Washington: Symbol and City

The name almost succeeds: District of Columbia. The last word means, Hail Columbia, happy land, the gem of the ocean discovered by the admiral from Genoa, Cristoforo Colombo, the Admiral of the Ocean Seas. But the word district has all the wrong connotations, as in water and sewer district or garment district or district jail; the term is inherently local and provincial, devoid of the dignity accorded to a state. — From Washington Itself, by E.J. Applewhite

In the first lines of his estimable book on Washington, Mr. Applewhite got right to the heart of the paradox that is the nation’s capital. Born of geographical and political compromise, Washington has always had a split personality. It is a place of grand public buildings and elegant neighborhoods, but also a city facing tough social problems and, some would argue, lacking a unique local culture and civic identity. Still, unlike most cities created by similarly artificial means, Washington has largely succeeded in becoming a credible metropolis, and one that increasingly attracts new residents thanks to good-old-fashioned civic amenities and quality of life.

The National Building Museum recently opened Washington: Symbol and City, a long-term exhibition that explores the dual nature of the capital city — a global icon of democracy and political power, but also a place where people go about all kinds of business, sit in cafés, meander through parks, attend school, and engage in routine activities. It is sometimes easy for the tourist, weary from visiting the city’s countless memorials, museums, and other historic sites, to overlook the “real” Washington. And it is just as easy for the busy Washingtonian to take for granted the many remarkable institutions and places of interest that make this a world-class city. This exhibition traces a range of stories that are fascinating for both the local and the visitor, illuminating the sometimes forgotten connections between the heroic and the mundane aspects of the city.

The show takes a particular look at the occasional conflicts that understandably arise from this curious circumstance. Administered directly by the federal government for much of its history, the District of Columbia has at times been a political pawn. Even today, with a locally elected mayor and city council, the District must constantly negotiate a careful path with Congress and numerous federal agencies that retain substantial power over the city’s destiny.

Inspired by Washington: Symbol and City, this issue of Blueprints features several articles that address aspects of Washington’s changing identity, as well as the relationship between federal and local interests. They reveal some of the hidden stories — and largely forgotten histories — that have influenced the character of the city. They also remind us that in Washington, as in politics, things are not always what they seem.

Executive Director
National Building Museum
Social Capital
Washington in the Gilded Age

by Marvin Mueller

W A S H I N G T O N H A S A L O N G S T A N D I N G R E P U T AT I O N AS a quiet, culturally conservative city—a bland stew of bureaucrats with a few charismatic politicians adding hints of flavor. This stereotype is greatly overblown, and becomes less valid with each passing day, as the region’s economy becomes more diverse and the percentage of local workers holding non-government-related jobs grows rapidly. Nonetheless, Washington clearly has more than its share of hyper-achieving former class presidents and valetudinarians who make the city an intellectual powerhouse, but contribute relatively little in the way of the glamour and social intrigue that enliven most of the world’s great urban centers.

This was not always the case. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Washington was one of the primary seats of American high society. For a period of several decades, the nation’s capital was a popular place for wealthy families to “winter,” since that was the season during which Congress was in session, and political leaders provided the core for a vibrant social scene. To make matters more interesting, a huge percentage of the wealthy people who came to Washington during this period were of the self-made variety—rubber barons, tinkerers, inventors, and others who had been born to families of very modest means and made their own fortunes through a combination of luck, pluck, and sometimes gritty work. Such scrappy new millionaires were not eagerly welcomed into the more established social circles of New York, Boston, and Philadelphia, but the equally scrappy politicians who were at the heart of the Washington social circuit were more than happy to overlook a few grains of dirt under the fingernails of the nouveaux riches, and eagerly invited them into the smoke-filled dens of power.

