

Lafayette Park Security Modifications

1600 H Street, NW, Washington, DC

Approval of Comments on Concept Plans

United States Department of the Interior

Project Summary

Commission Meeting Date: September 3, 2026

NCPC Review Authority: 40 U.S.C. § 8722(b)(1) and (d)

Applicant Request: Approval of Comments on Concept Plans

Session: Staff Presentation

NCPC Review Officer: Stephanie Free

NCPC File Number: 8802

Project Summary:

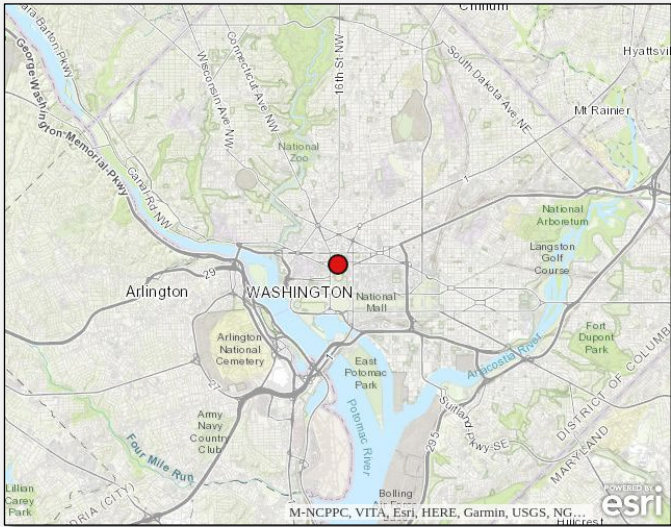
The United States Secret Service (USSS) and the Executive Office of the President (EOP), in coordination with the Department of Interior (DOI) and the National Park Service (NPS), requests comments on concept plans for a program of security and access improvements at Lafayette Park and its surrounding streets in northwest Washington, DC.

The proposal includes a new, 8- to 10-foot height fence and gates around the perimeter of the 8-acre park which occupies a full block north of the White House, bounded by H Street NW, Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Madison Place NW, and Jackson Place NW, with related corridors on Pennsylvania Avenue NW between 15th and 17th Streets NW and along Jackson and Madison Places.

The current reliance on temporary barriers, such as bike-rack fencing, anti-climb barricades, and modular panels, provides short-term control but imposes recurring setup, staffing, and operational burdens that degrade visitor experience and are not sustainable as a primary long-term strategy. The park cannot be easily secured during heightened conditions, and the approach is piecemeal and lacks a holistic framework.

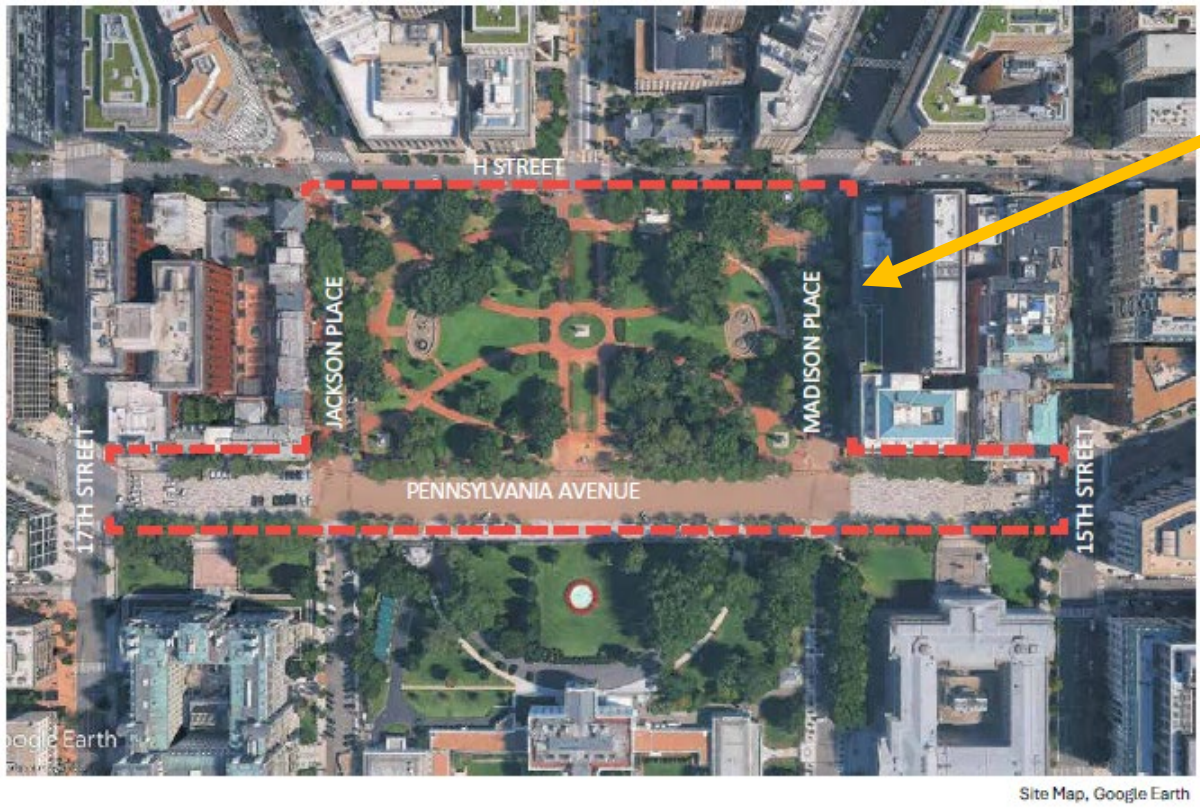
The objective of the project is to enhance long-term safety, preserve the park's identity as a significant NPS landscape, and maintain public access to this nationally symbolic space. It seeks to maintain a welcoming northern edge along H Street, NW and ensure public access to meaningful portions of the park, including views of the White House.

Site Location

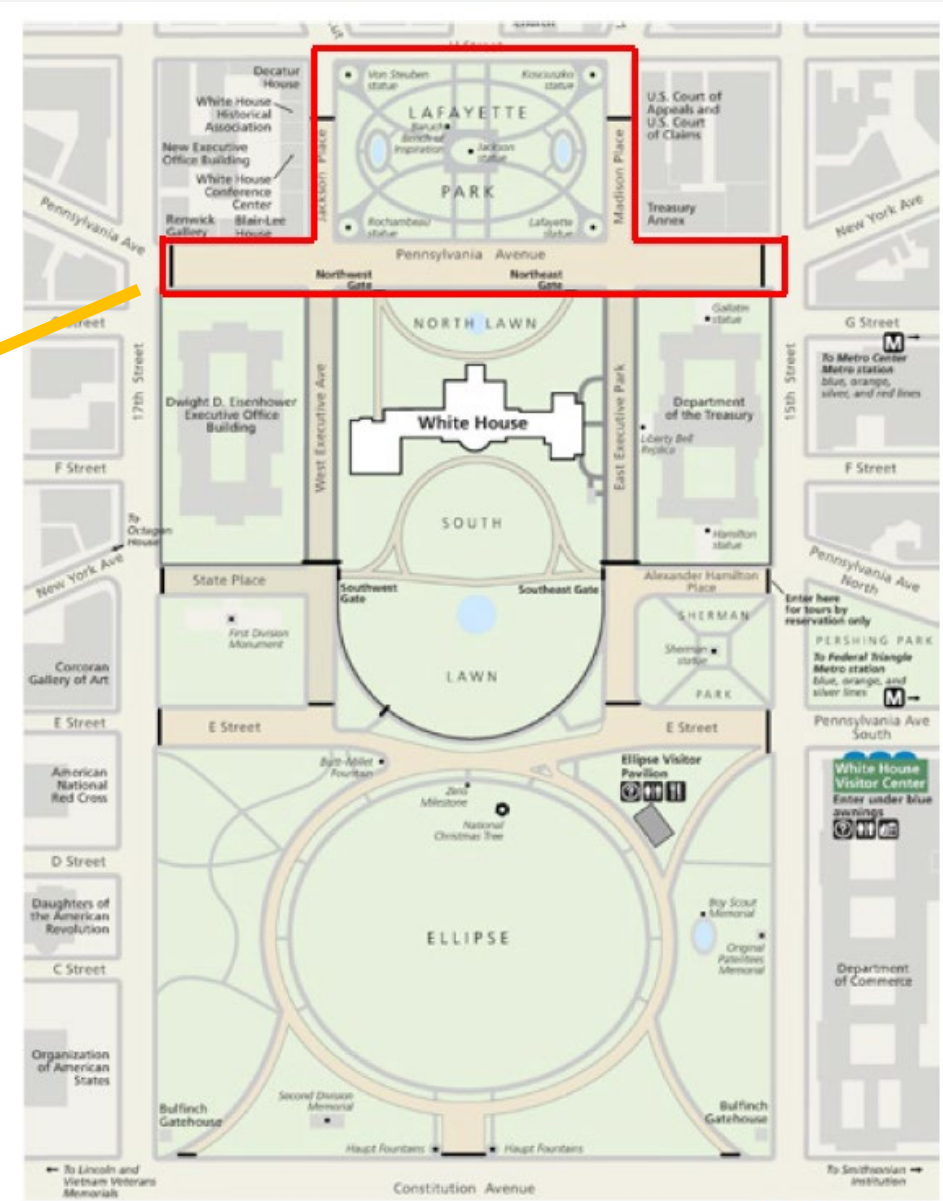


Location Map

Site Context and Location



Site Map, Google Earth



NPS President's Park Map

Site History

The siting and symbolic configuration of the landscape of the White House and President's Park as a centerpiece for the new federal city of Washington, D.C., were first articulated in plans prepared by Pierre Charles L'Enfant in 1791 and led to federal government acquisition of the necessary land, which became known first as Appropriation 1, and later Reservation 1.



