

MODERN POLITICAL SPACE

CONSUMPTION AND AUTHENTICITY IN THE EVOLUTION OF NATIONAL SPACE, WASHINGTON, DC

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This paper explores the idea of a national political space, and investigates the philosophical issues associated with the primary symbolic space of the United States, the Mall in Washington, DC. Washington is unique among American cities in having a significant void at the understood locus point of the city. The Mall is both a symbolic and literal space that is defined by a complex overlay of abstract systems. As such the Mall reflects the condition of modernity that is defined by Max Weber as a "differentiation of the spheres"¹ and "is chiefly characterized by the proliferation of 'independent logics' in the value-spheres of science/technology, morality/law, and art."²

Jurgen Habermas has expanded upon this definition of modernity, and uses the analogy of the "lifeworld" as a way of understanding the complexity of the modern condition. Habermas views the city as a lifeworld and as "imbedded in abstract systems that as such (can) no

longer be represented aesthetically in concretely existing form."³ As architects, we may prefer to understand the Mall aesthetically as a figure-ground relationship of solids and voids and as an exquisite rendition of French Baroque planning principles. The Mall can be understood as an architectural space. However the Mall has independent meanings as a political space, an art space, a historical space, and as a recreational urban park, among others. The life-worlds of the Mall have gradations of existence from permanent manifestation in the built environment to the ephemeral manifestation of the temporal human event. Shades of gray exist between the fundamentally political and the politically neutral, and between the public man and the private man. In order to understand the Mall as a modern political space, one must also consider public space, design, symbolism, and authenticity.

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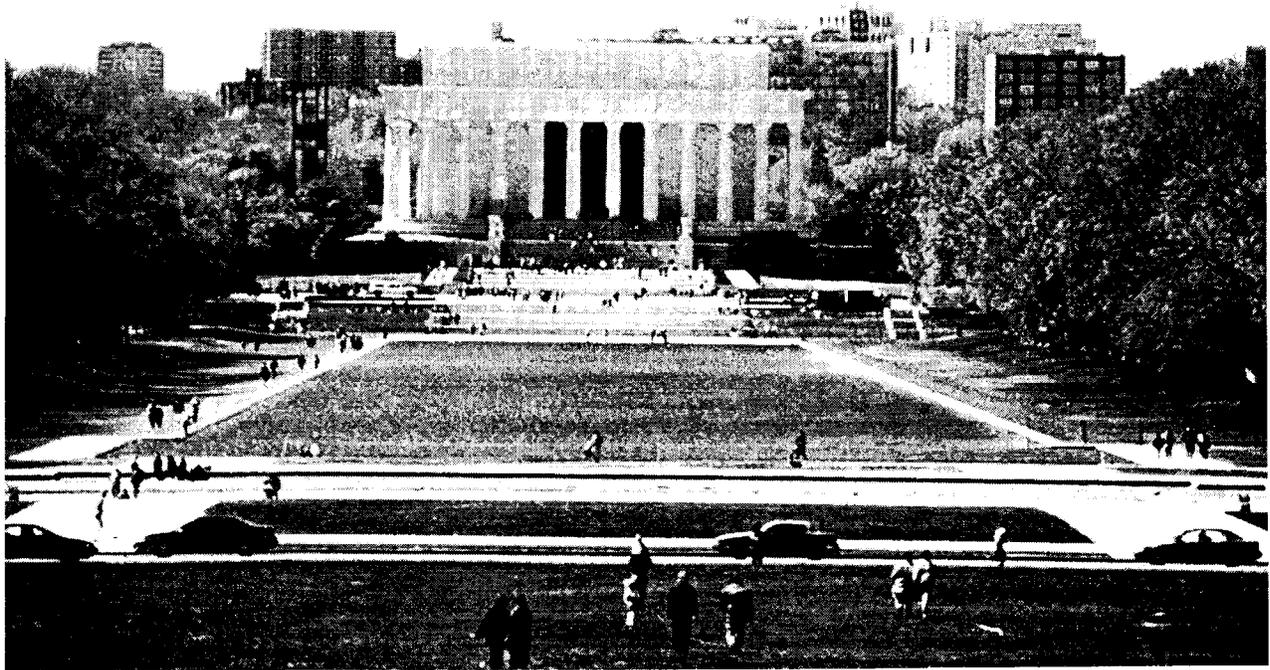


Fig. 1. View West from Washington Monument Grounds.

Public Space

This leads to the question, "What is public space?" Public space is impersonal space. Public space is where we participate as strangers. "The public geography of a city is civility institutionalized."⁴ Another quality is its diversity of purpose. Public space is "the overlay of function in a single territory, which creates complexities of experience on that turf."⁵ The Mall is clearly a public space, where we meet as civil strangers and share a complexity of experience.