Mark Twain and Charles Dudley Warner ridiculed the vulgarity of the newly minted socialites and the often corrupt politicians of the day in their novel The Gilded Age, published in 1873. Twain and Warner’s title became synonymous with the era that followed, lasting perhaps 30 years, in which spectacular fortunes were made or won, graft was an essential component of the political process, and social credentials were rigorously scrutinized. The novel was largely set in Washington, which the authors considered to be the epicenter of the wretched excess that was the subject of their scorn.

A Capital Transformed

In many ways, it was remarkable that the nation’s capital in the 1870s could have been taken seriously as a social mecca. Just a few years before The Gilded Age was published, Washington was for the most part a rough and sporadically developed town. Some decades earlier, Congress had passed a law called “An Act to Prevent Swine from Going at Large.” This was not a snide reference to politicians or lobbyists but to actual pigs, designating Massachusetts Avenue as the line below which such animals were not allowed to roam. Nonetheless, there are famous photographs dating to the late 19th century that show livestock contentedly munching on the White House lawn. Mid-19th-century Washington was also replete with shanty towns, including an area known as Murder Bay—just blocks from the White House—whose claim to fame is self-evident. Meanwhile, the rest of the city, including most middle- and upper-class precincts, was a scene of dirt roads, scruffily landscaping, and wildly inconsistent public services. And Georgetown, which had been founded 40 years before the District of Columbia was established, was still legally a separate city, with its own mayor and a number of prominent merchants who were highly skeptical of the dubious enterprises undertaken in the upstart town immediately to the east.

But all of that began to change in 1875, when Georgetown was annexed by Washington, and, most importantly, Congress established a new territorial government for the District of Columbia run by commissioners appointed directly by President Ulysses S. Grant. The new government’s most prominent agency was the Board of Public Works, which was dominated by Alexander Shepherd, known universally as “Boss.” Washington’s version of Paris’s Baron Haussmann, Boss Shepherd promptly began a comprehensive, obsessive, and often ruthless campaign to modernize the city’s infrastructure. Roads were paved, 60,000 trees were planted, and a feudal canal was filled in to form Constitution Avenue. The entire face of the city was changed, making it, in Shepherd’s words, “worthy of the nation.” Unfortunately, this Franck renewal came at a high price. Shepherd was deposed when Congress learned how much debt he had incurred, and in 1879, the territorial government was abolished, and any semblance of even limited “home rule” lost for a full century.

In just three years, though, Shepherd had paved the way, literally and
During the Gilded Age, more than 100 mansions were built along Massachusetts Avenue and in the adjacent neighborhoods of Dupont Circle and Kalorama. “Mass Ave” became one of the country’s great boulevards, lined with dozens of urban palaces that were bastions of a fabulous and often excessive social life. The building that is now the Indonesian Embassy, for instance, was built in 1902 for the almost inconceivable sum of $43 million plus a percentage of future profits. Now among the country’s richest men, he brought his family to Washington for the sole purpose of entering society. Quickly realizing that a grand house was one of the most useful instruments for social climbing, he commissioned a neo-Baroque mansion and shamelessly declared the source of his wealth by embedding a chunk of gold right in the porch. The house quickly became associated with a rampant social scene—the New York Times reported that just 345 guests at one of Walsh’s New Year’s parties consumed “388 fifths of scotch, 480 quarts of champagne, 40 gallons of beer, 35 bottles of miscellaneous liquors, and 48 quarts of cocktails.” Walsh bequeathed the house to his daughter, Evelyn, who married Edward McLean, of the family that owned the Washington Post. According to James Goode’s book, Capital Loaves, Evelyn and Edward “managed to dissipate almost all of the vast McLean and Walsh fortunes, amounting to $60 million.” A sizable portion of that fortune was “dissipated” on the Hope Diamond, the allegedly accursed jewel that superstitious types blame for numerous tragedies that later befell the McLeans, including Edward’s implication in the Teapot Dome scandal.