LOC, 1857

President Thomas Jefferson authorizes separation of President's Park from White House Grounds

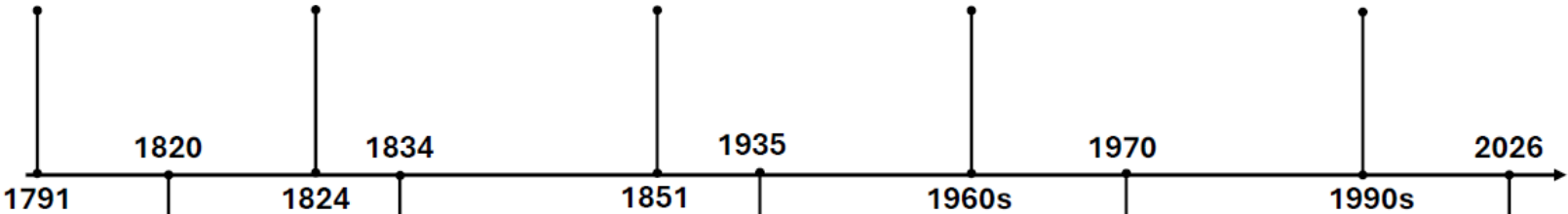
Architect Andrew Jackson Downing hired to design park grounds



John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston

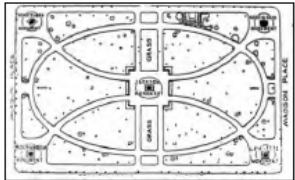
President Kennedy implements additional security measures at the park

Pennsylvania Avenue NW closed to vehicular traffic following the Oklahoma City Bombing



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NPS PRPA Lafayette Park, 2021



Library of Congress

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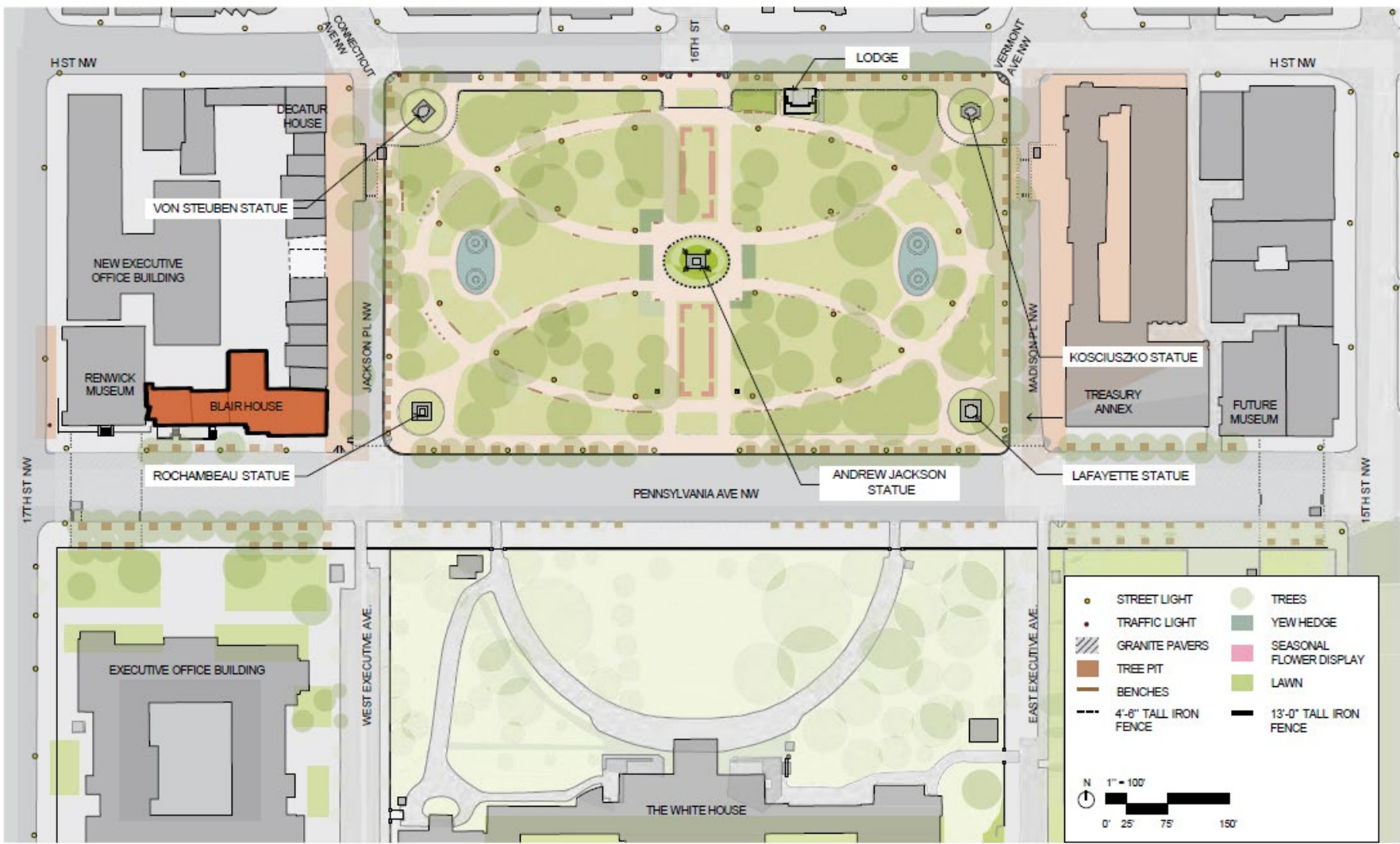
Lithograph, 1848



LOC, 1880

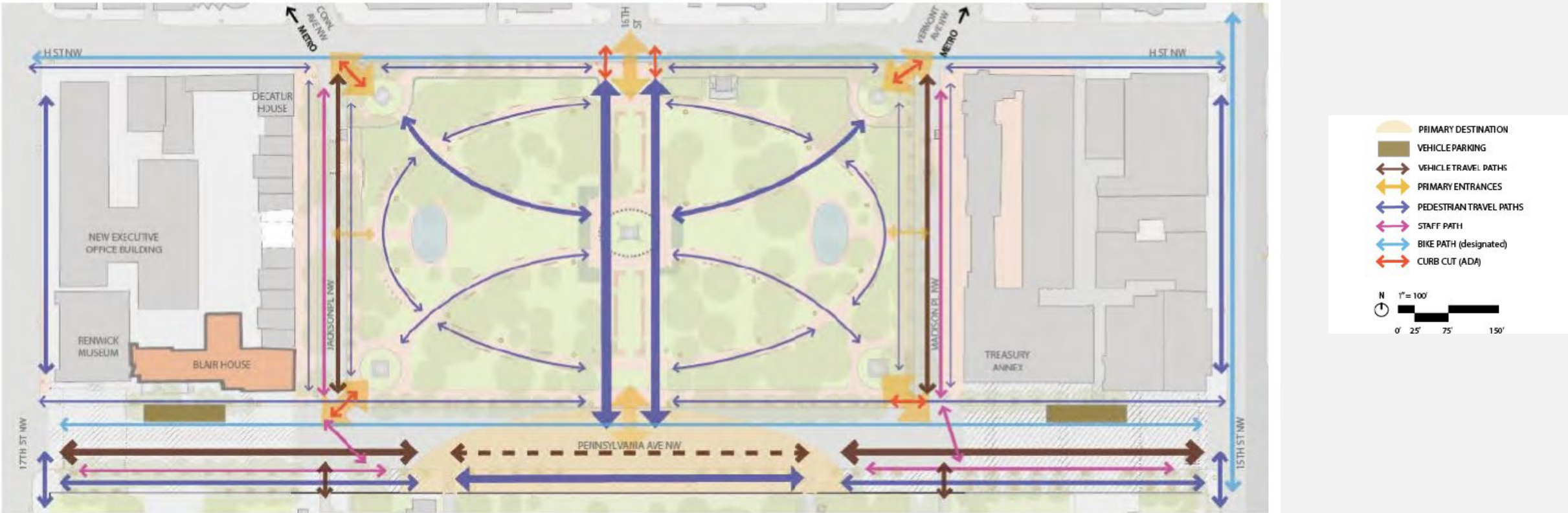
Existing Conditions – Site Plan

The 8-acre Lafayette Park project site comprises the entire block bounded by H Street NW, Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Madison Place NW, and Jackson Place NW.



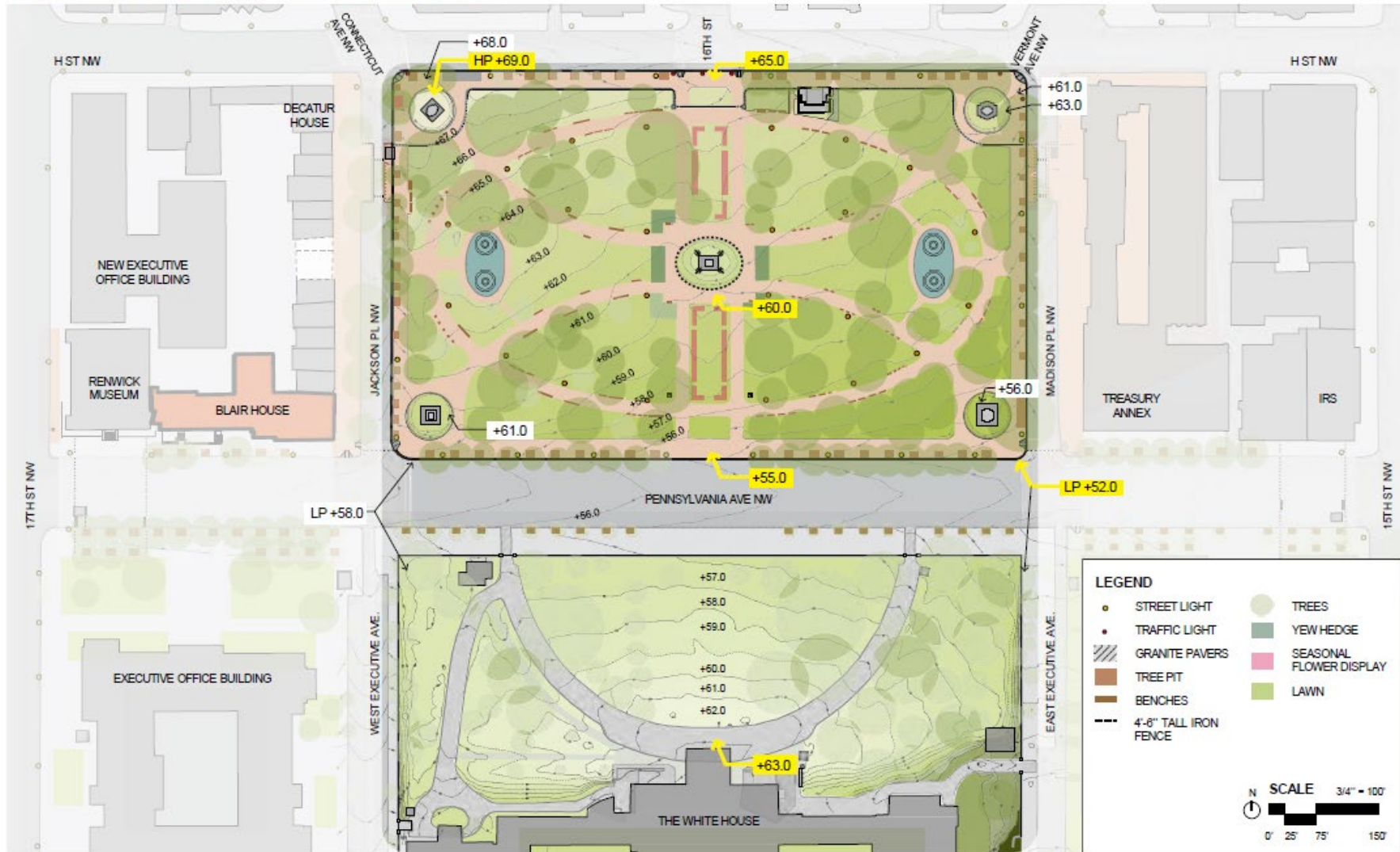
Existing Conditions - Circulation

Lafayette Park currently allows vehicular, pedestrian, and bike traffic on H Street. Pedestrian and bike traffic are allowed on Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Madison Place NW, and Jackson Place NW. Sally port entrances are located on the northern end of Jackson Place NW and Madison Place NW.



