

**A HISTORICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE
BUILT ENVIRONMENT IN WASHINGTON, D.C.:
SOME KEY TEXTS**

Richard Longstreth, comp.

The titles cited below include some of the best scholarly studies of architecture, planning, and urbanism in the nation's capital. For purposes of brevity, I have limited the number to thirty-five books and ten articles. The former include short annotations. For a much more extensive listing, see Richard Longstreth, comp., "A Historical Bibliography of the Built Environment in the Washington, D.C., Metropolitan Area," available at <http://www.vafweb.org/conferences/2010/resources/dcbib-full.pdf>. Titles pertinent to the places VAF will visit in May, 2010, are also cited in the notes of Housing Washington.

BOOKS:

Abbott, Carl, Political Terrain: Washington, D.C., from Tidewater Town to Global Metropolis, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999

A general history that examines how the city has been viewed from many perspectives, analyzing regional, national, and international relationships.

Allen, William C., History of the United States Capitol: A Chronicle of Design, Construction, and Politics, Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2001

The most recent and by far the most detailed history of the nation's premier public building, delineating its complex development over more than two centuries.

Berg, Scott W., Grand Avenues: The Story of the French Visionary Who Designed Washington, D.C., New York: Pantheon, 2007

Written for a general audience, this book offers an authoritative and insightful narrative of the life of Peter Charles L'Enfant and the extraordinary plan he devised for Washington in the late eighteenth century.

Borchert, James, Alley Life in Washington: Family, Community, Religion, and Folklife in the City, 1850-1970, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980

A pioneering study of a long-disparaged housing form, focusing on the significance of alley cultures as they evolved for more than a century.

Bowling, Kenneth R., Creating the Federal City, 1774-1800: Potomac Fever, Washington: American Institute of Architects Press, 1988

The most substantive study of the events that led to the establishment of the federal city and of its difficult early years of development.

_____, Peter Charles L'Enfant: Vision, Honor and Male Friendship in the Early Republic, Washington: Friends of the George Washington University Libraries, 2002

A short, but essential, text on the enigmatic French military engineer's career in North America.

Bryan, John, M., Robert Mills: America's First Architect, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2001

The best monograph on the architect of the Washington Monument and the Treasury and Post Office buildings, who also contributed to the Patent Office Building, and made proposals for the Smithsonian, Capitol extensions, and Mall.

Carson, Barbara G., Ambitious Appetites: Dining, Behavior, and Patterns of Consumption in Federal Washington, Washington: American Institute of Architects Press, 1990

A good analysis of the social importance and material culture of dining among elites in the early nineteenth-century Washington.

Dickinson, William C., et al., eds., Montgomery C. Meigs and the Building of the Nation's Capital, Athens: Ohio University Press, 2001

Essays on the career of Army engineer Montgomery Meigs, who developed the city's first water system, was engineer for the Capitol extensions, designed the Pension Building, and in other ways was a key figure in the shaping of Washington in the mid nineteenth century.

Contributions by: William Dickinson, Cynthia Field, Wayne Firth, Martin Gordon, Dean Herrin, Linda Lyons, Michael Mills, Willaim Mohr, Pamela Scott, Harry Ways, and Barbara Wollanin.

Field, Cynthia, et al., eds., Paris on the Potomac: The French Influence on the Architecture and Art of Washington, D.C., Washington: U.S. Capitol Historical Society, and Athens: University of Ohio Press, 2007

Essays on the multi-faceted ties between Paris and Washington in architecture, interior design, sculpture, and planning from the late eighteenth into the early twentieth centuries.

Contributions by: William Allen, Cynthia Field, Isabelle Gournay, Liana Paredes, and Thomas Somma.

Fitzpatrick, Sandra, and Maria R. Goodwin, The Guide to Black Washington: Places and Events of Historical and Cultural Significance in the Nation's Capital, 1990; revised ed., New York: Hippocrene Books, 1999

An instructive guide to buildings and sites associated with important African-American individuals, families, organizations, and events.

Gillette, Howard, Jr., Between Justice and Beauty: Race, Planning, and the Failure of Urban Policy in Washington, D.C., 1995; reprint ed., Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006

An excellent overview of the city's history, focusing on the tensions that have existed between the federal and private sectors. The built environment figures prominently in the analysis.