Just down the street lived Richard and Mary Scott Townsend, heirs to the Scott fortunes who became famous in 1907 when Charles Lindbergh appeared there with President Calvin Coolidge to wave to cheering throngs below. Photographs of Lindbergh, who had just returned from his heroic flight across the Atlantic, and the president, who was living at the Patterson House while the White House was under renovation, appeared in newspapers all over the country, and the balcony on which they stood became a symbol of Washington glamour. This particular house managed to remain a lively place for much longer than many of the other mansions of the era, thanks to a new generation in the form of Cissy Patterson, Robert’s ambitious, smart, but scandal-prone daughter. Cissy worked her way up through the family business, and eventually, she bought and combined two local newspapers to form the Washington Times-Herald, becoming one of the world’s first female publishers. The newspaper quickly assumed a decidedly yellow cast—Cissy used it as a vehicle for demonizing figuratively, for Washington to become what one might call a national-class city, if not a world-class one. This was enough to attract the attention of the newly rich tycoons whom Twain lambasted in his book. They came to Washington in scores, changing forever the character of the modest little capital and, by extension, the nature of national politics.

An Architectural Legacy

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President Franklin D. Roosevelt, whom she blamed for “smashing” her reporters for govern-ment assignments during the New Deal and World War II.

Another remarkable building of the period is 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, now the headquarters of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Incredibly, it was built as a rental apartment building with just six apartments, ranging in size up to 11,000 square feet. Commissioned by Stanley McCormick, heir to the McCormick reaper fortune, the structure was designed by Jules Henri de Sibour, a descendant of French royalty and the darling of many Washington architectural patrons of the day. The building’s most famous tenant was Andrew Mellon, who occupied the top floor while serving as secretary of the Treasury. At one point, the apartment below Mellon’s was vacant, and the audacious international art dealer Lord Duveen quickly rented it for the sole purpose of selling a cache of very expensive paintings to Mellon. Duveen brought in an astonish-ing array of art, dropped off the key with Mellon, and left. At some point, the apartment to Mellon. Duveen brought in an astonish-ing array of art, dropped off the key with Mellon, and left. At some point, the apartment

Citizen officials and foreign missions. She then proceeded to market the houses to bring in “the right kind of people,” ultimately attracting Cabinet officials and foreign missions. She also sold to the government the land that became Meridian Hill Park, forming the centerpieces of the enclaves she created from scratch. Soon began a campaign to have Cabinet officials and foreign missions. She then proceeded to market the houses to bring in “the right kind of people,” ultimately attracting Cabinet officials and foreign missions. She also sold to the government the land that became Meridian Hill Park, forming the centerpieces of the enclaves she created from scratch. Soon began a campaign to have

room carpet always sported fresh

school, I dated a girl whose living room carpet always sported fresh vacuum tracks—the mother, obsessed with neatness and order, could have created the fairway-like Washington skyline.

On some days, I would find this oppressive and long for a craggly, messy skyline, spiked with water towers and radio antennae—abrasive, earning skycrap-pers their name. The uniformity reminded me all too strongly of the suburb that I moved to the city to escape. No “downtown apartments in the sky.” No planetary, stratospher-ic penthouse to strive for.

The rooftop of the Cairo, however, is a point of surveillance that one wouldn’t find in any other city without the benefit of an astronomically expensive apartment or the hassles of a tourist conga-line to the top of a high-elevation landmark. In that way, D.C.’s skyline belongs to everyone, or at least anyone who can slip past the guard. Just smile and wave and act like you live there. The trip to the top comes highly recommended.

Will Doig is a writer currently living in New York.
Imposing Place

The Federal Hand on the D.C. Landscape

Daniel Emberley is president of Emberley Streamlined Office Systems. He has been writing about Washington architecture and neighborhoods for over a decade. In this article, he examines the impact of the federal role in shaping the city. While recognizing that governmental initiatives largely made Washington the grand and beautiful place that it is, he illuminates the often overlooked and unintended consequences of federal planning and development on the local community.

by Daniel Emberley

The Federal Government Created Washington, and is responsible for much that is good in our city. Sometimes, however, its actions have been at odds with the development of a strong local community. As the national government has grown, the amount of land it needs has increased, and the type of use it needs often conflicts with local interests and routine civic uses. This has caused heightened conflict in the last decade, especially as new security concerns have challenged long-standing attitudes toward public space. This article explores some of the key conflicts between federal and local interests in land use over time.