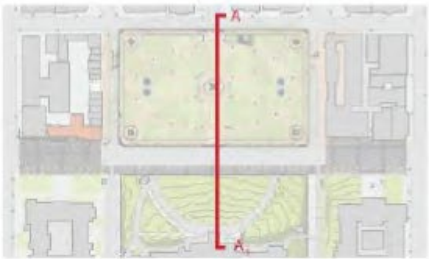
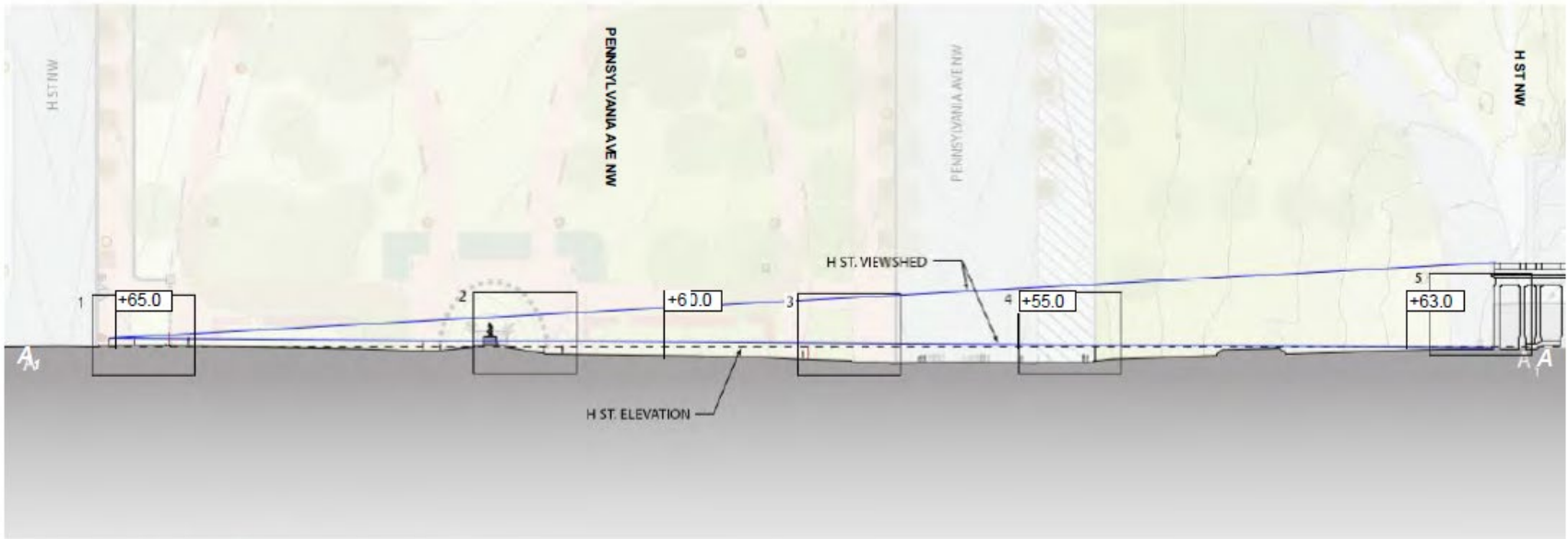
Topographic Plan

The topography of the site generally slopes from northwest to southeast.



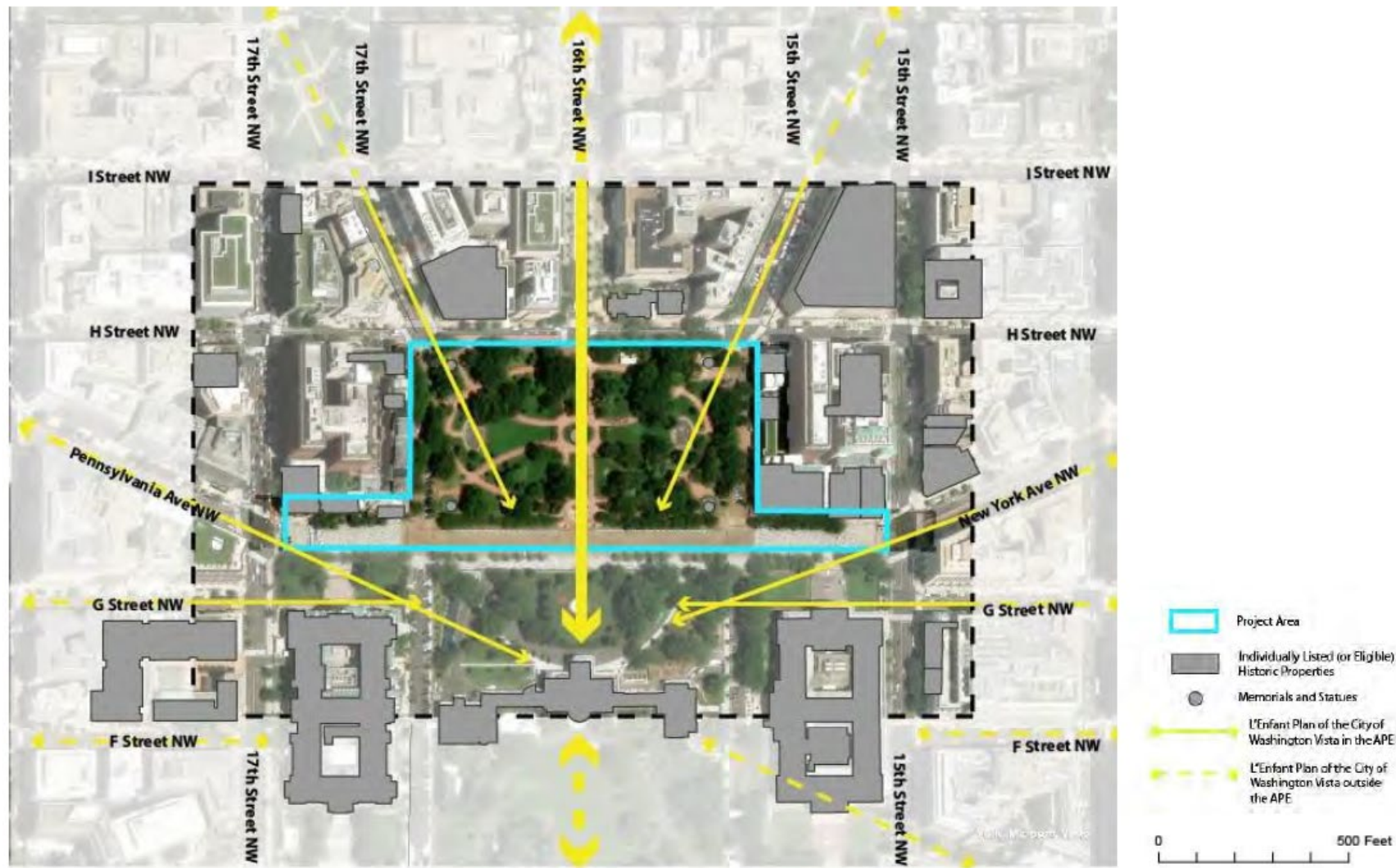
Existing Conditions – North/South Axis Section

Elevation of the park is highest at the White House and H Street NW at 63 feet and 65 feet respectively, with a decline to 55 feet of elevation at Pennsylvania Avenue NW.



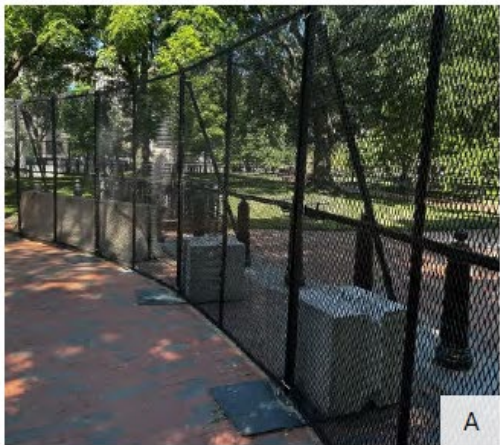
Existing Conditions – Contextual Views

This map shows the contextual view corridors through Lafayette Park from the surrounding streets within Washington, D.C. highlighted in yellow. Lafayette Park is outlined in light blue.



Existing Conditions – Temporary Security Barriers

Many types of barriers are currently in use within and around Lafayette Park. Below is a description of the temporary barriers and their locations.



Anti-scale fencing on H Street NW, June 2026



Anti-scale fencing and concrete barriers at H Street and 16th Street NW, June 2026



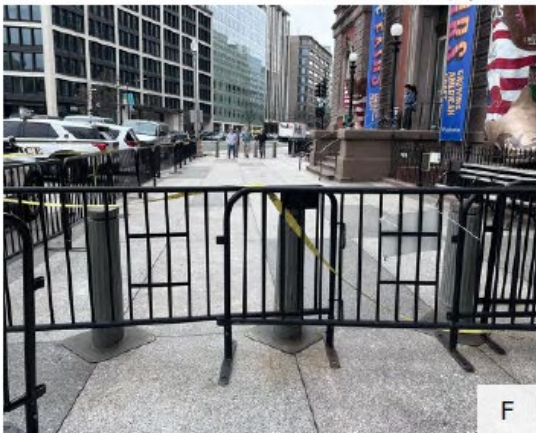
Bike rack barriers on Pennsylvania Avenue NW near the White House, April 2026



Chain link fencing on Jackson Place NW, April 2026



Bike rack barriers on Pennsylvania Avenue and 15th Street NW, April 2026



Bike rack barriers on Pennsylvania Avenue and 17th Street NW, April 2026

Existing Conditions – Temporary Security Barriers

Currently, Lafayette Park has temporary fencing enclosing the park. Pictures below shows temporary fencing surrounding the park, with fence heights ranging from 4' bike racks and concrete barriers to 10' temporary fencing, shown below. Personnel is required to transport temporary barriers to the park, set up the fencing, and secure the panels to each other to ensure their stability. The set up of temporary fencing can take as long as 72 hours, and dismantling the barriers can take equally as long. The added personnel needed to implement this measure, along with the unappealing aesthetics of this fencing, led to the dismissal of this solution.