_____, ed., Southern City, National Ambition: The Growth of Early Washington, D.C., 1800-1860, Washington: American Architectural Foundation and Center for Washington Area Studies, George Washington University, 1995

Essays explore aspects of the city's development at a formative stage.

Contributions by: Mary Beth Corrigan, David Goldfield, Bernard Herman, and Frederika Teute

Glazer, Nathan, and Cynthia R. Field, eds., The National Mall: Rethinking Washington's Monumental Core, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008

Includes valuable essays addressing the Mall's role in contemporary society and the challenges in planning its future.

Contributions by: Judy Scott Feldman, Cynthia Field, Patrick Gallagher, Nathan Glazer, Richard Kurin, Michael Lewis, Witold Rybczynski, Edith Turner, Frederick Turner, and Richard Guy Wilson,

Goode, James M., Best Addresses: A Century of Washington's Distinguished Apartment Houses, 1988; updated ed. Washington: Smithsonian Books, 2003

A copious history of important examples of apartment buildings and complexes in metropolitan Washington, underscoring the city's importance in the development of the type for over a century.

_____, Capital Losses: A Cultural History of Washington's Destroyed Buildings, 1979, revised ed., Washington: Smithsonian Books, 2003

A very ambitious compendium of architecture that no longer exists, affording an invaluable perspective on the city's history. The Foreword examines key historic preservation issues in Washington since the book was originally issued.

Gutheim, Frederick A., and Antoinette J. Lee, Worthy of the Nation: The History of Planning for the National Capital, 1997, revised ed., Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006

A sweeping history of planning – broadly defined – and the physical development of the national capital region since the late eighteenth century.

Kohler, Sue A., and Pamela Scott, eds., Designing the Nation's Capital: The 1901 Plan for Washington, D.C., Washington: U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, 2006

Essays that provide the definitive analysis of the Senate Park Commission (McMillan) Plan prepared by Daniel Burnham, Charles McKim, and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.

Contributions by: Dana Dalrymple, Timothy Davis, Kurt Helfrich, Sue Kohler, Jon Peterson, Pamela Scott, and Tony Wrenn.

Leach, Sara Amy, ed., Capital IA: Industrial Archeology of Washington, D.C., Washington: Montgomery C. Meigs Original Chapter, Society for Industrial Archeology, 2001

A difficult-to-find, but valuable guide to important historic engineering sites in Washington and environs.

Lessoff, Alan and Christoph Mauch, eds., Adolf Cluss, Architect: From Germany to America, Washington: Historical Society of Washington, D.C.; Heilbronn, Germany: Stadtarchiv Heilbronn; and New York: Berghahn, 2005

Essays that explore aspects in the life and career of a German-American architect who became a central figure in the shaping of Washington during the Gilded Age.

Contributions by: Tanya Edwards Beauchamp, Joseph Browne, Kathleen Neils Conzen, Sabina Dugan, Cynthia Field, Sabine Freitag, Harriet Lesser, Alan Lessoff, Richard Longstreth, Christoph Mauch, Helen Tangires, Christhard Schrenk, and Peter Wanner.

Longstreth, Richard, History on the Line: Testimony in the Cause of Preservation, Washington: National Park Service, and Ithaca, N.Y.: National Council for Preservation Education, 1998

Chapters analyzing the historical significance of representative commercial building types and a community garden in Washington, assembled as a handbook for preservationists.

_____, ed., The Mall in Washington, 1791-1991, 1991, reprint ed., Washington: National Gallery of Art, and New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002

Essays on the development of the national Mall over two centuries, providing the most detailed examination of the subject. While most chapters are historical in nature, several are by architects and others involved in shaping the Mall during the 1970s and 1980s.

Contributions by: J. Carter Brown, Jean Paul Carlhian, Norma Evenson, Thomas Hines, Daniel Urban Kiley, Richard Longstreth, Therese O'Malley, Gyo Obata, Jon Peterson, Pamela Scott, Robert A. M. Stern, and Richard Guy Wilson.

Miller, Frederic M., and Howard Gillette, Jr., Washington Seen: A Photographic History, 1875-1965, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995

An exemplary urban history that employs photographs as a primary basis for interpretation and analysis, encompassing numerous vignettes of everyday life in the city.