Richard Sennett has written evocatively of the decline of public space. In *The Fall of Public Man*, he chronicles the abandonment of the "theatrum mundi" concept of the 18th century city as the cultivation of the individual personality and the growth of intimacy began to dominate modern society.⁶ Consequently we have seen a proliferation of dead public spaces and a decline of imagination as a social phenomenon.⁷

History

The history of the Mall has a certain complexity, which I will summarize. In 1791, Pierre Charles L'Enfant was appointed by George Washington as the planner of the federal district. Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson and three commissioners were appointed to oversee the design and construction of all public buildings. L'Enfant prepared a map that captured his iconographic vision for the new city. The plan was a unique mix of French baroque planning principles and the qualities of the English Picturesque movement. L'Enfant's design reflected his sensitivity to the topography of the site, and his ambition to symbolically represent a plurality of meanings. A linear axis was established with the placement of the Capitol building on the prominence of Jenkins Hill, and a broad open mall extending to the west, open to the Potomac River and the implicit presence of the youthful

nation beyond. Along the mall was a distribution of buildings that were probably intended as embassies, French hotel-style residences for government officials and the wealthy, luxurious shops, a fountain, possibly a theater or museum.⁸ A canal was shown along the northern edge of the mall which crossed to the south side in front of the Capitol to connect to the Anacostia River and to serve the interior of the city.

Diagonal avenues created a hierarchy of order throughout the city plan. The names of the avenues were those of the colonies. The names made symbolic references to the geographic location of each colony and its role in the history of the nation. The balance of power between the executive and legislative branches of government was personified in the linking placement of Pennsylvania Avenue. While it is commonly thought that Versailles was the source of L'Enfant's inspiration, L'Enfant would have also been familiar with Jules Hardouin-Mansart's design at Marly and the city plan of Paris.

L'Enfant planned for allegorical statuary to further his iconographic agenda. L'Enfant's interest in symbols is illustrated in his architectural projects for New York and Philadelphia.⁹ Allegorical statues of the Delaware and Hudson Rivers were to be placed at the head of the Mall. L'Enfant called for a statue of "Liberty Hailing Nature Out of Its Slumber" which expresses his interest in the Picturesque.

Historical evidence supports Thomas Jefferson's interest in the picturesque aspects of the design, and substantiates his own involvement in planning the design.¹⁰ Both Jefferson and L'Enfant were taken with the pastoral nature of the site and the country. In fact, "it is the fusion of the formal and the picturesque elements that gives the L'Enfant plan its unique character."¹¹ L'Enfant fell out with the commissioners and resigned on March 2, 1792.



Fig. 2. View East from the Lincoln Memorial.

