect anticipated.

(e) That it takes fifty to sixty years for an elm tree to reach perfection of growth and that its life is not much over two hundred years, so that at best we could only expect one hundred and fifty years of perfection.

Aesthetic Considerations:

(a) What we are seeking is a long quiet greensward from the Capitol to the Washington Monument, bordered by a high planting on either side. The fewer interruptions and diversions there are in this vista the more pleasing this effect will be, whether viewed from the Capitol or the Monument or points in between.

(b) By planting high branching elm trees at fifty foot intervals, instead of enclosing this greensward we are opening to view on either side a more or less heterogeneous lot of white buildings which will constantly take the eye off the two main objects – the Capitol and the Washington Monument. It will be disturbing rather than restful for those who go up and down the central portion of the Mall.

(c) We are not planning a Village Green in New England, so often cited for its beauty, which no one can deny in its appropriate place – but a very long formal vista.

(d) There is altogether too much emphasis placed in Washington, it seems to me, on the value of glimpses here and there of everything. In consequence, no one gets a quiet restricted view of anything. In other words, we are letting a lot of minor effects spoil the possibility of a few major ones. Concentration on the major effect is on an aesthetic principle which I feel sure no artist will deny.

For the above named reasons, I advocated a mixed random planting of English elms, red oaks, beech, pin oaks, lindens – planted among such trees as are already growing in these long two hundred feet wide areas – with an undergrowth of rhododendron, kalmia, viburnum and hornbeam or beech on the edges – these edge trees trimmed to a height of thirty or forty feet. These would make a dense enough growth so that the eye could not penetrate except where alleys are intentionally cut through to lead to the main entrances of the buildings facing the Mall or where the streets cut across it. Such a plan would not entail the wholesale destruction of such trees as already exist, an operation which is sure to cause adverse comment. It could be accomplished for much less money. Such trees as died would not disfigure the planting as a whole for they would be insignificant as compared to the whole and could be replaced more easily and economically than matched elms, and by necessary replacements, the major effect of this planting could be continued for an indefinite period.

Respectfully submitted,

(Sgd) Wm. Adams Delano

Lieut. Col. U.S. Grant, 3rd,
Department of Public Buildings and Public Grounds,
Washington, D.C.

Olmsted Brothers
Landscape Architects
Brookline, Massachusetts.

December 15, 1932

Colonel U.S. Grant, 3rd,
National Capital Park & Planning Commission,
Navy Building,
Washington, D.C.

My dear Colonel Grant:

I have your letter of December 6th enclosing a copy of Mr. William Delano's letter about the elms on the Mall. I certainly do not wish to suppress discussion, but I am personally entirely convinced that the recent vote was correct, and that there is no sufficient reason contained in Mr. Delano's statement to warrant a change. If I may, I should like to take up his reasons one by one and make short remarks of my own. I suppose that I am justified in saying that on the score of practical knowledge in dealing with trees and in their arrangement for effects of this kind I can draw upon a considerable and varied experience.

It seems to me that if the records are to be complete and Mr. Delano's arguments are recorded, then Mr. Olmsted's letter on this subject and my notes herein should be recorded also.

Taking up Mr. Delano's remarks in order.

Under Practical Considerations:

A. If we are willing to see a line of trees of the very various shapes and sizes which Mr. Delano suggests, we ought to be willing to see a line of elms varying no more than they would vary if they were not picked for similarity of form. As a matter of fact, however, there would be no considerable difficulty in picking elms to be sufficiently alike to give all the regularity and uniformity that ought to be shown. A minor amount of variation would be a good thing in any case.

B. We are misinformed if we believe that it would be almost impossible to get 1,000 reasonably matched elm trees of 10" or 12" caliper at a price comparable to that of other good trees of the same size. It is perfectly possible to do it, and I would engage to do it within a year if it were necessary, starting at once. The chances are, however, that they will not all be needed at once and that the suggestion which has long been contemplated of establishing a nursery, even perhaps with fairly good-sized trees for a start, would still be an economy.

C. The chance of the elm trees being stricken with a disease which would really destroy them as the chestnut trees have been destroyed is almost negligible. No other such pest as the chestnut blight has appeared since the memory of man, and there is no reason to expect that if one did appear it would be any more likely to seize upon the elm than on any other one tree.

Certainly it can be mathematically shown on the theory of chances that the chance of having say 20% of the trees fatally stricken with a pest at any one time is greater with a mixed planting

than it is with a pure planting. It should be remembered that we are not dealing with forest conditions. Any pest except such a deadly thing as the chestnut blight can be controlled without enormous expense, whether with several kinds of tree or with one kind.

D. It is quite true that all the elms probably cannot be planted at the same time. Changing the kind of tree or using several kinds of tree plainly has no effect on this consideration, unless we are willing to contemplate as the best solution an irregular mass of foliage running down the two sides of the Mall composed of trees of different kinds, different shapes and different sizes. Planting smaller trees first and larger trees later would largely meet the difficulty as to size if the ultimate size were the same for all, i.e. if they were all of the same kind.

E. Granting that we can expect only 150 years of perfection from an elm, what can we expect from anything else? We have no immortal trees, and the average life under the contemplated conditions of some of the trees mentioned by Mr. Delano is shorter than the predictable life of an American elm under these conditions.

Under Aesthetic Considerations:

A and B. I believe that we are all agreed in essence on this point. I do not agree, however, that diversions are bad so long as they do not operate as interruptions. If you stand within the limits of the open space in the center of the Mall and look along the Mall either at the monument or at the capitol, it can be readily shown that the trunks of the trees will so foreshorten upon one another that any object outside of the quadruple row of trees will be blinded and broken up to such an extent that it would not unduly divert the attention from the main vista point at the end of the central vista.

C. We are indeed planning a very long formal vista. That is the reason why we should plant our trees formally and use a tree which reaches and maintains about a maximum height and spread.

D. No one would deny the validity of the aesthetic principle of concentration on the major effect. Personally, however, I do emphatically deny that the arrangement of planting contemplated by the McMillan Commission is a violation of this aesthetic principle.

As to Mr. Delano's recommendation.

There is available only 200 feet for the thickness of the planting. The two outer rows of trees must surely be straight. This leaves but 100 feet for random planting, that is, an average of two trees in the width. You cannot make an aesthetically random planting of five kinds of trees, spaced far enough apart so that they will grow well under such circumstances. If you were dealing with a forest this would be possible; if you were dealing with the large bosquets of Versailles, it would be sufficiently reasonable. But under the restrictions of this problem I am personally quite convinced that such an arrangement of trees forming the side of a formal mall would give a final effect not of formality pleasantly diversified but of a degree of wanton diversity which verged on messiness. As to the possibility of maintaining in Washington, under the kind of care that is reasonable to be expected, an undergrowth of rhododendrons, kalmia, viburnum, and hornbeam or beech beneath the shade of English elms, red oaks, beech, pin oaks, and lindens; I have not figured just what such an arrangement would cost per year, but I am perfectly sure that the cost of its up-keep in any condition not disgraceful and its policing for

decency and safety would be many times greater than the up-keep of the elms as at present proposed.

All of this is respectfully submitted for the records or for discussion if the Commission shall desire to pursue the subject further.

Very sincerely,

(Sgd) Henry V. Hubbard