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Past Fencing Alignment

According to *Cultural Landscape Report: Site History and Evaluation, 1791-1994, The White House and President's Park*, Lafayette Park (Lafayette Square) was first enclosed with a wood fence by 1826. In 1845 a program was initiated to improve many of the "streets, avenues, and public reservations" in the city of Washington. The reservations designated were Lafayette Square, President's Park South], Fountain Square, the National Mall, and the vacant ground adjoining the U.S. Capitol. As part of this program, an estimate was given to enclose "Lafayette Square" with posts and wood railings "of the best materials," possibly to replace the enclosure that existed in 1826. In 1853, the old wood fence was replaced with an iron fence, and gaslights were installed in the park. From 1888-1889, the iron fence around Lafayette Park was removed and sent to the Gettysburg Memorial Association to be used at the National Cemetery. This removal was attributed to pressure from nearby residents. In 1889, as a replacement to the fencing, funding for granite curbs was requested on behalf of the NPS.



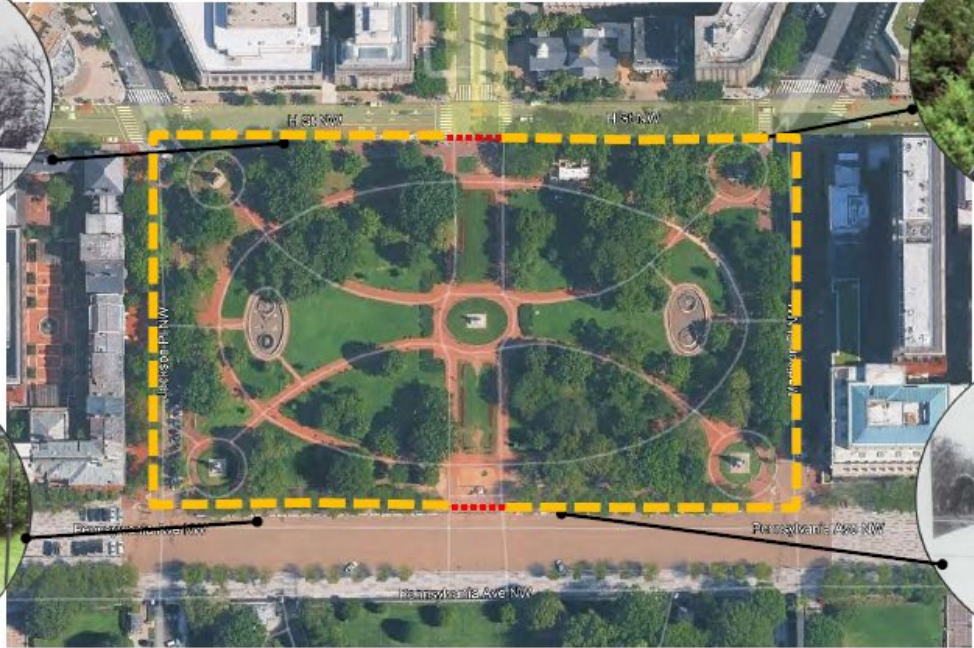
Lafayette Park from H Street, CFA 1885



Finial on Original Lafayette Park Fence, 2009



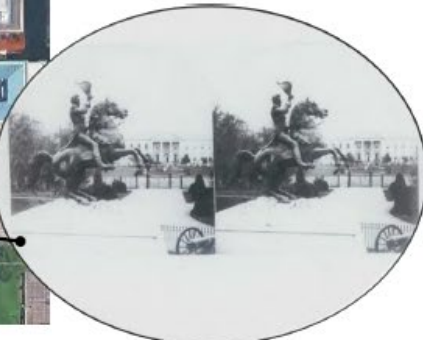
Original Lafayette Park Iron Fence, Located in Gettysburg Cemetery, 2009



1853 Iron Fence Perimeter



1853 Iron Fence Gate

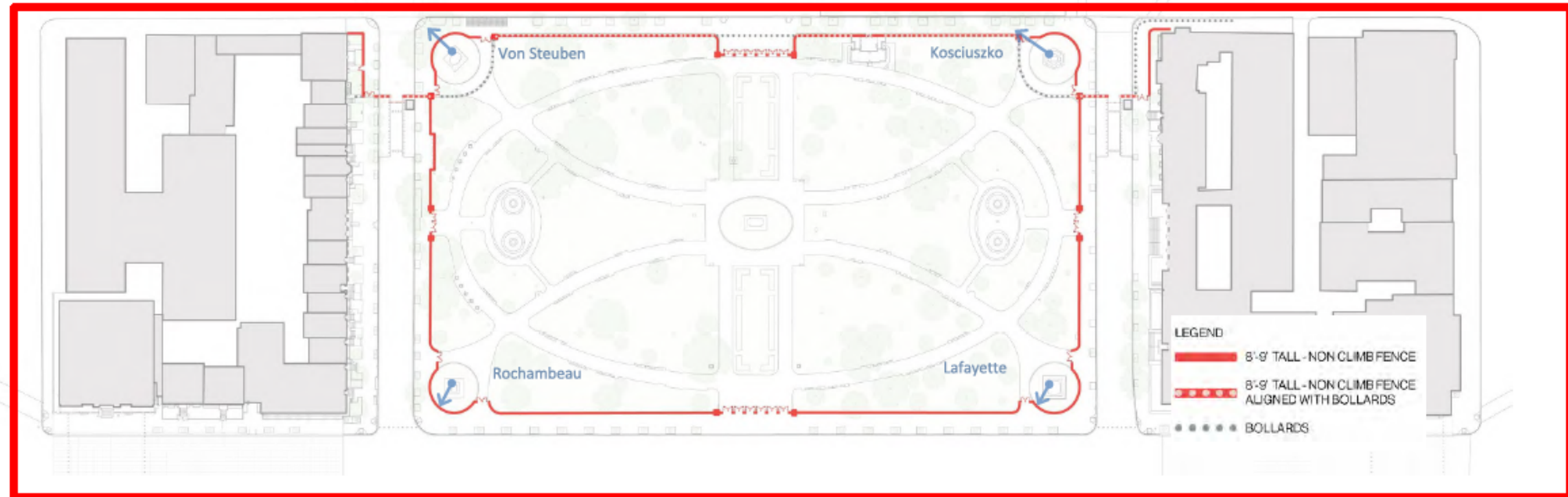


Lafayette Park Fence Gate, 1853-1889

Fencing Alternative – Alignment 1 (Preferred)

The preferred alignment places the fence along the perimeter of Lafayette Park. The alignment allows flexibility in the North Center Entry gates' placement and style to allow for wider openings. It also provides for a larger hardscape plaza at H Street NW, which will allow for First Amendment gathering activities when the park is closed. Overall, this combination provides a more open visitor experience along H Street while still maintaining security standards needed to secure the park during key moments.

 Recommended Alternative



Positives for Visitor Use:

- Allows flexibility in North Center Entry gates placement and style to allow for wider openings because it is no longer aligned with bollards
- Enables hardscape plaza at H and 16th Streets NW, which allows gathering for First Amendment activities when park is closed
- Retains existing park bench locations
- Offers access to statues during Pennsylvania Avenue NW closure

Positives for Operations:

- Swings gates out of the Park towards H Street NW, in the direction of egress
- Accommodates Inauguration stands
- Establishes multiple gates to facilitate egress

Negatives for Visitor Use:

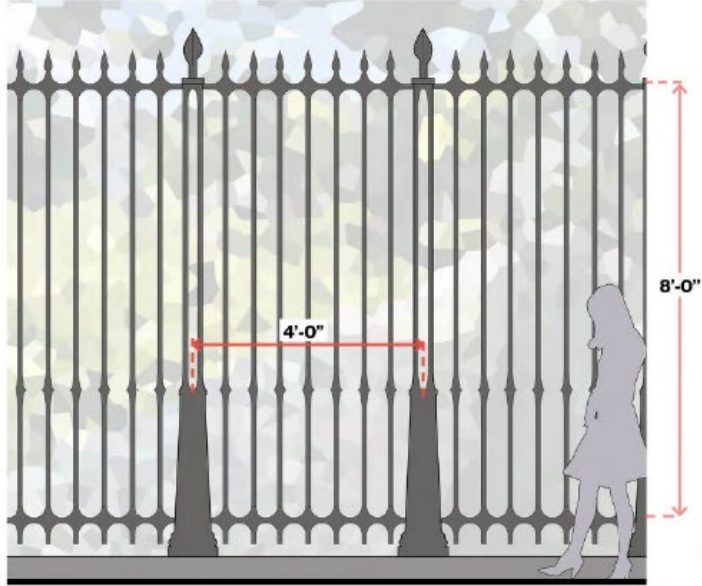
- Adds additional barrier line due to moved bollards to entrance along H Street NW at 16th Street NW
- Emphasizes closed feeling of the park due to continuous fencing directly along H Street NW, except at North Center Entry
- Limits viewing area when Pennsylvania Avenue is closed

Negatives for Operations:

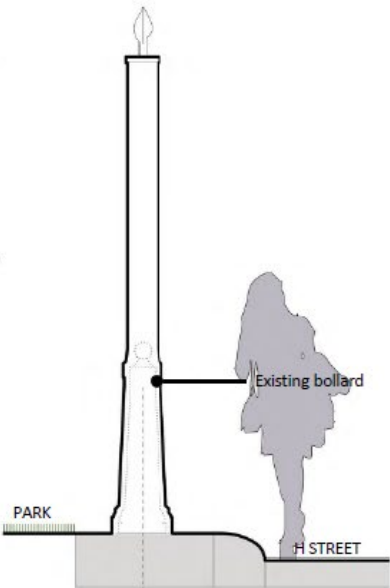
- None identified

Alignment 1 (Preferred) – Integrated Bollard

The recommended approach for Lafayette Park includes 4" spacing and incorporation of existing bollards, tapering towards the top of the fence. This option is the recommended alternative should the alignment follow the existing bollards.