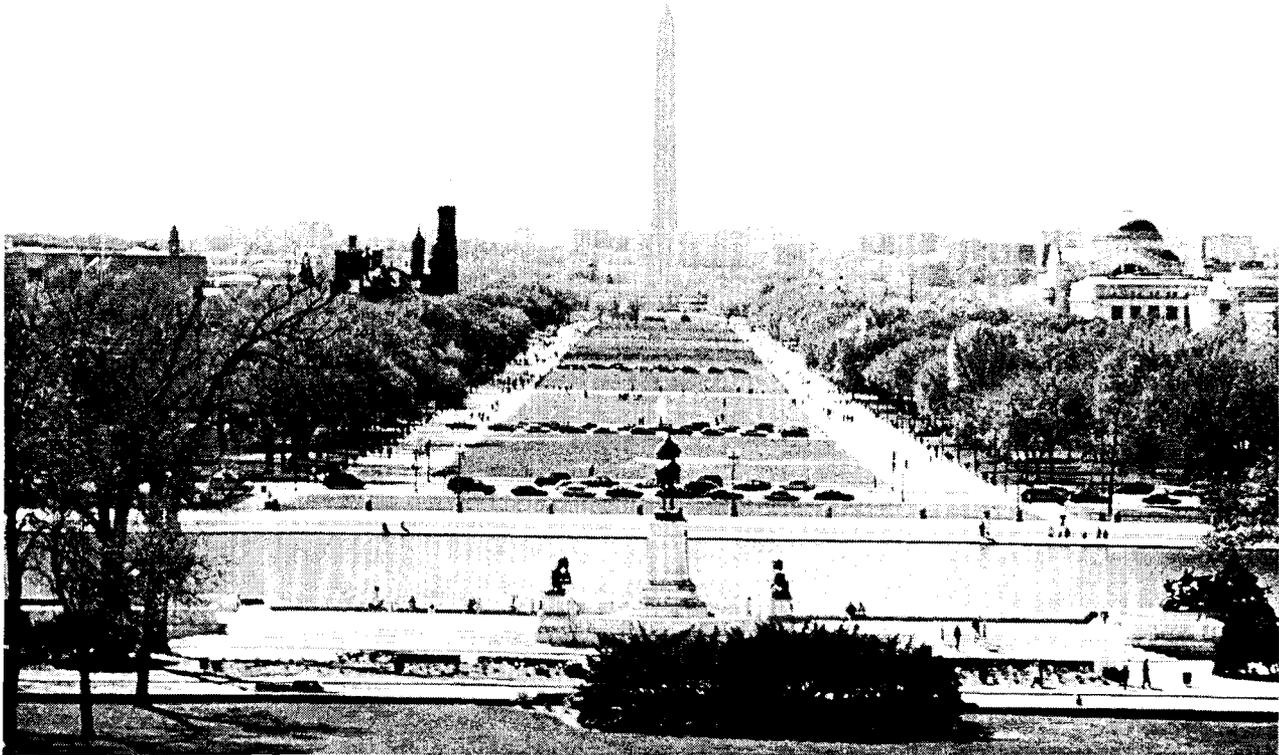


Fig. 3. View West from the U.S. Capitol.

Many changes were both envisioned and made to the Mall in the 19th century. Benjamin Henry Latrobe, Robert Mills, James Renwick, Jr., Andrew Jackson Downing, and others, all contributed to the shaping of the Mall. In 1874 Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. was asked to prepare a design for the Capitol grounds. Significant structures of the era were the Smithsonian Institution (1846-1851), the Washington National Monument (1845-1854), and completion of the Capitol (1793-1865).

Function

L'Enfant's original vision for the utility of the Mall was as "a place of general resort" and for "all such sort of places as may be attractive to the learned and afford diversion to the idle."¹² In the 19th century, a variety of functional uses were projected, although not all were realized. Included were a national university, botanical gardens and greenhouses, the canal, a railroad station, and an Army Medical Museum and Library. Even a "fifty foot tall stump of a giant sequoia from General Grant National Park in California that functioned as a tree house from which to view the Mall" was on the Mall.¹³

Senate Park Commission Plan

By the end of the 19th century, the Mall had become a fragmented agglomeration of activities, structures and gardens under the fractured jurisdiction of separate Senate committees. The tidal flats to the west of the Washington Monument had been filled by the Army Corps of Engineers between 1882-1900.

In 1901, Senator James McMillan sponsored legislation to undertake a redesign of the Mall. Daniel Burnham,

Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and Charles McKim were appointed as a planning commission, and "Charles Moore served as full-time secretary and administrative assistant for the project."¹⁴ The purpose of the Commission was supported by the American Institute of Architects with the leadership of Glenn Brown, secretary of the American Institute of Architects.

The Commission produced a plan that is most commonly referred to as the McMillan Plan. The main feature of this plan was a broad, open greenway that signified a return to L'Enfant's axial planning. An elaborate plaza and garden plan with biaxial symmetry was to be at the base of the Washington Monument. The Monument had been constructed in an asymmetrical location, off both the major axis, and the minor axis generated by White House and its grounds. The McMillan Plan effectively accommodated these off-sets.

The plan called for a major memorial to Abraham Lincoln, sited to terminate the axial vista. The Commission members had traveled Europe, visiting Paris, "Versailles, Fontainebleau, Hampton Court, (where) examples of the use of a long stretch of water, tree-lined, furnished ideas for the basin ..." And also "Vaux le Vicomte, Compiègne, Schoenbrunn, Hatfield House... gave inspiration for the treatment of the mall."¹⁵

The placement of the Lincoln Memorial closed L'Enfant's vista, his vision that "would be the meeting of the city and the river, and that would join the force of the region, the Potomac River, thus placing it in common with other great cities, such as Venice, Florence, and Saint Petersburg."¹⁶

"The thinking of the designers of the present century



Fig. 4. The U.S. Capitol.

was not in harmony with a concept of such breadth. In 1902 the members of the McMillan Commission desired a contained, self-completing, and comfortably inward-looking idea, rather than a dynamic interrelationship with the region.¹⁷ The Lincoln Memorial (1912-1922), designed by Henry Bacon, was delayed by the obstruction of the powerful Representative from Illinois, Joseph Cannon, but not for reasons related to L'Enfant's vision.¹⁸ The Jefferson Memorial as conceived by John Russel Pope was constructed between 1939 and 1943.

Design Analysis

The Mall is a spatial precinct. The Mall has recognizable wholeness and separation within its greater urban context.

The fundamental order of the Mall is the visual and spatial axis that originates with the Capitol building, with its great dome, height and dominance on Jenkins Hill. The axis extends through the Mall to be received and terminated by the Lincoln Memorial. This axis exemplifies "the idea of architectural design ... as (the) articulation of experience along an axis of movement through space,"¹⁹ with historical roots in the Renaissance understanding of perspectival space. However, because of both distance and terrain, the bodily experience of the Mall typically is through a sequence of domains controlled by the dominant visual axis. Four or five separate spatial domains are experienced by users.