Urban Surgery Through Planning

During Washington’s first century, there were relatively few discrepancies between federal and local needs. This is largely because there was more land available than people or uses to fill it. A significant divergence of federal and local concerns, however, emerged toward the end of the 19th century. One example was the creation of Rock Creek Park in 1890, which entailed the appropriation of significant tracts of privately owned land, and led to the condenmation of a number of flour and manufacturing mills along the creek. Many residents resented what they considered a land grab, but the entire region has long enjoyed the vast park set aside by governmental fiat.

The 1902 McMillan Plan was the first major encroachment of federal power on the city that had grown up around it. The disruption of the naturally-evolved city by the federal entity was partially inspired by Baron Haussmann’s recreation of Second Empire Paris. One of the most successful implementations of the City Beautiful movement, the McMillan Plan guided federal impositions on the city plan in a variety of venues. There were no locally elected officials at the time, so implementation was not hindered by local needs.

The re-creation of the National Mall, starting about 1883, forced removal of private railroad stations and rights-of-way, private businesses, and several blocks of housing. The Mall’s green fields replaced what had become an industrial area in the center of the city, complete with a sewage-clogged canal tracing the path of Constitution Avenue. The train stations and businesses had been used by residents every day. The park that replaced them is an impressive and valuable assembly space, but used only occasionally by most locals — it is primarily for a national audience. What was becoming a core piece of a commercial downtown was instead removed from local use; for many Washingtonians, these acres of the urban core are a rarely visited Smithsonian/memorial theme park.

The train stations were replaced in 1905 by Union Station and the new Post Office (now the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Smithsonian’s Postal Museum). These buildings replaced part of the predominantly Irish Swampoodle neighborhood. The residents had been poor workers in the construction trades, the same people who were building the new federal city. Leveling of anthracite tenement homes in favor of Daniel Burnham’s imperial Union Station reflected the federal government’s unquestioned ability to control where Washingtonians were able to live, and how land was to be used downtown.

Center Market, built to designs by Adolph Cluss in 1873 at the intersection of 7th Street, NW and the old canal, was the residential city’s retail center. In its woot, blocks of boarding houses, office buildings, and homes had grown into the “Hooker’s Division” red light district, named after the Civil War general whose troops were quartered there. In an 1898 urban renewal effort, the government replaced a substantial portion of the area with the Old Post Office. Washingtonians were able to live, and how land was to be used downtown.

FEATURE
IMPOSING PLACE: THE FEDERAL HAND ON THE D.C. LANDSCAPE

Not all Federal encroachment occurred according to plan. The needs of the legislative and executive branches of government incrementally ate away at the historic neighborhoods that grew up around them. This happened with enough time between construction projects to make the cumulative effect difficult to discern.

L’Enfant planned for the Capitol to occupy a very large tract, capable of handling many expansions without impinging on the city. Indeed, the Capitol was expanded almost continuously in its first century. After 1900, however, Congress began to build satellite office buildings adjacent to but outside the Capitol grounds. This preserved the remaining landscape and prospects of the Capitol, but destroyed wide swaths of the residential parts of Capitol Hill.

The Cannon House Office Building and Russell Senate Office Building were designed as a pair in 1905. Longworth was added to the south—House—side in 1924–25, and Rayburn in 1925–26. The Senate added Dirksen in 1947–52 and Hart in 1973–82. The Library of Congress expanded into the Adams Building in 1935, and Madison in 1938. Each building fills its block in a monumental fashion that impresses the pedestrian for “pavilions in a park”—office buildings sited in a large park—an Executive Mansion in a neighborhood that had filled with other mansions by 1890. During that

Gradual Impositions

period, the executive branch expanded within L’Enfant’s “President’s Park,” into the Treasury and Old Executive Office Buildings. Still, neighbors “dropped cards” for the First Lady, and felt at home visiting the White House. The executive mansion was fenced off in 1920, but the gates were usually open, and the space continued to serve the neighborhood.

