

## Management Information

### Descriptive And Geographic Information

**Historic Name(s):** McPherson Square  
Scott Square

**Current Name(s):** McPherson Square

**Management Unit:** National Mall & Memorial Parks

**Tract Numbers:** Reservation 11

**State and County:** District of Columbia, DC

**Size (acres):** 1.65

### Boundary UTM

Boundary UTM(s):	Source	Type	Datum	Zone	Easting	Northing
	GPS-Differentially Corrected	Point	NAD 83	18	323583	4307913
	GPS-Differentially Corrected	Point	NAD 83	18	323582	4307809
	GPS-Differentially Corrected	Point	NAD 83	18	323639	4307811
	GPS-Differentially Corrected	Point	NAD 83	18	323642	4307912

**GIS File Name:**

**GIS File Description:**

### National Register Information

**National Register Documentation:** Entered -- Inadequately Documented

**Explanatory Narrative:**

Though two multiple-property nominations list McPherson Square as a contributing site, neither addresses the history, development, features, or significance of the square and its landscape.

**NRIS Information:**

NRIS Number: 97000332

Primary Certification: Listed In The National Register

Primary Certification Date: 4/24/1997

Other Certifications: Date Received/Pending Nomination

Other Certification Date: 3/19/1997

Name In National Register: L'Enfant Plan of the City of Washington, District of Columbia

**National Register Eligibility:** Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination

**Explanatory Narrative:**

The State Historic Preservation Officer for the District of Columbia concurred with the findings of the McPherson Square CLI on 9/9/05, in accordance with Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act. It should be noted that the Date of Eligibility Determination refers to this Section 110 Concurrence and not the date of National Register Eligibility, since that is not the purview of the Cultural Landscapes Inventory.

**Date of Eligibility Determination:** 9/9/2005

**National Register Classification:** Multiple Property

**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 -- Inventory Unit 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

**Period Of Significance**

Time Period: 1791 AD

Historic Context Theme: Expressing Cultural Values

Historic Context Subtheme: Other Expressing Cultural Values

Historic Context Facet: Other Expressing Cultural Values --

Time Period: 1867 - 1933 AD

Historic Context Theme: Expressing Cultural Values

Historic Context Subtheme: Landscape Architecture

Historic Context Facet: The City Beautiful Movement

**Area Of Significance:**

Category: Landscape Architecture

Priority: 1

## National Historic Landmark Information

### National Historic

**Landmark Status:** No

## World Heritage Site Information

**World Heritage Site Status:** 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: Recreation/Culture  
Use/Function: Outdoor Sculpture (Statuary)  
Detailed Use/Function: Outdoor Sculpture (Statuary)  
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

## Ethnographic Information

**Ethnographic Survey Conducted:** No Survey Conducted

## Adjacent Lands Information

**Do Adjacent Lands Contribute?** Yes

### Adjacent Lands Description:

In a small urban park like McPherson Square, the surrounding architecture plays a large role in the visitor's experience, providing a visual framework. The buildings facing McPherson Square lend the park a different character than found at Farragut Square or Franklin Park. Though there are some recent structures, a majority of the buildings date from the early or mid-twentieth century. These Beaux-Arts and simple Art Deco structures display an array of architectural styles, a variety of materials, and a fine level of detail that is missing from the modern, post-1960s structures that

face the other two parks. Most of the buildings around McPherson Square are constructed to the twelve-story height limit of downtown Washington, but they have maintained a consistent first-floor cornice line, which gives a sense of human scale.

## General Management Information

**Management Category:** Must Be Preserved And Maintained

**Management Category Date:**

**Explanatory Narrative:**

## 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:** 09/19/2005

**Date Recorded:** 11/18/2004

**Park Management Concurrence:** Yes      **Concurrence Date:** 9/19/2005

**Level Of Impact Severity:** Moderate

**Explanatory Notes:** McPherson Square retains much of its historic fabric, dating to 1931 or earlier. Trees are in good condition. Lawns are eroded in many places. Some small-scale features, such as trash receptacles, are in need of repair.

The Assessment Date refers to the date that the park superintendent concurred with the Condition Assessment. The Date Recorded information refers to the date when condition was first assessed by the author.

of the report.

### **Stabilization Measures:**

#### **Impact:**

Type of Impact: Deferred Maintenance

Internal/External: Internal

Description:

Many walks are damaged, cracked, or broken.

Type of Impact: Soil Compaction

Internal/External: Internal

Description:

The high volume of pedestrian traffic through the park and across its lawns results in soil becoming compacted in eroded areas, making it difficult for water to filter through to tree roots.