The openness of the lawn is a defining common element of these domains. The central space of the Mall

is a grass lawn, a "tapis vert," a greensward.²⁰ It embodies L'Enfant's original concept of the "paie-d'oie," flanked by allees of trees.²¹ East of the Washington Monument, the spatial boundaries to the north and south are supported by monumental architecture ranked beyond the allees. To the west of the Washington Monument the tapis vert is replaced by the Reflecting Pool. Here the north and south spatial boundaries are defined more softly with gardens layered behind the allees of trees.

The central focal point is the Washington National Monument. The Smithsonian is also a visual focus because of its location forward of the architectural edge of the Mall and its picturesque profile.

The scale of the Mall is monumental. The Mall is simply large. The length is more than two miles, and the present day width of the lawn is about 300 feet. But the impression of monumentality is derived from our understanding of its as an entity, from our perception of individual elements as always being part of the greater whole. The monumental scale is equally conveyed by the architectural language of the major buildings, with the possible exception of the Smithsonian Institution. Whether Neoclassical or modern, the expression of scale is monumental.

Further design analysis would reveal the paths, nodes, domains, secondary axes, minor vistas, focal points, boundaries and degree of enclosure that define the Mall as a space.

Symbolism

The dome of the Capitol is emblematic of our democratic principles. It is the iconographic unification of the two branches of the legislature into the Congress. The dome works at the scale of the Mall and as a landmark in the city skyline. Similarly, the Lincoln Memorial's monumentality is responsive to the mall and terminates the vista begun at the Capitol, and relays the ordering axis to Arlington Cemetery across the Potomac. The Lincoln Memorial was, in the past, Washington's Place de l'Etoile where a national monument could be experienced from your car, like the Arc de Triomphe in Paris.

The symbolism of the Lincoln Memorial is more than the recognition of a president. It symbolized the unity of the nation²² following the cataclysm of the Civil War, but not the war itself.²³ The Washington Monument as an obelisk "connotes immortality"²⁴ and symbolizes our perception of the Mall as a permanent space. These icons of the Mall have been transmuted into our culture as pervasive images. The more difficult question is our understanding of the Mall as a political space.

Political Space

What is political space? Political space can be symbolic or actual. The Mall is both. It is the symbolic center of our nation, the symbolic fulcrum point of our democratic society. It is also an actual political space. Demonstrations of tremendous scale have used the precinct of the Mall as a forum for the expression of political ideas. An historic example is the March on Washington of the civil rights movement in the 1960s. By the participants, it was viewed as a pilgrimage to "put pressure on Congress to pass the civil rights bill."²⁵

"As soon as they start to filibuster," King declared, "I think we should march on Washington with a quarter of a million people."²⁶ Two-hundred thousand people came to the Mall and witnessed Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech.²⁷

Political constituents of all groups have exercised the democratic right to assemble and have used the Mall as an actual political space. Students, farmers, advocates for AIDS research, and both sides of the great American abortion rights debate are among the many on the political guest roster of the Mall.

During these momentous events, the monumentality and the symbolism of the Lincoln Memorial has served as a meaningful platform. Our collective recognition of this site as a national space gives implicit political meaning to events that are not overtly or explicitly political. An example is the story of contralto Marian Anderson.²⁸ Denied the opportunity to sing in Constitution Hall, owned and operated by the Daughters of the American Revolution, Marian Anderson sang at the Lincoln Memorial instead on April 9, 1939, to an unprecedented audience of 75,000.

These political events have each transformed the Mall into a temporary manifestation of particular life-worlds. Historically the events have been peaceful.

The Most Recent Fifty Years

Building on the Mall has continued to the present day. Despite early advocacy by Joseph Hudnut of Harvard, modern architecture did not arrive on the Mall until the 1960s in the form of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. Designed by by Gordon Bunshaft of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, an early scheme "projected a sculpture garden, sunken 18 feet deep as a trench running across the Mall to Constitution Avenue."²⁹ Although it had passed the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Planning Commission, this scheme was criticized for disturbing the "hallowed sanctity of the Mall's 'gamboling greensward,'" and the design was changed.³⁰ SOM prepared a new master plan for the Mall in 1965, including a National Sculpture Garden, the elimination of parking on the inner drives, and the replacement of these drives with an aggregate walking surface that approximates that of the Tuileries Gardens.³¹ The design "represented more a return to the formality of the McMillan Plan than an evolving interpretation of that plan's principles and those of L'Enfant's design, which Olmsted had sought to practice."³²

In the 1960s, acres of temporary buildings still filled areas of the Mall. At Richard Nixon's insistence the "tempo" were finally removed.³³

Modern buildings include the National Air and Space Museum (1972-76), by Hellmuth, Obata and Kassabaum, the National Gallery of Art, East Wing (1978), the triad of Smithsonian galleries (1983-1987) by Jean Paul Carlhian of Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson and Abbott.

