

John Marshall Park

John Marshall Park, designed by Carol R. Johnson & Associates, Inc. of Cambridge, MA, with ALPHATEC, p.c. of Washington, DC as engineering consultants, is located between Pennsylvania Avenue and C Street beside the U.S. Courthouse and the proposed Canadian Chancery site. The Park was constructed by the Fort Myer Construction Corporation of Washington, DC.

The design concept of the park utilizes a twelve foot grade change between C Street and Pennsylvania Avenue to create three distinct areas: a lower bosque, an upper bosque, and a garden room in the center. The upper and lower bosques are paved plazas, with the center portion kept open to maintain the important L'Enfant vista to the Old City Hall. The sides of the lower and upper plazas are heavily planted with Littleleaf Lindens, forming tree-rooms. Granite paving, seating and English Ivy under the trees contribute to the character of these areas. The dense shade beneath the Lindens will provide comfortable seating areas in summer and will be a counterpoint to the open expanses of the Avenue and its sidewalk.

In the upper bosque, the benches and tables are arranged around two small fountains with sculptural features commemorating the early city spring which was located at the northern end of the park and from which in 1808 water for public use was first piped through the streets of Washington. The sculptures by David Phillips of Somerville, MA, are bronze lily pads complete with frogs, turtles, fish and dragon flies.

The garden room in the center is set apart from the bosques by its grass terraces for seating and the richness of its planting. Ramps on either side give easy access to C Street, and the Courthouse, the future Canadian Chancery and the garden room itself. The design features of the garden room include a large grass lawn, grass sitting steps and chess boards, two life-sized bronze sculptures of chess players, informal plantings and informal bench seating. The chess players are by sculptor Lloyd Lillie of Newton, MA. The planting is done in layers to provide an overstory of major trees, an understory of minor flowering trees and shrubs, and a ground level layer of perennials and groundcovers. The goal has been to provide continuous interest with flowering occurring not just in the spring, but throughout the spring, summer and fall. Fall color, fruiting and winter character have also been considered. A majority of the shrub planting is evergreen or broadleaf evergreen to maintain the form of the garden in winter.

The space will also provide insights into the life of John Marshall through inscriptions in the granite walls. Additionally, a replica of the sundial found at his Richmond, VA home has been placed in the garden room.