FENCE ELEVATION AT H STREET



FENCE SECTION



FENCE PLAN



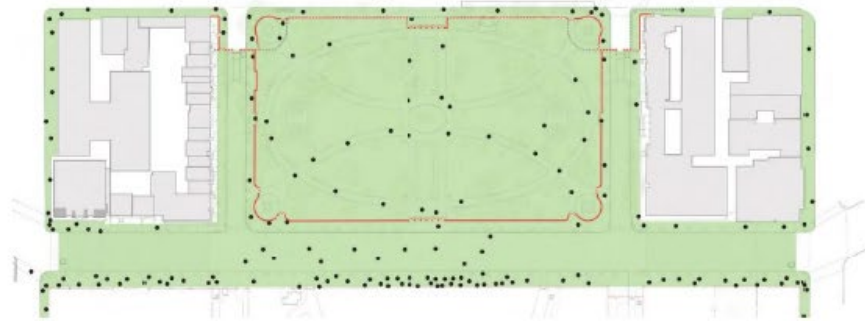
FENCE MATERIAL

Painted steel

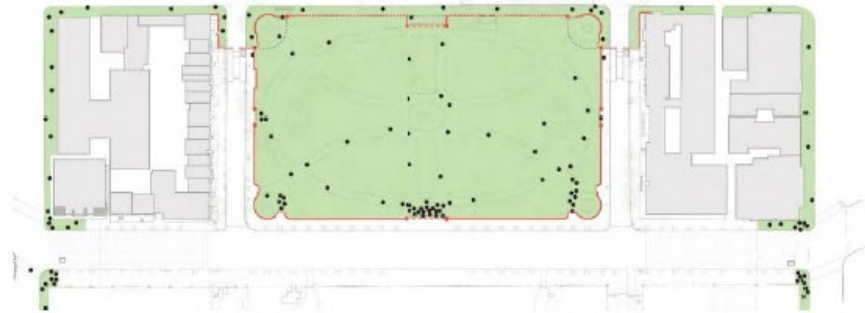
Alignment 1 (Preferred) – Access Scenarios

The below graphics show Lafayette Park with the preferred alignment implemented and how access to the park would be affected in different security scenarios. Green areas symbolize spaces where the public could access in each scenario, with the black dots representing members of the public. It is anticipated that future submissions will provide data on park closures.

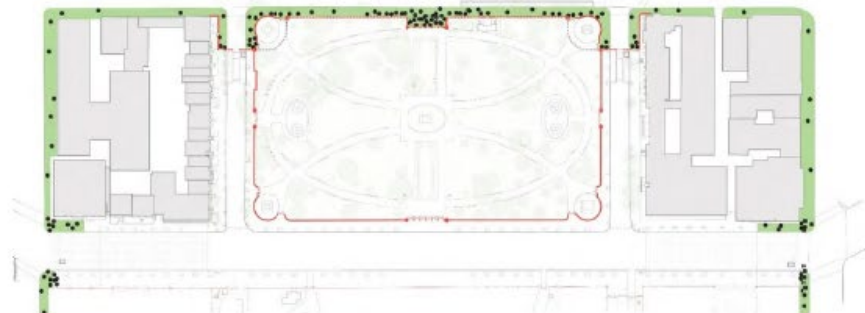
TYPICAL CONDITION



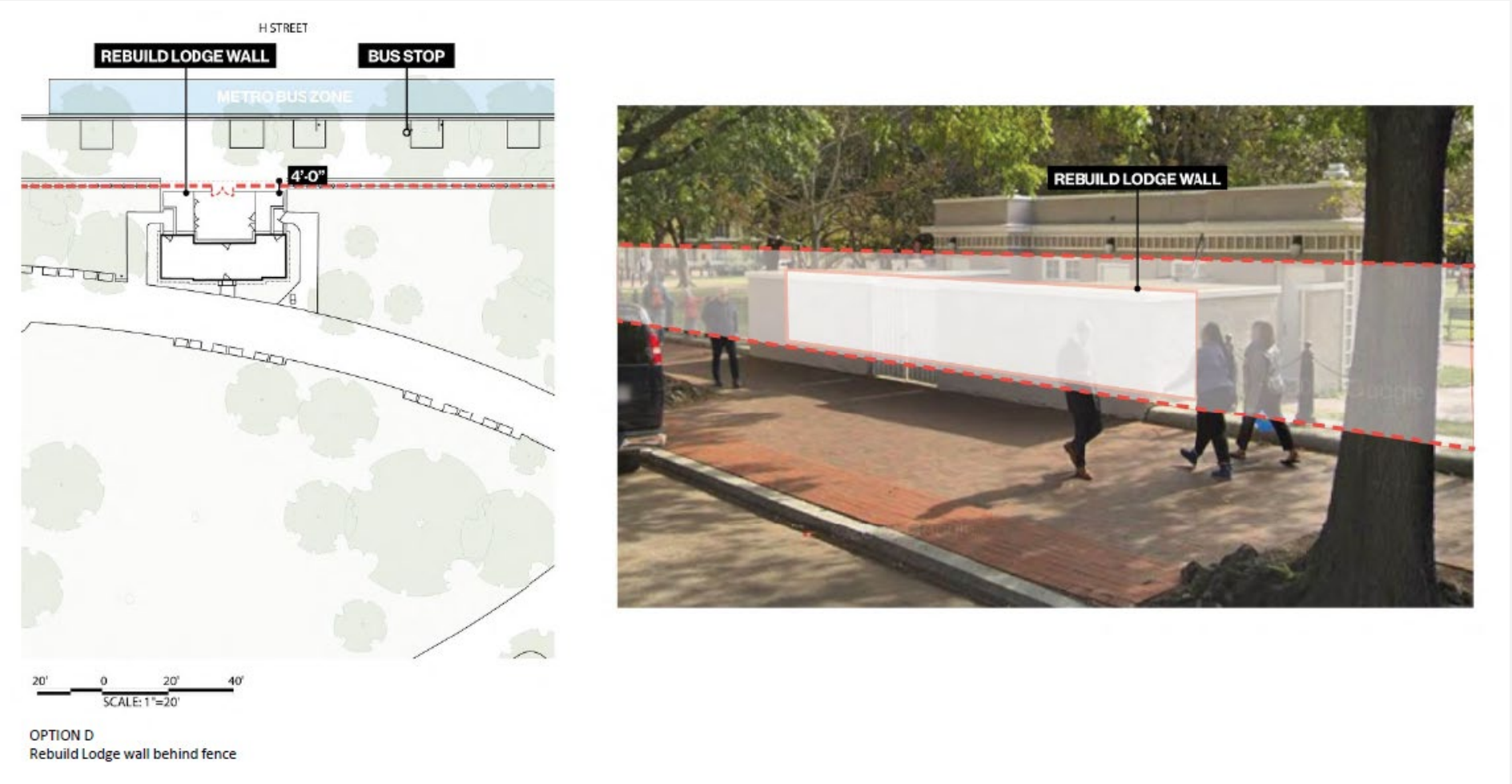
TEMPORARY PARTIAL CLOSURE



TEMPORARY FULL CLOSURE



Alignment 1 Alignment 1 (Preferred) – Lodge Treatment



Alignment 1 (Preferred) – Visualization

This rendering shows the preferred fence alignment, Alignment 1, with piers on either side of the northern fence gates on 16th Street NW and H Street NW. The gates allow visitors to move freely in and out of the park when open. The below configuration also allows for a sizable viewing area of the park on H Street NW when the gates are closed.



Alignment 1 (Preferred) – Visualization

This rendering shows the preferred fence alignment, Alignment 1, with piers on either side of the northern fence gates on 16th Street NW and H Street NW. The below configuration also allows for a sizable viewing area of the park on H Street NW when the gates are closed. This view is shown at eye level across the street from the Lafayette Park.



Alignment 1a – Visualization

This rendering shows the preferred fence alignment with an altered gate configuration, referred to as Alignment 1A. Two sets of gates open on either side of the center fencing panel. Piers are present on either side of the gate openings on 16th Street NW and H Street NW, and the middle fencing panel lines up with the Andrew Jackson statue and the White House. This positioning would provide a less obstructive viewing area for patrons of the park.



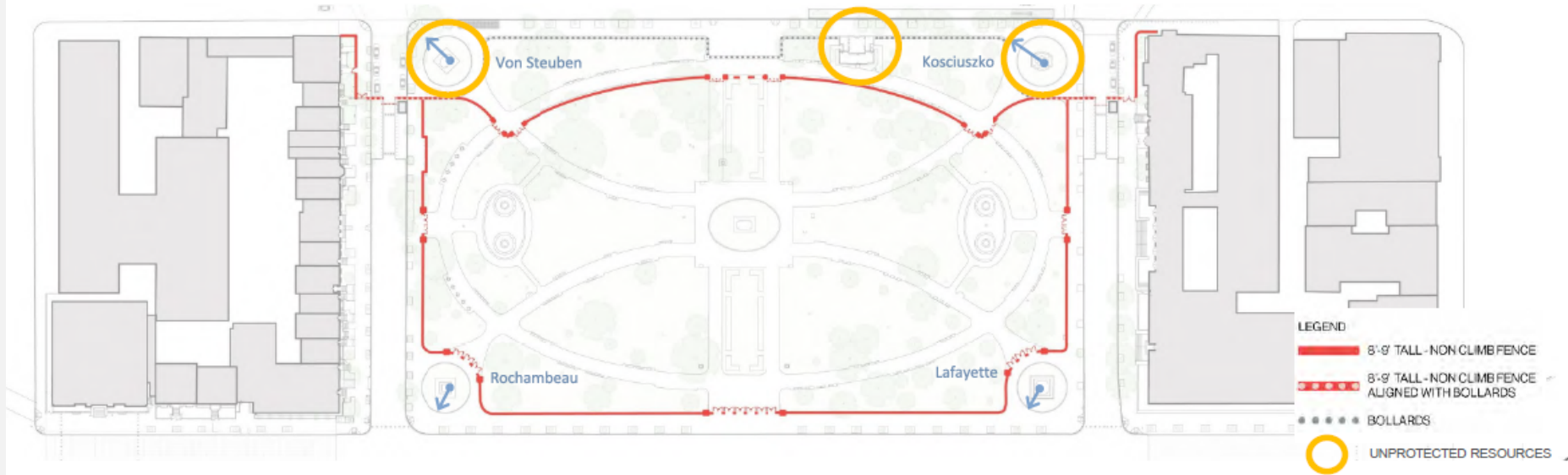
Alignment 1b – Visualization

This rendering shows the preferred fence alignment with an altered gate configuration, referred to as Alignment 1B. Two sets of gates open on either side of the center gate section. Piers are present on either side of the gate openings on 16th Street NW and H Street NW, and the middle set of gates has 10 metal posts and 11 gate openings. This allows the middle gate opening to line up with the Andrew Jackson statue and the White House to provide a less obstructive view for patrons of the park.



Fencing Alternative – Alignment 2

The alignment of Alignment 2 allows flexibility in the North Center Entry gates style to allow for wider openings. The fencing is placed so that statues remain open to the public at all corners of the park. It also allows a larger hardscape plaza at H Street NW, which will allow for First Amendment gathering activities when the park is closed. Lafayette Lodge will be enclosed with this fence line as well, providing additional security to the structure. Overall, this combination allows the park's statues to remain open to the public regardless of closures, and the perimeter allows for the maintenance of security standards needed to secure the park during key moments.