The most notorious controversy on the Mall in recent history enveloped the smallest piece of monumental design: the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (1982) by Maya Lin, with the Cooper-Lecky Partnership. The history of the controversy has been summarized elsewhere.³⁴ The importance of the VVM to this discussion of political

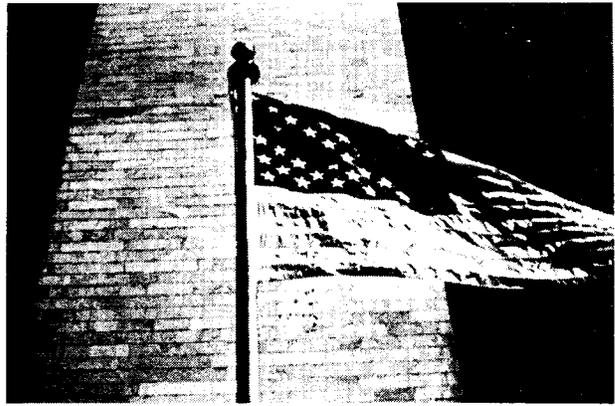


Fig. 5. The Washington National Monument.

space resides in the memorial's ability to evoke personal involvement. This involvement can be understood as an element of political awareness. The monument is spontaneously interactive. The memorial is touched by the hand, and mementos are left against its wall. Its symbolic language is radically different from most other memorials because it is non-figurative.³⁵ It has been described as a linking object that evokes an experience of connection and loss, which is provoked by its reflectivity and relationship to the earth.³⁶ However, as controversial as the design of the VVM may have been, because of its location in Constitutional Gardens, it does not significantly impact the primary space of the Mall.

Away from the Mall is the United States Holocaust Memorial, completed in 1993 by James Ingo Freed.³⁷ The Korean War Veterans Memorial was completed in 1995, and is sited in a location peripheral to the Reflecting Pool.³⁸ Plans have been developed by Douglas Cardinal for the national Museum of the American Indian,³⁹ projected for a predominant site on the Mall, east of the Air and Space Museum.

Authenticity

The Mall is effective as a political space because of our collective perception of its authenticity. What makes a space authentic? First, authenticity can be acquired by historical event. "Bloody Lane" at Antietam Battlefield is an authentic historical space. Interestingly, "no blood was spilt" at the Mall, no battles fought, no one is buried here.⁴⁰ However, other historic events have occurred here. Every four years a Presidential Inauguration is held on the Mall, in the open air of this public space.

Second, the authenticity of the Mall is derived from its "extraordinary cohesiveness"⁴¹ of its symbolism, and from its development as a "self-organizing whole."⁴² The entire spatial complexity and iconography supports the Mall's authenticity as a national space. This authenticity is dependent upon our belief in its permanence, that it will endure as a space of collective memory.⁴³

Our belief in this authenticity requires a direct experience. It is important that the experience is not lost in the package, or "the symbolic machinery by which the experts present the experience to the consumer."⁴⁴ Today we are still able to experience the Mall by direct confrontation as sovereign knowers. The experience is



Fig. 6. Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

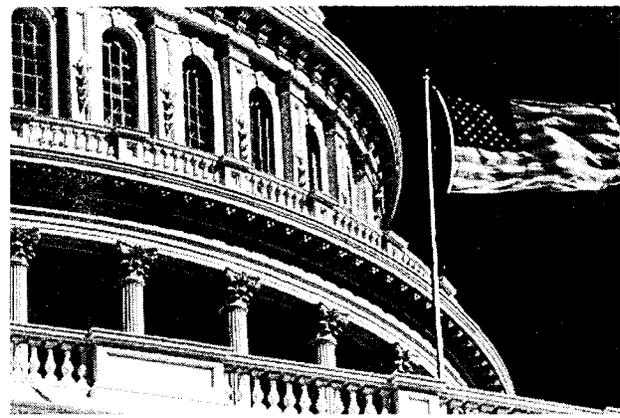


Fig. 7. The US Capitol Dome.

part of the way we identify ourselves as citizens, as participants in an authentic greater whole, our nation. Our self-identity as citizens is essential to the health of the democratic process. We can understand ourselves as members of the larger social and political context through the experience of a national space. However this experience of authenticity will be eroded in the future if the Mall is over-developed as a preformulated consumer experience.

The World War Two Memorial

Current plans for a World War II Memorial delineate a large sunken plaza that straddles the very axis of the Mall at a site to the west of the Washington Monument.⁴⁵ The project calls for more than 40,000 square feet of exhibition space which will be housed below massive earthen berms. At the plaza level, colossal colonnades will enframe the reconstructed Rainbow Pool.