Type of Impact: Adjacent Lands

Internal/External: External

Description:

High-rise office buildings surround the park. Though these structures help define the urban square, they block sunlight. The shade created in certain areas may impede plant growth and may deter people from visiting the park.

Type of Impact: Erosion

Internal/External: Internal

Description:

Lawns in the park are subject to erosion where grass has been worn away by pedestrian traffic.

Type of Impact: Visitation

Internal/External: Both Internal and External

Description:

McPherson Square is located within the central business district, and thousands of office workers pass through the park daily. It also attracts a large number of visitors, lunchtime picnickers, and indigent persons.

## **Agreements, Legal Interest, and Access**

**NPS Legal Interest:** Fee Simple

**Explanatory Narrative:**

**Public Access:** Unrestricted

McPherson Square is open to the public at all hours.

## Treatment

**Approved Treatment:** Rehabilitation  
**Approved Treatment Document:** Other Document  
**Document Date:** April 13, 2004

**Explanatory Narrative:**

Cy Paumier, landscape architect with the Downtown Business Improvement District (BID), developed these figures with the Downtown Parks Task Force (3/2003-4/2004). Estimates were given to the Task Force on April 13, 2004.

**Approved Treatment Completed:** No

## Approved Treatment Cost

**LCS Structure Approved**

**Treatment Cost:** \$28,100

**Landscape Approved**

**Treatment Cost:**

**Cost Date:** April 13, 2004

**Level of Estimate:** C - Similar Facilities

**Cost Estimator:**

**Explanatory Description:** Phase 1 of this cost estimate includes costs for bench renovation (\$2500), new trash receptacles (\$7500), and new post-and-chain fencing (\$18,000). Phase 2 includes installation of park curbing (\$30,000), installation of a 42-inch-high railing (\$15,000), and installation of brick paving (\$165,000). A line item to widen the K Street sidewalk for \$30,000 would not be the responsibility of the NPS.

## Stabilization Costs

**LCS Structure Stabilization Cost:**

**Landscape Stabilization Costs:**

**Cost Date:**

**Level Of Estimate:**

**Cost Estimator:**



**Explanatory Description:**

## Documentation Assessment and Checklist

**Documentation Assessment:** Fair

**Documentation:**

Document: Historical Base Map

Year Of Document: 1920

Amplifying Details: "Tree Plan Proposed for McPherson Square," TIC 874\_80010 designed by Irving Payne, Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, June 21, 1920

Adequate Documentation: Yes

**Explanatory Narrative:**

This base map records the third park design overlaid with an early version of the final park design of 1930 (implemented 1930/31). It includes the names and diameters of many trees.

Document: Historical Base Map

Year Of Document: 1930

Amplifying Details: Planting Plan, McPherson Square," TIC 874\_80012; Irving W. Payne, Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, May 22, 1930 - submitted, June 6, 1930 - approved.

Adequate Documentation: Yes

**Explanatory Narrative:**

This plan records the fourth and final design for McPherson Square. The major difference from the 1920 plan is the greater width of the grass panels along the Vermont Avenue axis.

Document: Historical Base Map

Year Of Document: 1929

Amplifying Details: "Survey of Existing Plant Material for McPherson Square," Oct. 18, 1929, file #37-22

Adequate Documentation: Yes

**Explanatory Narrative:**

This plan indicates that the 1920 redesign had not been implemented by 1929. The species, size, and condition of trees are recorded.

Document: Historical Base Map  
Year Of Document: 1980  
Amplifying Details: "Rehabilitation Plan," TIC 874\_80033  
Adequate Documentation: Yes  
Explanatory Narrative:

This plan shows the addition of Southern magnolias and red maples to the palette of McPherson Square. Several specimens were placed at the inner edges of the grass panels so that they formed a ring around the statue, accentuating this feature. Pairs of red maples were added at the far ends of the loop panels. These trees were removed in 2004 and 2005.

Document: Historical Base Map  
Year Of Document: 1965  
Amplifying Details: "Spring Planting Plan - 1965" and "Fall Planting Plan - 1965" TIC 874\_80026  
Adequate Documentation: Yes

Explanatory Narrative:  
Plans for floral display beds in McPherson Square were developed under President Lyndon B. Johnson's Beautification Program. The beds have since been removed or reconfigured.