Positives for Visitor Use:

- Enables larger hardscape plaza at H and 16th Streets NW, which allows gathering for First Amendment activities when park is closed
- Enables more access to park north of fence line along H Street NW, including northern corners, during Park closures
- Provides more open visitor experience along H Street NW
- Appears less imposing due to curvature of fence line
- Allows circulation within southern elliptical walkway during Pennsylvania Avenue NW closure
- Maintains statues open to Pennsylvania Avenue NW

Positives for Operations:

- Swings gates from Pennsylvania Avenue NW into the Park, in the direction of egress
- Accommodates Inauguration stands
- Establishes multiple gates to facilitate egress

Negatives for Visitor Use:

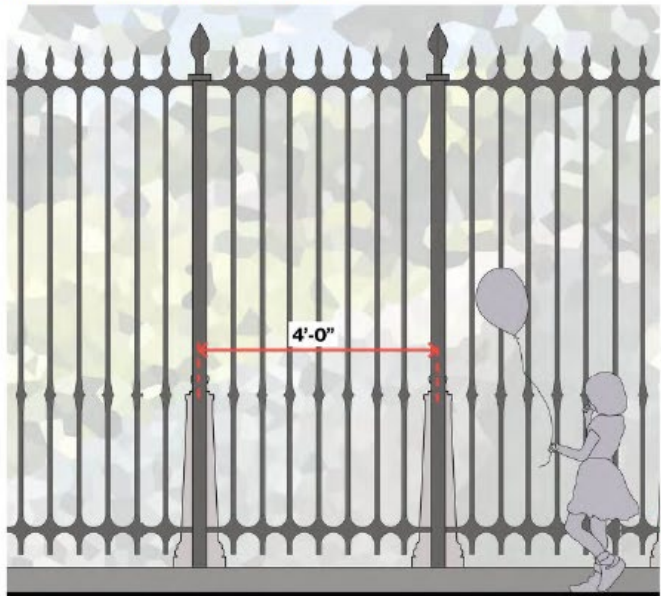
- Adds additional barrier line due to fence relocated inboard of entrance along H Street NW at 16th Street NW
- Potentially requires existing benches to be relocated
- Constrains potential gate locations at north center entry
- Limits viewing area when Pennsylvania Avenue is closed

Negatives for Operations:

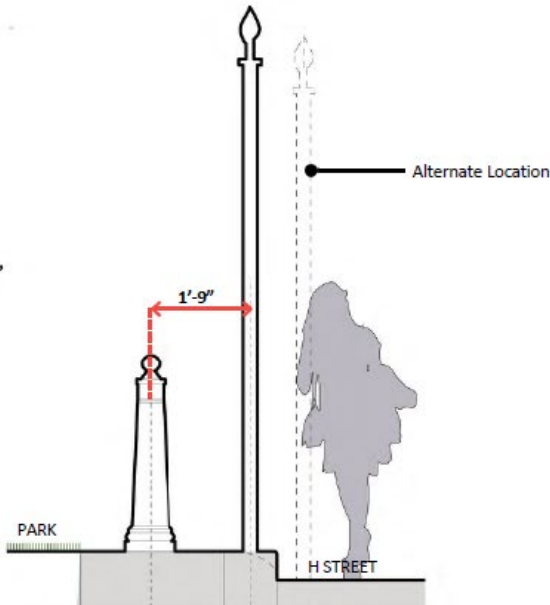
- Places Lafayette Lodge outside the fence line
- Exposes two statues on H Street NW to potential to vandalism
- Swings East and West gates swing into the Park, against the direction of egress
- Swings north side gates in against the direction of egress from the Park

Alignment 2 – Fence Separate from Bollard

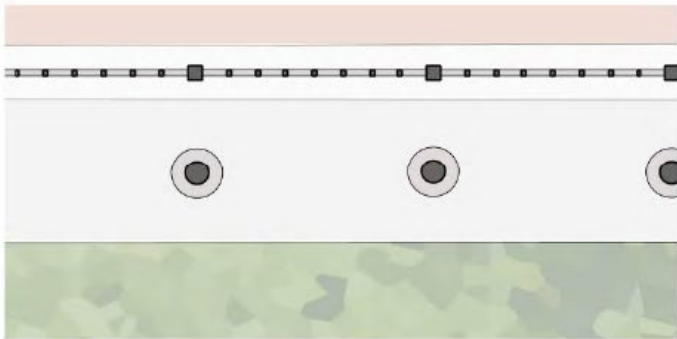
Other options for Lafayette Park included placing fencing in front of bollards.



FENCE ELEVATION AT H STREET



FENCE SECTION



FENCE PLAN

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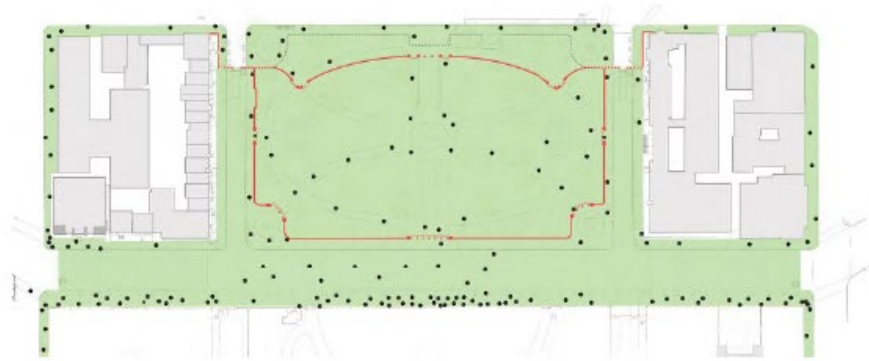
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Alignment 2 – Access Scenarios

The below graphics show Lafayette Park with the preferred alignment implemented and how access to the park would be affected in different security scenarios. Green areas symbolize spaces where the public could be present in each scenario, with the black dots representing members of the public.

TYPICAL CONDITION



TEMPORARY PARTIAL CLOSURE



TEMPORARY FULL CLOSURE



Alignment 2 – Visualization

This rendering shows Alignment 2 with two sets of gate openings on either side of a center fencing panel. Two sets of gates open on either side of the center fencing panel on 16th Street NW and H Street NW, and the middle fencing panel lines up with the Andrew Jackson statue and the White House. This positioning will provide a less obstructive viewing area for patrons of the park. The below configuration also allows for a sizable viewing area of the park on H Street NW and the northern path of the park when the gates are closed.



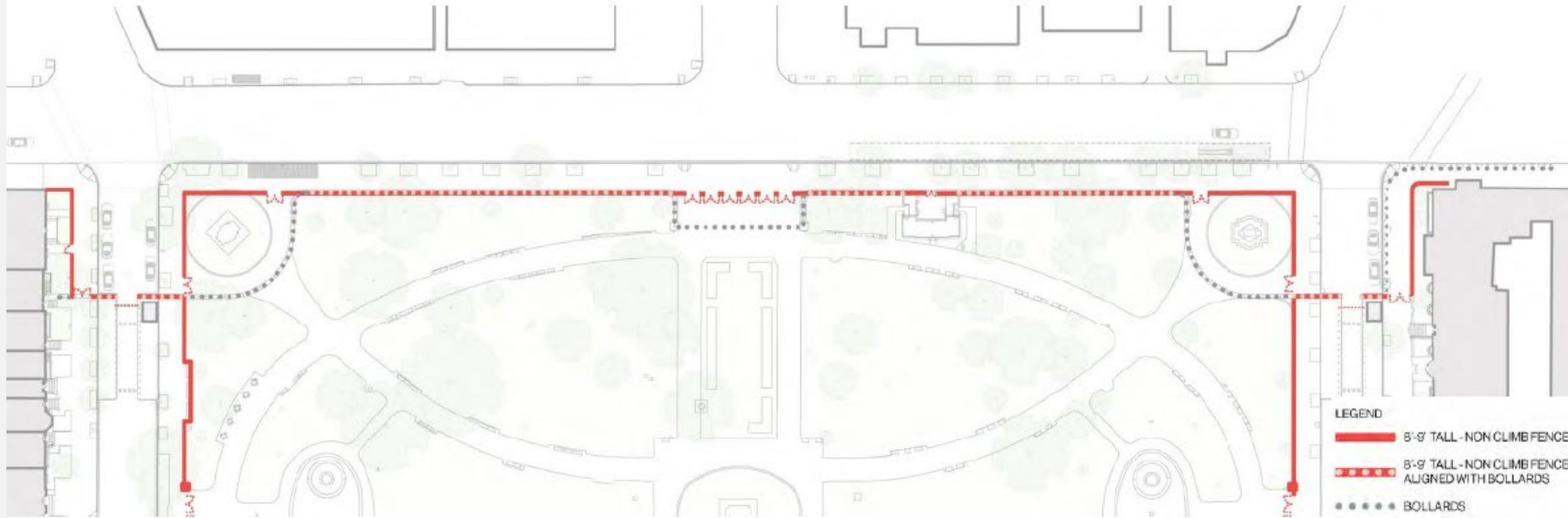
Alignment 2 – Visualization

This rendering shows Alignment 2 with two sets of gate openings on either side of a center fencing panel. Two sets of gates open on either side of the center fencing panel on 16th Street NW and H Street NW, and the middle fencing panel lines up with the Andrew Jackson statue and the White House. This positioning will provide a less obstructive viewing area for patrons of the park. The below configuration also allows for a sizable viewing area of the park on H Street NW and the northern path of the park when the gates are closed. This view is shown at eye level across the street from the Lafayette Park.



Fencing Alternative – Alignment 3

Another alignment along the northern portion of Lafayette Park explored installing a fence straight along H Street NW. This alignment allows flexibility in the North Center Entry gates' placement and style to enable wider openings. It does not provide a plaza at H Street NW for First Amendment gathering activities when the park is closed. Overall, this combination provides a secure perimeter along H Street that maintains security standards needed to secure the park during key moments. This exploration does not currently include assessments of a southern alignment.



