



# **L'Enfant's Legacy: Public Open Spaces in Washington, D.C. (Creating the North American Landscape)**

*Michael Bednar*

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Many American democratic ideals are embodied in the public spaces of its cities, especially in Washington, D.C. In *L'Enfant's Legacy* architect and scholar Michael Bednar explores the public spaces of the nation's capital, examining the context of the surrounding architecture and the roles of the spaces in the changing functional life of the city.

Bednar examines the ways in which L'Enfant's innovative plan of 1791, along with later developments, symbolizes and encourages democratic freedoms and traditions. In the spaces of Capitol Square, citizens expect to encounter their government directly in a dignified setting, a symbolic public forum. On the White House grounds they expect to meet the president where he works and lives. At the National Mall?America's front lawn?citizens exercise their rights of assembly and free speech, as well as play football, eat lunch, and socialize.

From historic Lincoln Square, Dupont Circle, and Judiciary Square to the newly developed Freedom Plaza, Pershing Park, and Market Square, Bednar's thoughtful study provides a fresh perspective on the role of public space in the expression of democratic ideals.

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