Objections⁴⁶ to the WWII Memorial concern both the site⁴⁷ and the design. Deborah Dietsch has expressed the sacred space argument in her statement that "the real purpose of the two presidential memorials (Washington and Lincoln) is to remind Americans of the enduring strength of our Union, not of the wars fought by these leaders. The open view between the pair symbolizes our democracy and must be preserved."⁴⁸ The space or the void of the Mall has a national value greater than the monuments, memorials, and museums that more or less permanently define the space of the Mall. The nation needs a public space, a political space, a forum, a national agora. This space should not be occupied or dedicated to a specific purpose, no matter how noble.

Others have raised the "theme park" argument. In discussing Josep Subiros analysis of a fragmented Washington, Roger Lewis has expressed how "for many, visiting the nation's capital is more like visiting a theme park than visiting a city."⁴⁹ Others simply feel that "the Mall doesn't need another monument."⁵⁰

There is a security issue with the sunken plaza at night. There are no "eyes on the street" here, in a space that is largely concealed from view. This is a space that will have to be physically cordoned off at night or actively patrolled by security forces. Interestingly the most widely publicized view of the design proposal is a bird's eye view that minimizes the impact of the gigantic berms, and of

any other element as experienced from the pedestrian point of view. Diagrammatically the design revisits the McMillan plan with symmetrical hemicycles embracing the axially of the reflecting pool. Unfortunately, it is an example of a two-dimensional idea that fails as a three-dimensional design. The third dimension, in the excavating of the plaza and in the raising of the enormous berms, destroys the aesthetic and symbolic spatial relationships of this historic American landscape. It has been demonstrated that these berms will block views of the Lincoln Memorial. Recognizing that the McMillan Plan represented the nationalism of a particular era, and was the embodiment of a 19th-century Ecole des Beaux Arts approach, a question must be posed.⁵¹ Is this plan a meaningful insertion into our national political space, the Mall that so effectively symbolizes the spirit of our diverse democracy?

The presentation of WWII as a museum with 43,000 square feet of interior space, including interactive educational facilities, within the sacred space of the Mall will be destructive to the very quality of authenticity the American Battle Monuments Commission seeks in selecting this site.

On a more fundamental level one might speculate that the articulation of this memorial represents a paradigm that is more appropriate to the politics of authority and consumerism.⁵²

The evolution of the Mall from the sketchy outline of L'Enfant's 18th-century vision of a public space into the political space of a modern democracy is a remarkable story. The Mall is a political space resplendent with meaning and symbolic purpose. It should not be our ambition to permanently occupy the Mall with artifacts of our time, but to conserve the heritage of this authentic place. It the task of our nation's architectural community to remain passionately involved in the future of our national political space. We need to be responsibly involved, to speak up and to be heard.

NOTES

¹ Richard Wolin, "Introduction," in Shierry Weber Nicholson, ed., *The New Conservatism, Cultural Criticism and the Historical Debate* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989), p.xxii.

² *Ibid.*, p.xxii.