As a logical northern extension of office space for the president, the area around Lafayette Square was especially vulnerable to ambitious federal plans. In 1917, Cass Gilbert succeeded in proposing buildings requiring the demolition of the residential blocks on which the War Department and the U.S. Court of Claims, the Treasury and Old Executive Office Buildings, WWI “temporary” offices, on the Mall south of Constitution Avenue, July 1938

Planning for the automobile disastrously followed the “big plan” model outlined above. The C&O Canal, under National Park Service control since 1938, was nearly turned into an L Street Expressway. Instead, the Whitehurst Freeway filled that role, reducing Georgetown’s 8th Street waterfront to marginal uses for decades. Replacement of the integrated, close-knit Southwest neighborhood in the 1960s by L’Enfant Plaza and urban renewal was

The Auto, Urban Renewal, Security, and Home Rule

Gradually, office buildings were turned into office buildings lobbies and decor for massive brick structures that fill their blocks. The result pushed the White House’s “turf” north of Lafayette Square to H Street. Recent efforts to secure the White House have closed Pennsylvania Avenue to vehicular traffic (though it recently reopened to pedestrians), and surrounded Lafayette Park with Jersey barriers. It is unlikely these blocks will be knitted back into the city fabric in the near future.

right / Main Navy and Munitions

IMPOSING PLACE: THE FEDERAL HAND ON THE D.C. LANDSCAPE

above / Schott’s Court with Senate office building in background

September 1941. Photograph by Marion Post Wolcott, Farm Security Administration. Courtesy Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division.
 paired with the desire to run Interstate 95 through the city. The spaghetti-bowl of Interstate 66 removed blocks of the Foggy Bottom neighborhood, leaving the Watergate (1966-69), Kennedy Center (1970), and Saudi Embassy as auto-accessed islands that do not welcome pedestrians.

The Pennsylvania Avenue Development Commission (PADC) discussed by Jay Brodie in this issue, had a “big plan” for the avenue, but implemented it incrementally. The successes of that venture are due in part to PADC’s willingness to learn as it went forward, changing focus from fortress-like early efforts to the resident-inclusive plaza of Market Square. The Pennsylvania Avenue, “America’s Main Street.” As the president rides (and/or walks) among the crowd, he will see residents of the vibrant Penn Quarter neighborhood, office workers (both public and private), restaurants doing booming Inaugural Day business, attractive parks and plazas — all the attributes of a successful revitalization effort of several decades’ duration. And that effort, involving many partners, was led by a unique independent corporation of the federal government: the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation (PADC).

At Pennsylvania Avenue and 8th Street, in front of the National Archives building, engraved in stone, is the memorable phrase “The Past is Prologue.” So in understanding the work and legacy of PADC, we should recall its beginnings. They were neither short nor easy. Substantial funding from Congress took several more years. Optimism about the future of the avenue were hard to find, in Congress or anywhere else; skepticism that much could be achieved was pervasive, given that the area to the north of Pennsylvania Avenue was a mix of shabby office buildings, and plazas — all the attributes of a successful revitalization effort of several decades’ duration.

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The area from that period is virtually unrecognizable today, with new and renovated office buildings of generally high-quality design, handsome and well-used public spaces, a variety of restaurants and cafes, diverse residential buildings, and a thriving Willard Hotel complex. And this 20-block, hundred-plus-acre area of key public and private improvements has been a catalyst for nearby projects such as the MCI Center and other developments along Pennsylvania Avenue. The right plan, combining vision with practicality.