Positives for Visitor Use:

- Allows flexibility in North Center Entry gates placement and style to allow for wider openings because it is no longer aligned with bollards
- Retains existing park bench locations

Positives for Operations:

- Protects the Lafayette Lodge and statues

Negatives for Visitor Use:

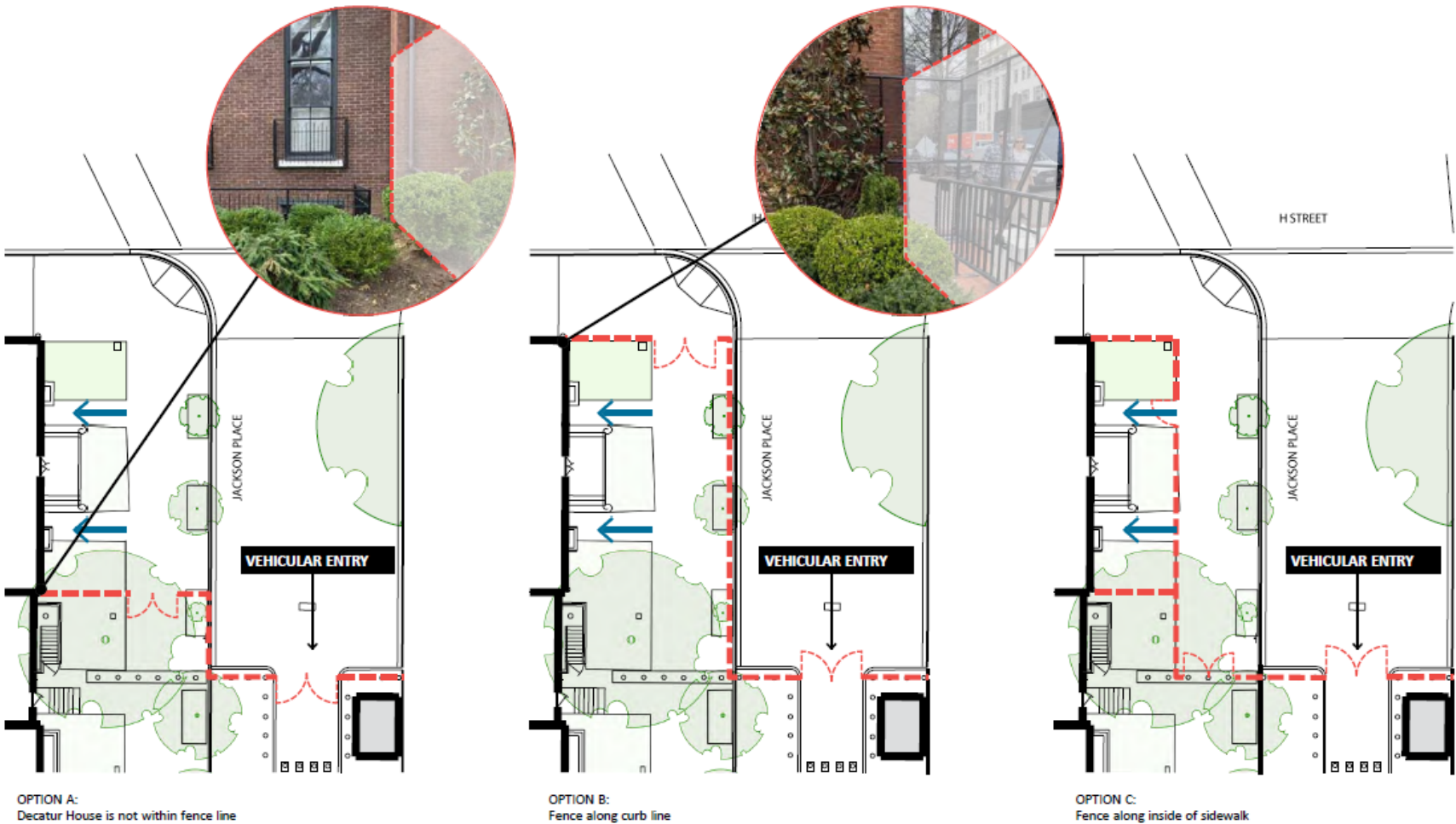
- Emphasizes closed feeling of the park due to continuous fencing directly along H Street NW
- Limits viewing area when the park is closed
- Closes northern corners of the Park, limiting access during Park closures
- Limits access to statues

Negatives for Operations:

- Swings north side gates into the Park, against the direction of egress
- Exposes pedestrian gates at 16th and H Streets NW to potential vehicle intrusions

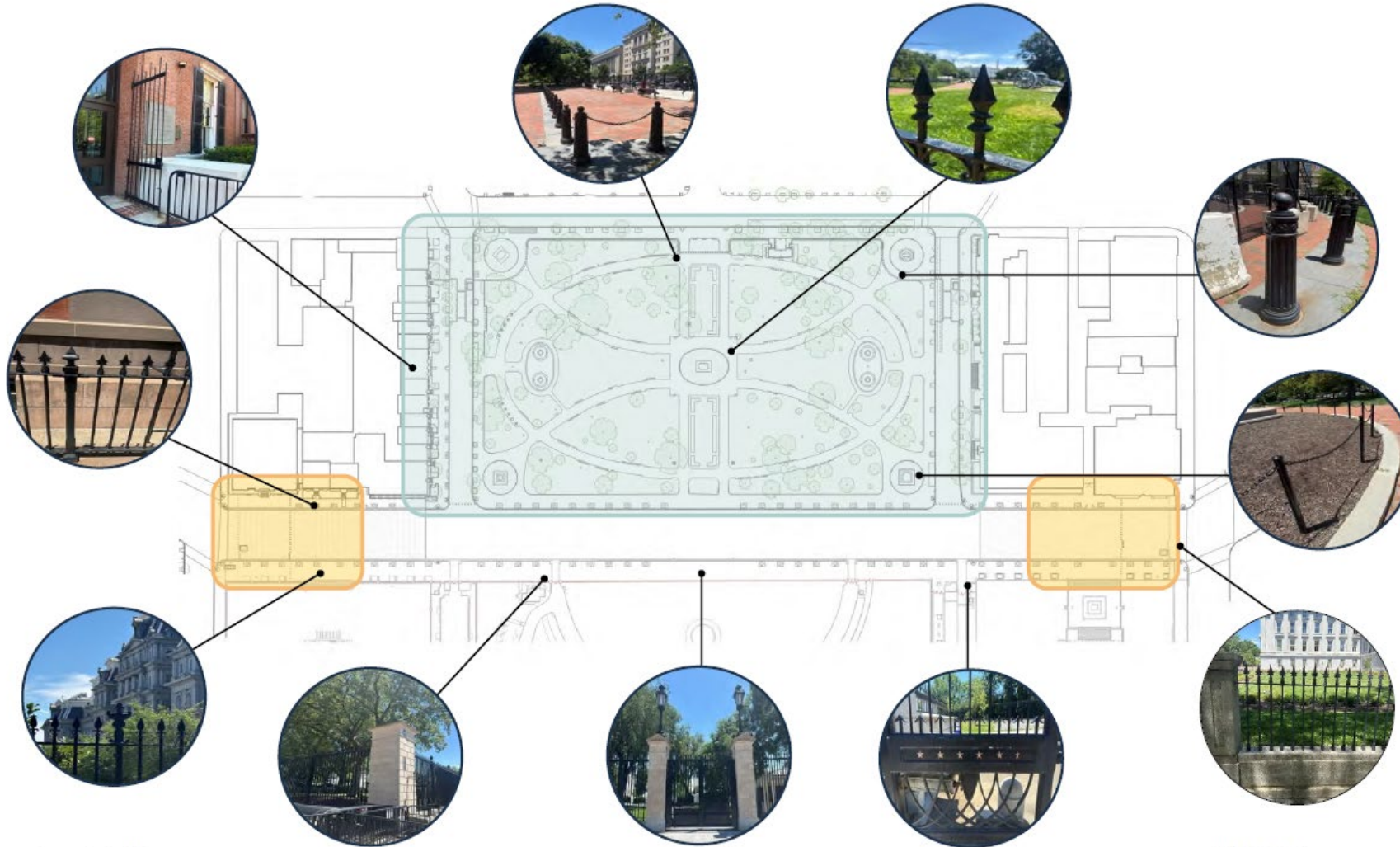
White House Historical Society Alignments

Multiple fence alignments at the White House Historical Society could address security requirements. Fence alignments would extend to the edge of the Decatur House to prevent trespassers and fence scaling near the Blair House.



Fence Character – Existing Context

The project area includes historic Lafayette Park and intersections with Pennsylvania Avenue NW, which as has had more recent interventions that are more contemporary in character.



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Fence Character – Current and Historic Fences

The project area has had multiple fencing types over time.



TREASURY BUILDING



ANDREW JACKSON STATUE



EISENHOWER EXECUTIVE OFFICE BUILDING



WHITE HOUSE FENCE



HISTORIC WHITE HOUSE FENCE



HISTORIC LAFAYETTE PARK FENCE



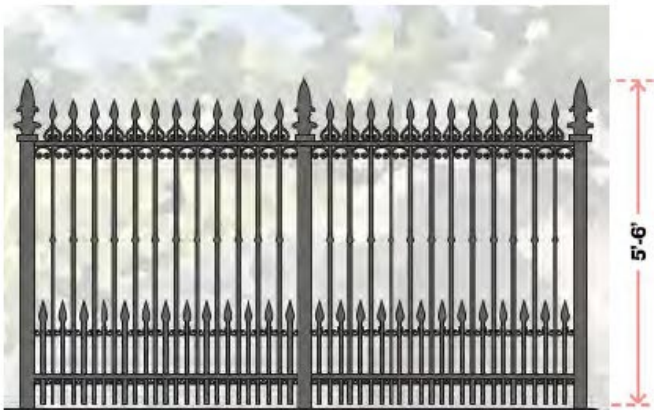
HISTORIC LAFAYETTE PARK FENCE
(Current location at Gettysburg National Cemetery)

Historic Fence Adapted

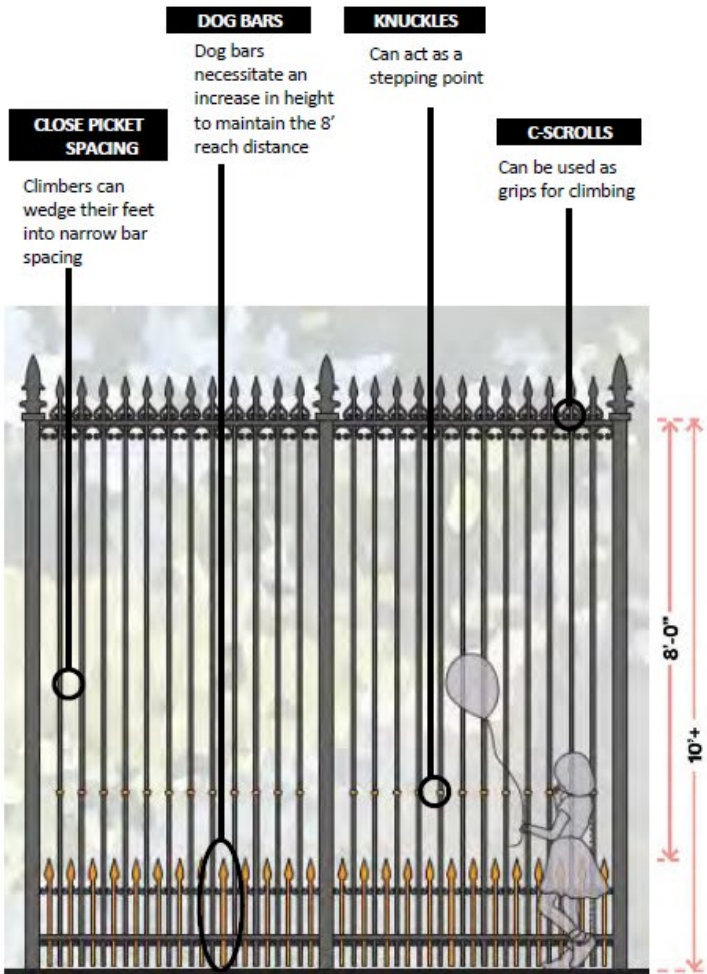
In the past, Lafayette Park had a 5'-6" fence enclosing the park. Below is an image of the original historical fence, currently located at Gettysburg National Cemetery. An illustration below that image shows the original dimensions of the historical fence. Due to present day security needs, the proposed Lafayette Park fence would need to be 8' to 10'. The graphic on the right-hand side shows the fence dimensions if the historic fence was raised to the fence height appropriate for present-day security concerns.