- ³ Jurgen Habermas, "Modern and Post-Modern Architecture" in Shierry Weber Nicholsen, ed., *The New Conservatism, Cultural Criticism and the Historians Debate* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989), p. 17.
- ⁴ Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), p. 264.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p.297.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁷ "The creation of a public geography has, in other words, a great deal to do with imagination as a social phenomenon. When a baby can distinguish the me from the not-me, he has taken a first and most important step in enriching his symbol-making powers: no longer must every symbol be a projection of the baby's own needs onto the world. The creation of a sense of public space is the adult social parallel to this psychological distinction in infancy, with parallel results; the symbol-making capacity of a society becomes that much richer, because the imagination of what is real, and therefore believable, is not tied down to a verification of what is routinely felt by the self. Because an urban society which has a public geography has also certain powers of imagination, the devolution of the public and rise of the intimate have a profound effect on the modalities of imagination which prevail in that society." *Ibid.*, p.41.
- ⁸ Pamela Scott, "This Vast Empire: The Iconography of the Mall, 1791-1848," in Richard Longstreth, ed., *The Mall in Washington, 1791-1991* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1991), p. 40.
- ⁹ "... one of his principal concerns had been to invent or employ a symbolic visual language appropriately expressive of the American experience. He repeatedly used accepted American symbols, such as the eagle from the Great Seal of the United States and the stars from the American flag, in an architectural context. His incorporation of the number thirteen in his designs to signify the importance of the union of the states under the federal government culminated in his plan for Washington." Pamela Scot, "Two Centuries of Architectural Practice in Washington," in Pamela Scott and Antoinette Lee, *Buildings of the District of Columbia* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p.21.
- ¹⁰ Pamela Scott, "This Vast Empire: The Iconography of the Mall, 1791-1848," in Richard Longstreth, ed., *The Mall in Washington, 1791-1991* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1991), p. 39.
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 43.
- ¹² Pamela Scot, "The Mall," in Pamela Scott and Antoinette Lee, *Buildings of the District of Columbia* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 62.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 73.
- ¹⁴ Thomas S. Hines, "The Imperial Mall: The City Beautiful Movement and the Washington Plan of 1901-1902," in Richard Longstreth, ed., *The Mall in Washington, 1791-1991* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1991), p.86.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 87.
- ¹⁶ This important distinction between L'Enfant's intention and the McMillan plan is not often clarified. Bacon continues "In its proposals it blocked off the view from the Capitol by the Lincoln Memorial, and the White House visa by what later became the memorial to Jefferson, which shut out the river." Edmund N. Bacon, *Design of Cities, Revised Edition* (Middlesex England: A Penguin Book, 1978), p. 222.
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁸ "Strong opposition existed for years to locating the Lincoln Memorial in what was then only a marshy backwater of the Potomac, where as one wag suggested, the "structure would shake itself down in loneliness and ague." Representative Joseph Cannon, the arch-conservative from Illinois, was the plan's most vicious and enduring critic. 'So long as I live,' he told Elihu Root. 'I'll never let a monument to Abraham Lincoln be erected in that God-damned swamp.'" Thomas S. Hines, "The Imperial Mall: The City Beautiful Movement and the Washington Plan of 1901-1902," in Richard Longstreth, ed., *The Mall in Washington, 1791-1991* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1991), p. 94.
- ¹⁹ "... the idea of architectural design... as an articulation of experience along an axis of movement through space." Edmund N. Bacon, *Design of Cities, Revised Edition* (Middlesex England: A Penguin Book, 1978), p. 123.
- ²⁰ Thomas S. Hines, "The Imperial Mall: The City Beautiful Movement and the Washington Plan of 1901-1902," in Richard Longstreth, ed., *The Mall in Washington, 1791-1991* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1991), p. 94.
- ²¹ Pamela Scott, "This Vast Empire: The Iconography of the Mall, 1791-1848," in Richard Longstreth, ed., *The Mall in Washington, 1791-1991* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1991), p. 43.
- ²² Charles L. Griswold, "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Washington Mall: Philosophical Thoughts on Political Iconography," *Critical Inquiry* 12/4 (Summer 1986), p. 690.
- ²³ Deborah K. Dietsch, "Capital Offense, An Overblown War Memorial Will Destroy a Sacred Site on the National Mall," *Architecture* (March 1997), p. 63.
- ²⁴ Charles L. Griswold, "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Washington Mall: Philosophical Thoughts on Political Iconography," *Critical Inquiry* 12/4 (Summer 1986), p. 695.
- ²⁵ David J. Garrow, *Bearing the Cross, Martin Luther King, Jr., and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference* (New York: William Morrow and Co., Inc., 1986), p. 271.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 283-284.
- ²⁸ Tim Page, "The Singer's Undying Voice, On Maria Anderson's 100th, A Ringing Tribute to Courage," *The Washington Post*, February 28, 1997, p.C1 + C8.
- ²⁹ Richard Guy Wilson, "High Noon on the Mall: Modernism versus Traditionalism, 1910-1970" in Richard Longstreth, ed., *The Mall in Washington, 1791-1991* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1991), p. 163.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*
- ³¹ J. Carter Brown, "The Mall and the Commission of Fine Arts," in Richard Longstreth, ed., *The Mall in Washington, 1791-1991* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1991), p. 250.
- ³² David C. Streatfield, "The Olmsteds and the Landscape of the Mall," in Richard Longstreth, ed., *The Mall in Washington, 1791-1991* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1991), p. 137.
- ³³ Richard Guy Wilson, "High Noon on the Mall: Modernism versus Traditionalism, 1910-1970" in Richard Longstreth, ed., *The Mall in Washington, 1791-1991* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1991), p. 147, and J. Carter Brown, "The Mall and the Commission of Fine Arts," in Richard Longstreth, ed., *The Mall in Washington, 1791-1991* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1991), p. 251.
- ³⁴ Tod A. Marder, *The Critical Edge: Controversy in Recent American Architecture* (Rutgers, NJ: Rutgers University Press and Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985).
- ³⁵ Charles L. Griswold, "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Washington Mall: Philosophical Thoughts on Political Iconog-

raphy," *Critical Inquiry* 12/4 (Summer 1986), pp.688-719, and D.S. Friedman, "Public Things in the Modern City: Belated Notes on *Tilted Arc* and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial," *Journal of Architectural Education* Volume 49, Number 2 (November 1995), p.62-78.

³⁶ Jeffrey Karl Ochsner, "A Space of Loss: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial," *Journal of Architectural Education* Volume 50, Number 3 (February 1997).

³⁷ Jeffrey Karl Ochsner, "Understanding the Holocaust through The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum," *Journal of Architectural Education* Volume 48, Number 4 (May 1995).