There was, as might be expected, more than one plan. The plan of the 1960s was bold, but destructive—clearing the Willard and adjacent blocks for a National Square of key audacious scale but doubtful uses and proposing new buildings the size of the FBI Headquarters. Fortunately, it could not be afforded. Then, over time, a different kind of plan evolved by 1979, focused on a mix of office, hotel, retail, and residential uses, with significantly more historic preservation, a variety of public spaces, still grand enough in vision to capture the imagination, but achievable in affordable increments, and consistent in urban design principles, but flexible in details.

The right combination of focused responsibility and authority. The Congressional legislation gave PADC the power to plan and guide redevelopment—to assemble sites using eminent domain if necessary, to borrow from the U.S. Treasury for that land acquisition, to apply for annual federal appropriations, to sell and lease real estate, and to require its design approval of all new development and rehabilitation.

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The right strategy to implement the plan. An understandable and visible strategy of implementation was created, starting with key improvements to the public environment, both as an end in themselves and to set the stage for seeking commitments of private investment. At the same time, PADC pursued major projects of actual and symbolic importance, moving them to the riskier residential- and art-related developments. National Place, with the flagship J.W. Marriott Hotel, shops, and office space, which was physically tied to the renovated National Press Club Building, was an important early effort, culminating in 1984. But no one project represented the rebirth of the western end of Pennsylvania Avenue more than the completion of The Willard Hotel, office building, and retail complex. The buildings were in decay, the hotel closed for over a decade, by 1978, when PADC acquired it and the adjacent property for about $10 million. A development team was selected through a nationally-advertised design/developer competition, but the project they envisioned could not be financed. The team added The Care Company of Washington as the general partner and the mix of uses was modified to include a 199-room hotel, 240,000 square feet of office space, 24,000 square feet of retail, and underground parking for 281 cars. The site of about 60,000 square feet and the structure of the old hotel was leased by PADC to the developer for $800,000 per year. PADC received part of the gross income and the net rental income. With the assistance of PADC, the developer obtained an Investment Tax Credit of about $4 million for the historic preservation work, allowing enhancements particularly to the lobby and “Peacock Alley.” Seen still as a risky project, the difficult-to-finance complex opened in 1986. Both the developer and PADC assumed that the office space revenue would carry the hotel through several expected slow years, in fact, both the hotel and the office building, from the opening, exceeded economic expectations.

The public improvements to the streetcape, tied closely to the private projects, were vital. Seven hundred willow oak trees lined the avenue, accompanied by uniquely-designed tree grates. Seven parks and plazas were refurbished or created. Freedom Plaza was to be the site of many events; it became the “front yard” of National Place; the green oasis of Pershing Park performed the same function for the Willard; the Navy Memorial is framed and integrated with Market Square’s 200 housing units, 350,000 square feet of office, and 100,000 square feet of retail.

Market Square, The Lansburgh (350 units), and Pennsylvania Plaza (50 units) became the keystone housing developments of Pennsylvania Quarter, each made possible through the utilization of PADC site-assembly powers. The Lansburgh also became the home of the Shakespeare Theatre, a major and lively anchor for 7th Street.

The right governance and leadership. PADC had a board and staff that could engage in public/private partnerships, with a deal-making, risk-taking mentality that included public sharing of net profits, using each public dollar to leverage greater amounts of private funds. Individuals on both the board and staff created credibility and private-sector confidence in PADC’s processes and bipartisan political support. Insistence on the highest quality of design, construction, and maintenance; a program of inclusiveness through affirmative action; and programming of cultural and art events in public spaces were all critical.

Year round, thousands of people were drawn to the parks and plazas to enjoy an array of festivals, cultural performances, and athletic events sponsored by PADC in collaboration with private businesses, District and federal agencies, foreign embassies, and arts organizations. There were standing board committees on design,
PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE: REFLECTIONS OF URBAN REVITALIZATION AND THE PADC

IN MEMORIAM

J. Irwin Miller

In 1991, the American Institute of Architects surveyed its members, asking them, among other things, to name the greatest cities in the United States for architectural quality. The top five answers were predictable, including Chicago, New York, and Washington. The sixth highest vote-getter, however, might come as a surprise to those not in the know—it was Columbus, Indiana, with a population of just 39,000.

