

1818 KING MAP OF WASHINGTON

Source: R. King, "A Map of the City of Washington," 1818. Courtesy Library of Congress.


MMP—LOC—King—1818

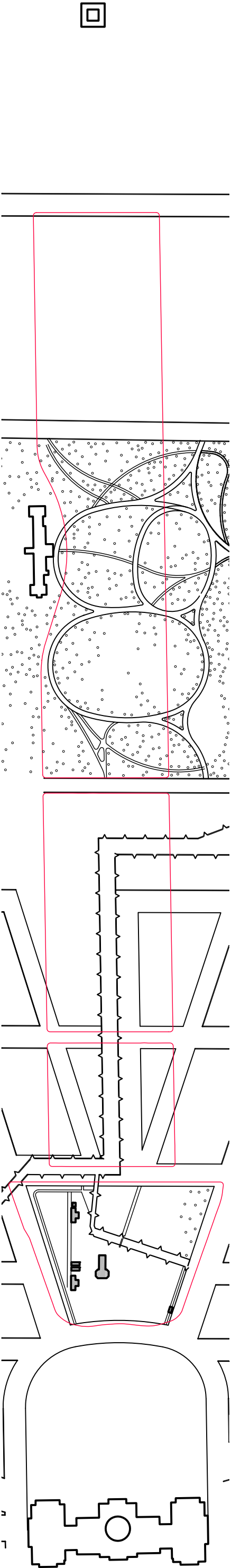


CIRCA 1800 BIRCH PAINTING OF CAPITOL SQUARE

Source: Birch, Capitol Square, c.1800. Courtesy National Archives.

MMP—NA—Capitol—Square—Birch—1800

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<p>TITLE OF SERIES</p> <p>MALL MAPPING</p> <p>RECONSTRUCT TURF & SOIL ON THE NATIONAL MALL</p> <p>NATIONAL MALL & MEMORIAL PARKS WASHINGTON, DC</p>				
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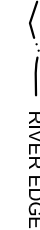
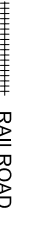



1857 LAYOUT WITH 2010 STREET CURBS



1857 BOSCHKE MAP OF WASHINGTON CITY

SYMBOL KEY

	STRUCTURE		WALL		ROAD
	TEMPORARY BUILDING		RIVER EDGE		WALK
	MONUMENT		WETLAND		TREE TRUNKS
	CANAL		RAILROAD		2010 STREET CURB, MALL & UNION SQUARE FOR LOCATION

SOURCES

- ALBERT BOSCHKE, "MAP OF WASHINGTON CITY", 1857. COURTESY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.
- ALBERT BOSCHKE, "TOPOGRAPHICAL MAP OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA SURVEYED IN THE YEARS 1856 '57 '58 & '59", 1861. COURTESY NATIONAL ARCHIVES.
- A. J. DOWNING, "PLAN SHOWING THE PROPOSED METHOD OF LAYING OUT THE PUBLIC GROUNDS AT WASHINGTON", FEBRUARY 1851. COURTESY NATIONAL ARCHIVES.

		TITLE OF SERIES		SHEET TITLE	
Heritage Landscapes, LLC Preservation Landscape Architects & Planners Cheshire, VT 802.425.4320 Newark, CT 203.862.1985 Newark, VT 802.552.0719		MALL MAPPING RECONSTRUCT TURF & SOIL ON THE NATIONAL MALL NATIONAL MALL & MEMORIAL PARKS WASHINGTON, DC		CONTRACT NO. 1443C2000091500	1820-1865 1
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1820-1865 Park & Canal Landscape

During the 1820-1865 period, planning and implementation efforts shape the National Mall and Union Square as picturesque pleasure grounds with an enlarged water transport route, resulting in considerable ground disturbance. A series of north-south streets were built through the landscape, the Washington Canal was expanded and reworked, Union Square was transformed into a Botanic Garden, Downingsque paths and drives were built adjacent to the Smithsonian, and the overall topography was altered with fill to shape the naturalistic landscape.

By the late 1850s, the National Mall and Union Square landscape exhibited substantial changes. The key reference document for the 1820-1865 period is the 1857 Albert Boschke “Map of Washington City” (page 5). In addition to the 1857 Boschke map, later titled as the “Topographical Map of the District of Columbia Surveyed in the Years 1856 '57 '58 & '59”, the outline layout for this period (page 5) is also informed by the 1861 black and white Boschke map (page 7) and by the February 1851 Andrew Jackson Downing, landscape gardener, design titled “Plan Showing the Proposed Method of Laying out the Public Grounds at Washington” (page 7).