³⁸ Deborah K. Dietsch, "Compromised Commemoration, A New Memorial To The Korean War Symbolizes What's Wrong With Our National Monuments" *Architecture* (September 1995), p.15.

³⁹ John Krakauer, "A New Vision for a Museum on the Mall," *The Smithsonian* (May 1996), p 76-79.

⁴⁰ Charles L. Griswold, "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Washington Mall: Philosophical Thoughts on Political Iconography," *Critical Inquiry* 12/4 (Summer 1986), p. 690.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 692.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Aldo Rossi, *The Architecture of the City* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1982), p. 6.

⁴⁴ Walker Percy, *The Message in the Bottle* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1981), p. 46-63.

⁴⁵ Press Release, American Battle Monuments Commission, 20 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20314.

⁴⁶ Janny Scott, "Planned War Memorial Sets Off Its Own Battle in Washington," *The New York Times*, March 18, 1997.

⁴⁷ "The site, between 17th Street and the eastern end of the Reflecting Pool, was selected in 1995 by a federally appointed committee, which considered seven sites in Washington offered by the Nation Parks Service and then persuaded the agency to add the current site, which it then chose," and "Mr. Brown of the Fine Arts Commission suggested that he would stand by the site. 'Our belief is that no amount of acreage can do justice to the over-whelming importance of this event, and for this reason its memorial demands the most prominent and significant location - symbolically, historically, and emotionally - that this nation can offer it,' he wrote. "That site, I believe, has been achieved."from Janny Scott, "Planned War Memorial Sets Off Its Own Battle in Washington," *The New York Times*, March 18, 1997. However it is interesting to compare J. Carter Brown's comments to his statement about the area made in 1991 suggesting the area is incomplete: "Among other Mall projects of the past two decades, none is more important than the Washington Monument. The monument stood unfinished for years in the nineteenth century, and in my opinion, the surrounding area remains incomplete. Perhaps our biggest problem on the Mall lies with the monument grounds." J. Carter Brown, "The Mall and the Commission of Fine Arts," in Richard Longstreth, ed.,

The Mall in Washington, 1791-1991 (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1991), p. 256.

⁴⁸ A more difficult objection rests with the architectural language of the memorial. "... the fluted columns are incomplete, their capitals lopped off, a curious gesture that parodies the Lincoln Memorial's proud pillars to the west. These stripped elements also recall the Classicism of Nazi architect Albert Speer, a painful association that could have been avoided by a more abstract, contemporary composition in the spirit of Maya Lin's moving Vietnam War memorial nearby." Deborah K. Dietsch, "Capitol Offense, An Overblown War Memorial Will Destroy a Sacred Site on the National Mall," *Architecture*, September 1995, p. 62-63. The argument that the association of a specific architectural expression with a particular polity, era or individual renders that expression inappropriate for other applications has been made before - and in this case it is a valid argument. The association here is simply too powerful to ignore, or to circumvent by exhuming the exhausted academic debate of classicism, modernism and post-modernism.

Also see Deborah K. Dietsch, "Memorial Madness, A War Memorial Competition Threatens to Diminish a Precious National Resource," *Architecture* (July 1996), p.18.

⁴⁹ Roger K. Lewis, "Puzzling Over Monumental Problems," *The Washington Post*, March 1, 1997., Roger K. Lewis, "WWII Memorial's Monumental Contradictions," *The Washington Post*, January 25, 1997, Roger K. Lewis, "Proposed WWII Memorial Site is Land Worth Fighting Over," *The Washington Post*, August 17, 1996.

⁵⁰ Bill Press, "Please, Not Another Monument on Our Mall..." *The Washington Post*, March 2, 1997.

⁵¹ At the planning scale, Robert Stern has argued that the flourishing of the monumental planning ideal of the Mall throughout the world has proved "its validity as an expression of institutional power and not of any single political system." I believe Stern defeats his own argument in this case with his emphasis on "institutional power." The vitality and importance of the Mall rests in its remarkable ability to function as a national political space, not as the representation of an institutional system. See Robert A. M. Stern, "A Temenos for Democracy: The Mall in Washington and Its Influence" in Richard Longstreth, ed., *The Mall in Washington, 1791-1991* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1991), p. 270.

⁵² The architectural community then returns to a statement by Habermas that "This return to the eclecticism of the previous century is due, as it was then, to compensatory needs. This traditionalism conforms to the pattern of political neoconservatism in that it redefines problems that lie at a *different* level as questions of style and thus removes them from public consciousness. The escapist reaction is linked to a move toward the affirmative: everything *else* is to remain as it is." Jurgen Habermas, "Modern and Post-Modern Architecture" in Shierry Weber Nichol森, ed., *The New Conservatism, Cultural Criticism and the Historians Debate* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989), p. 19.