Many people deserve credit for that remarkable ranking, but it is above all the legacy of J. Irwin Miller—business leader, arts patron, civil rights advocate, and recipient of the National Building Museum’s very first Honor Award (in 1986)—who died last August at the age of 95. Once praised by Martin Luther King, Jr. as “the most socially responsible businessman in the country,” Mr. Miller, through the Cummins Engine Foundation, established a program whereby the organization would pay the architects’ fees for public buildings in the community. Over the course of several decades, this initiative led directly to the construction of schools, firehouses, and numerous other prominent buildings designed by many of the most famous architects in the world. Architects who under other circumstances might never have cast their gaze beyond major metropolises actively vied for commissions in Columbus. The result is an extraordinary collection of modern architecture—a living encyclopedia of late 20th-century design in the heart of small-town America.

The National Building Museum was fortunate that Mr. Miller remained interested in our activities throughout his later years, and has further benefited from another of his legacies—his son, Will, currently serves on the Museum’s Board of Trustees as a vice chair. The senior Mr. Miller lived a long and productive life, and future generations from Columbus and around the world shall treasure the fruits of his visionary patronage of architecture.

In Memoriam

J. Irwin Miller

culture/arts, and affirmative action, reflecting the importance of these issues.

Even with all these positive elements, the area’s revitalization was neither simple nor quick. Such major projects are marathons, not sprints—or in the words of our great friend and supporter, the late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, such projects “are not for the short-winded.”

Would the avenue area, without PADC, have been improved over time by private developers alone? Perhaps. But only to much lesser results—lacking overall design guidelines, without the land-assemblage powers that made a Willard, a Market Square, and a Lansburgh possible, with little or no housing component, with few if any high-quality public spaces, and with less historic preservation.

We see today the manifestation in the heart of the nation’s capital, through public/private partnerships, of a truly American place. This is, consciously, different from the admired examples of the past such as Peter the Great’s St. Petersburg, or Baron Haussmann’s Paris, with their comprehensive unity and control. We tend to resist that much control and value greater diversity. So PADC sought an American balance between these values, allowing a mixture of the old (an Evening Star building, a Fireman’s Insurance Company building) and the new, within an urban design framework of attractive public spaces, height and setback regulations, and build-to-street-line standards.

The Pennsylvania Avenue area, like the great American political experiment in government, is not complete. Indeed, it may never be finished. Future generations will leave their own imprint.

Some buildings will change, others may be replaced entirely. But the core elements embedded in the revitalized area that we now see will stand the test of time, shaping a unique environment worthy of the events of American history and the infinite potential of our great nation. »
New Trustees

ROBERT H. BRAUNOHLER is regional vice president of Louis Dreyfus Property Group in Washington, DC. He previously held executive positions with JBG Development Services and The JBG Companies. Mr. Braunohler earned his undergraduate degree in engineering from Delft in the Netherlands, and has an MBA from Harvard University.

GREG BROOKS is a managing partner at The JBG Companies, a real estate and investment firm where he has been since 1997. He has held leadership positions in the Washington Land Institute District Council, the Economic Club of Washington, the Federal City Council, and the Mayor’s Commission on Downtown Washington. He received his undergraduate degree from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania and his law degree from the University of Texas.

Robert H. Braunohler

Deborah Berke

MUSEUM NEWS

The National Building Museum announces a new program for recognizing corporations and associations that provide substantial, unrestricted support to the Museum each year. The first two participants in the “Industry Partners” program are the Urban Land Institute and Lafarge North America. Industry Partners enjoy specific benefits based on the level of their support. For more information, contact Stan Watters at 202.371.4469 or swatters@nbm.org.