Moeller, G. Martin, AIA Guide to the Architecture of Washington, D.C., 1965; revised ed., Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006

A extensive architectural guide, thoroughly reworked from earlier editions, with detailed descriptions, focusing mostly on high-style examples in central parts of the city.

Peatross, C. Ford, ed., Capital Drawings: Architectural Designs for Washington, D.C., from the Library of Congress, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, and Washington: Library of Congress, 2005

Utilizing the Library of Congress's vast collections, essays examine the Capitol, White House, commercial architecture, housing, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and a panoply of unrealized projects.

Contributions by: Richard Longstreth, C. Ford Peatross, William Seale, Damie Stillman, Pamela Scott, and Gwendolyn Wright.

Reps, John W., Washington on View: The Nation's Capital since 1790, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991

A sumptuously produced volume examining the city's physical development through prints, most of them from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Ridout, Orlando, V, Building the Octagon, Washington: American Institute of Architects Press, 1989

A model study of the processes of design and construction of a major early nineteenth-century residence.

Schrag, Zachary M., The Great Society Subway: A History of the Washington Metro, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006

In examining one of the nation's most important mass transit projects of the twentieth century, this book underscores the central role of transportation in shaping the environment. One of the best histories of its kind.

Scott, Pamela, Capital Engineers: The United States Army Corps of Engineers in the Development of Washington, D.C., 1790-2004, Alexandria, Va.: Office of History, Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 2005

A superb analysis of the longstanding, and often pivotal, role played by the Army Corps of Engineers in shaping the city. Hard to get, but worth the trouble.

_____, Temple of Liberty: Building the Capitol for a New Nation, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995

An excellent analysis of the development of the U.S. Capitol up to the Civil War.

_____, and Antoinette J. Lee, Buildings of the District of Columbia, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993

The most detailed architectural guide to the city, with many entries that stand as valuable essays in themselves. Like Moeller's guide, the focus is on high-style work in central portions of Washington.

Seale, William, The President's House: A History, 2 vols., 2nd ed., 1986, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008

A copious examination of the president's residence, delineating the numerous modifications it has sustained over time, and the roles played by both designers and the building's distinguished occupants in the ongoing change of its features.

Smith, Kathryn Schneider, Port Town to Urban Neighborhood: The Georgetown Waterfront of Washington, D.C., 1880-1920, Washington: Center for Washington Area Studies, George Washington University; and Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1989

A rare examination of Washington's once important role as a port city, focusing on a pivotal time of change.

Sonne, Wolfgang, Representing the State: Capital City Planning in the Early Twentieth Century, Munich: Prestel, 2003

A comparative study of major world capitals. The chapter on Washington provides a very thorough and insightful synopsis of recent scholarship.

Thomas, Christopher A., The Lincoln Memorial and American Life, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002

A meticulous, insightful study of what is arguably the city's – and the nation's – most important public monument.

ARTICLES

Davis, Timothy, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, Washington, DC: The Evolution of a Contested Urban Landscape," Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes 19 (Summer 1999): whole issue

Field, Cynthia R., and Tilman, Jeffrey T., "Creating a Model for the National Mall: The Design of the National Museum of Natural History," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 63 (March 2004): 52-73

- Goode, James M., "Flying High: The Origin and Design of Washington National Airport," Washington History 1 (Fall 1989): 4-25, 98-99
- Griswold, Charles L., "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial and the Washington Mall: Philosophical Thoughts on Political Iconography," Critical Inquiry 12 (Summer 1986): 688-719
- Hoagland, Alison K., "Nineteenth-Century Building Regulations in Washington, D.C.," Records of the Columbia Historical Society 52 (1989): 57-77
- Longstreth, Richard, "The Neighborhood Shopping Center in Washington, D.C., 1930-1941," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 51 (March 1992): 5-34
- _____, "Washington and the Landscape of Fear," City & Society 18 (2006): 7-30
- Ochsner, Jeffrey Karl, "A Space of Loss: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial," Journal of Architectural Education 50 (1997): 156-171
- Rhoads, William B., "Franklin D. Roosevelt and Washington Architecture," Records of the Columbia Historical Society 52 (1989): 104-162
- Savage, Kirk, "The Self-Made Monument: George Washington and the Fight to Erect a National Memorial," Winterthur Portfolio 22 (Winter 1987): 225-242