Period documentation reflects several improvements to the National Mall and Union Square during the early to mid-19th century. Expansion of the Washington Canal during this period resulted in considerable ground disturbance. In 1831, the city government purchased the canal and made improvements, and an 8-foot wide towpath and access way was constructed along the edge of this transportation waterway. Because of the low-lying, marshy character of the landscape, construction of the towpath along the southern edge of the canal used fill materials from unidentified areas placed on top of the existing soil. By the end of the 1820-1860 period, much of Tiber Creek is straightened, widened, and channelized as the Washington Canal, extending through much of the National Mall and Union Square, as seen on period mapping and the 1860 Civil War Union Square Photograph (page 6).

The grounds west of the Capitol were developed in the picturesque style as a Botanic Garden, first established in 1820. Five acres of land were fenced in, and two oval ponds constructed. In 1823, grounds were drained and partially leveled, with gravel walks laid out. In the 1840s, the Botanic Garden moved off site, but returned in 1849. In 1850, the first greenhouse was constructed to the west of 1st Street. Construction of buildings at the Botanic Garden, seen in the 1860 Union Square Photograph, resulted in ground disturbance at Union Square.

Changes in grading characterized the landscape with fill required and ground shaping to form the curvilinear paths and drives with gently mounded areas adjacent depicted on late 19th century maps. Congress gave land on the National Mall between 9th to 12th Streets to the Smithsonian Institution in 1846. In 1850, landscape designer Andrew Jackson Downing was asked to create a landscape plan for the Smithsonian Grounds and “President’s Park”, the Ellipse and Lafayette Square. Downing’s plan (page 7), dated 1851, was picturesque in design and sidestepped the axial relationship between the Capitol and the Washington Monument. With the construction of the Smithsonian Castle, architect James Renwick, completed in 1855, the Smithsonian area began to take shape as picturesque pleasure grounds. The design was characterized by curved carriage drives and paths, and naturalistic individual and grove tree plantings. Though Congressional funding for implementing the National Mall design decreased after Downing’s tragic death in 1852, the character of that design for the Smithsonian Grounds was partially carried out. The 1857 and 1861 Boschke maps (pages 5 and 7) and the 1879 panoramic rooftop photograph (page 6) depict a naturalistic landscape curvilinear and informal in style, with considerable tree canopy density in place. Downing’s 1851 design became the guide to the style of the landscape developed on adjoining parcels on the National Mall, but did not inform the precise details.

During these years, fill to raise grades and shape features was added to the relatively open, low lying landscape. A range of features were constructed on the new, higher grades to include modest features like fences, and more substantial plantings, drives, walks, buildings, ponds, and railroad tracks. Features like fencing and vegetation would have resulted in a lesser depth of disturbance than larger features. Construction of drives and walks necessitated raising grades to remain solid, plantings were set in fill to provide root zone soils, railroad tracks were laid on an embankment, buildings were placed on fill, all above the soggy ground of the creek and canal landscape. Regardless of scale, these additions each required ground disturbance.

By 1865, the context adjacent to the National Mall and Union Square landscapes also changed. The first phase of construction of the Washington Monument to the west, began July 4, 1848 and was halted in 1854. The Washington Armory, also known as the Columbian Armory, was erected near the intersection of Independence Avenue and 6th Street, southeast of the Smithsonian. The Smithsonian Castle was built between 1847 and 1855, and in 1855 Congress allowed the Alexandria & Washington Railroad to lay tracks along 1st Street crossing Union Square at the eastern edge and terminating to the north at the Baltimore and Ohio depot. That same year, Congress voted to replace the wood and copper Capitol dome with cast iron dome designed by Thomas U. Walter. The new dome was completed in 1866.



1860 PHOTOGRAPH VIEW EAST TO BOTANIC GARDEN

Source: Pre-Civil War Photograph, Sept. 1860. Courtesy Library of Congress.
MMP-LOC-120-Sept-1860



1879 PANORAMIC PHOTOGRAPH FROM SMITHSONIAN

Source: Panoramic View, 1879. Courtesy Library of Congress.
MMP-LOC-USZC4-12138-Pano-View-1879

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