Lafarge North America is the largest diversified supplier of construction materials such as cement products, ready-mixed concrete, asphalt, aggregate, and paving in the United States and Canada. Its materials are used to make homes, high-rise apartments, retail stores, offices, schools, hospitals, banks, museums, highways, bridges, dams and reservoirs, as well as sports stadiums, amusement parks and swimming pools. Headquartered outside Washington, DC, in Herndon, VA, Lafarge North America employs more than 15,000 people in nearly 1,000 business locations. Lafarge North America’s three main operating divisions are construction materials, cement products, and gypsum.

Industry Partners

The Urban Land Institute (www.uli.org) is a nonprofit education and research institute supported by its members. Its mission is to provide responsible leadership in the use of land in order to enhance the total environment. Each year, the Institute honors an extraordinary community builder through the Urban Land Institute J.C. Nichols Prize for Visionaries in Urban Development. Established in 1996, the Institute has nearly 25,000 members in 90 countries representing all aspects of land use and development disciplines.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Members receive reduced admission to education programs, subscriptions to ULI and the Calendar of Events, invitations to exhibitions openings, and discounts on Museum Shop purchases. For more information about benefits, as well as corporate membership opportunities, please call 202.371.4466, ext. 3500.

Yes, I want to become a member of the National Building Museum! Please begin my membership at the following level:

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Thank You!

$75,000 and above


U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

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American Company

Canadian Friends of the National Building Museum

$25,000 to $49,999

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Canadian Friends of the National Building Museum

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Eugene A. Latief

Wells Fargo & Company

Will Miller and Lynne Maguire

The Stanley Kettelson and Mavis Families

The Old House Ventures, Inc.

UltiTap Urban Institute

$20,000 to $24,000

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The Beach Street Foundation

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The Stanley Kettelson and Mavis Families

The Old House Ventures, Inc.

UltiTap Urban Institute

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American Society of Landscape Architects

Architecture Organizations

Bentley Systems, Incorporated

$1,000 to $2,499

American Planning Association

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American Planning Association

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Bentley Systems, Incorporated

SUPPORT

Send an email to raymond@nbm.org

The National Building Museum is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization supported by its members. Contributions are deductible to the fullest extent allowable under the law. To obtain a copy of the organization’s most recent audited financial statement, please call 202.272.2448 ext. 3500.
Happy Silver Anniversary to Us!

Someday, Jack Nicholson kept smiling strangely and saying "Here's Johnny," and then the Empire struck back, and I heard about it all on that brand new television network called "CNN." They also mentioned something about the birth of a great new institution—the National Building Museum, which was apparently just established by an act of Congress. A new museum dedicated to the building arts and sciences? I was so excited, I turned off Magnum P.I. and rushed to sign up as a charter member.

Well, that was 1980, and now, a quarter-century later, the Museum is about to make 2005 a year-long celebration of its 25th anniversary! You, our members, will be invited to participate in various ways throughout the year. To begin, put on your thinking cap (or other creative headgear) and answer a few questions that may help to inform some of our programs and events:

1. List 5 cultural trends of the past 25 years that you think were especially noteworthy or will have long-lasting implications.

2. List the 5 most influential people in design and construction over the past 25 years.

3. List your 5 favorite works of architecture or design from the past 25 years.

4. What new developments, ideas, or innovations in design and construction would you expect or hope to see in the next 25 years?

5. Tell us about an especially memorable moment for you at the National Building Museum—this might be an event, an educational program, an epiphany at an exhibition, or even meeting an intriguing stranger in the Great Hall (but spare us any steamy details).

E-mail your responses to any or all of these questions to nbmnews@nbm.org, or mail them to:

Blueprints 25th Anniversary Survey
National Building Museum, 401 F Street NW, Washington, DC 20001

The first 10 responses will receive a special gift from the National Building Museum. Thanks for your input!