## Appendix

### Bibliography

#### Citations:

Citation Author:	Elizabeth Barthold
Citation Title:	"McPherson Square, Washington, D.C.," HABS DC-680
Year of Publication:	1993
Publisher:	n/a
Source Name:	HABS
Citation Type:	Both Graphic And Narrative
Citation Location:	copies in CLP office files and NCR library

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Citation Author:	George Burnap
Citation Title:	Parks: Their Design, Equipment, and Use
Year of Publication:	1916
Publisher:	Lippincott
Source Name:	Library Of Congress/Dewey Decimal
Citation Type:	Both Graphic And Narrative
Citation Location:	private collection

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Citation Author:	James M. Goode
Citation Title:	Capital Losses
Year of Publication:	2003
Publisher:	Smithsonian Institution Press
Source Name:	Library Of Congress/Dewey Decimal
Citation Type:	Both Graphic And Narrative

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Citation Author: James M. Goode  
Citation Title: The Outdoor Sculpture of Washington, D.C.  
Year of Publication: 1974  
Publisher: Smithsonian Institution Press  
Source Name: Library Of Congress/Dewey Decimal  
Citation Type: Both Graphic And Narrative

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Citation Author: Frederick Gutheim  
Citation Title: Worthy of the Nation  
Year of Publication: 1977  
Publisher: Smithsonian Institution Press  
Source Name: Library Of Congress/Dewey Decimal  
Citation Type: Both Graphic And Narrative

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Citation Author: Kauffmann  
Citation Title: "Equestrian Statuary in Washington"  
Publisher: Columbia Historical Society  
Source Name: Records of the Columbia Historical Society  
Citation Type: Narrative  
Citation Location: vol. 5, pp. 127-138

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Citation Author: Sara Amy Leach and Elizabeth Barthold  
Citation Title: "The L'Enfant Plan of the City of Washington, D.C."  
Year of Publication: 1997  
Publisher: n/a  
Source Name: National Register of Historic Places  
Citation Type: Both Graphic And Narrative  
Citation Location: copy in CLP office files

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Citation Author: Richard A. Longstreth, ed.  
Citation Title: The Mall in Washington, 1791-1991  
Year of Publication: 1991  
Publisher: National Gallery of Art  
Source Name: Library Of Congress/Dewey Decimal  
Citation Type: Both Graphic And Narrative  
Citation Location: author library

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Citation Author: multiple  
Citation Title: Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Public Buildings, 1818-1866, and of the Chief of Engineers, Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, 1867-1932  
Year of Publication: 1818  
Publisher: U.S. government  
Source Name: Library Of Congress/Dewey Decimal  
Citation Type: Both Graphic And Narrative  
Citation Location: These annual reports were issued by the successive chief administrators of the federal parks and reservations. Original copies are in the office of the Regional Historian, NCR, and span the years 1818-1932. Reports came out in June, end of fiscal year.

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Citation Author: Sarah Pressey Noreen  
Citation Title: Public Street Illumination in Washington, D.C.  
Year of Publication: 1975  
Publisher: George Washington University  
Source Name: GW Washington Studies Series, No. 2  
Citation Type: Both Graphic And Narrative  
Citation Location: CLP office files

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Citation Author: George J. Olszewski  
Citation Title: History of the Mall, Washington, D.C.  
Year of Publication: 1970  
Publisher: DOI, NPS, Eastern Service Center, Office of History & Historic Architecture  
Source Name: National Park Service  
Citation Type: Both Graphic And Narrative  
Citation Location: CLP office files

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Citation Author: John W. Reps  
Citation Title: Monumental Washington: The Planning and Development of the Capital City  
Year of Publication: 1967  
Publisher: Princeton University Press  
Source Name: Library Of Congress/Dewey Decimal  
Citation Type: Both Graphic And Narrative  
Citation Location: author library

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Citation Author: John W. Reps  
Citation Title: Washington on View  
Year of Publication: 1992  
Publisher: University of North Carolina Press  
Source Name: Library Of Congress/Dewey Decimal  
Citation Type: Both Graphic And Narrative  
Citation Location: author library

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Citation Author: Gary Scott  
Citation Title: Civil War Generals and Monuments in Washington, D.C.  
Year of Publication: 1977  
Publisher: n/a  
Source Name: National Register of Historic Places  
Citation Type: Both Graphic And Narrative  
Citation Location: copy in CLP office files

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Citation Author:	Pamela Scott and Antoinette Lee
Citation Title:	Buildings of the District of Columbia
Year of Publication:	1993
Publisher:	Oxford University Press
Source Name:	Library Of Congress/Dewey Decimal
Citation Type:	Both Graphic And Narrative
Citation Location:	author library

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## Supplemental Information