HISTORIC LAFAYETTE PARK FENCE
(Current location at Gettysburg National Cemetery)



Historic Fence



Historic Fence - At Required Height

Picket Spacing

The suggested approach to picket spacing would meet security requirements while still appearing porous and allowing views.

 Recommended Alternative



3" SPACING BETWEEN PICKETS

Narrow spacing
obstructs views



4" SPACING BETWEEN PICKETS

4" maximum to prevent
passing of a child through
opening



5" SPACING BETWEEN PICKETS

Spacing is too wide to
create a secure fence

Character Exploration – Bollard-Fence Integration

Below is a rendering of the Lafayette Park fence shown with different integrated bollard treatments. The top option features a rounded bollard cover, and the bottom option features a square bollard cover.



Rounded Bollard Cover



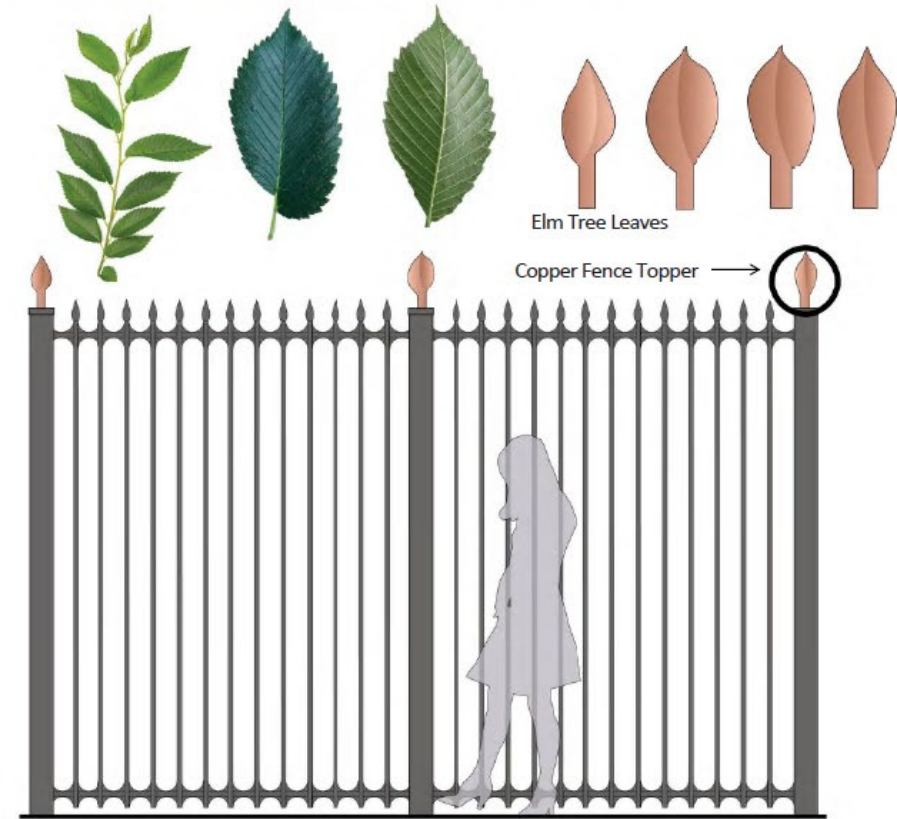
Squared Bollard Cover

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Character Exploration – Post Finials

The historic Lafayette Square fence posts were capped with post finials which resembled corn cobs, expressing the importance of agriculture during its time of construction. Various post finials positioned throughout Lafayette Square and President's Park are displayed to the right. The new post finials reference Elm leaves, a key landscape feature throughout Lafayette Square and Presidents Park. Elm leaves are always individually distinct and asymmetrical, referencing our collective American Heritage.

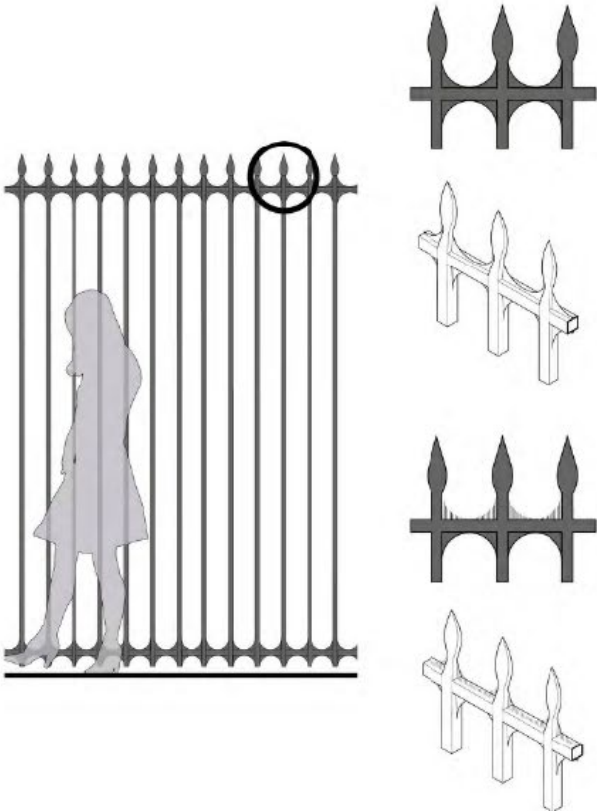
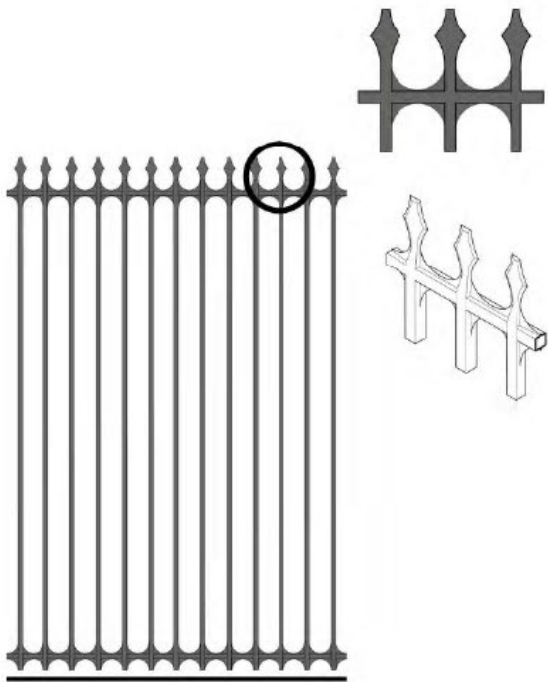


Historic Fence
"Corn Cob" Topper



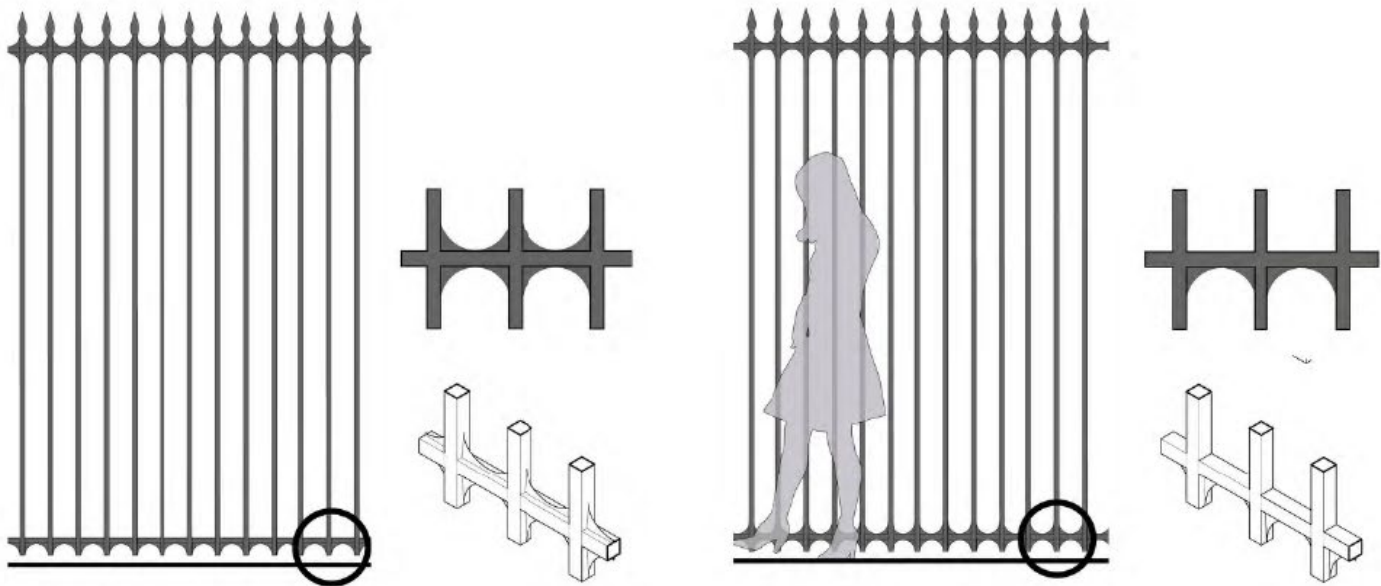
Character Exploration – Picket Finials

Various picket finials positioned throughout Lafayette Square and President's Park are displayed to the right. Below are some potential options for finials which will align with the character of the park as well as security standards.



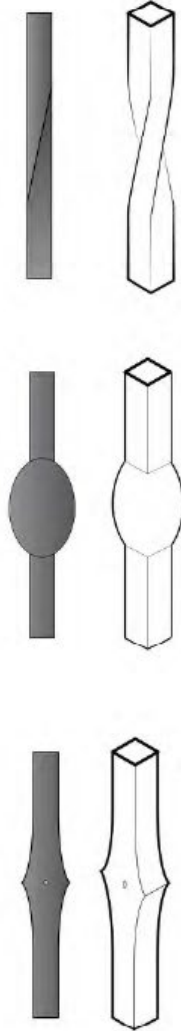
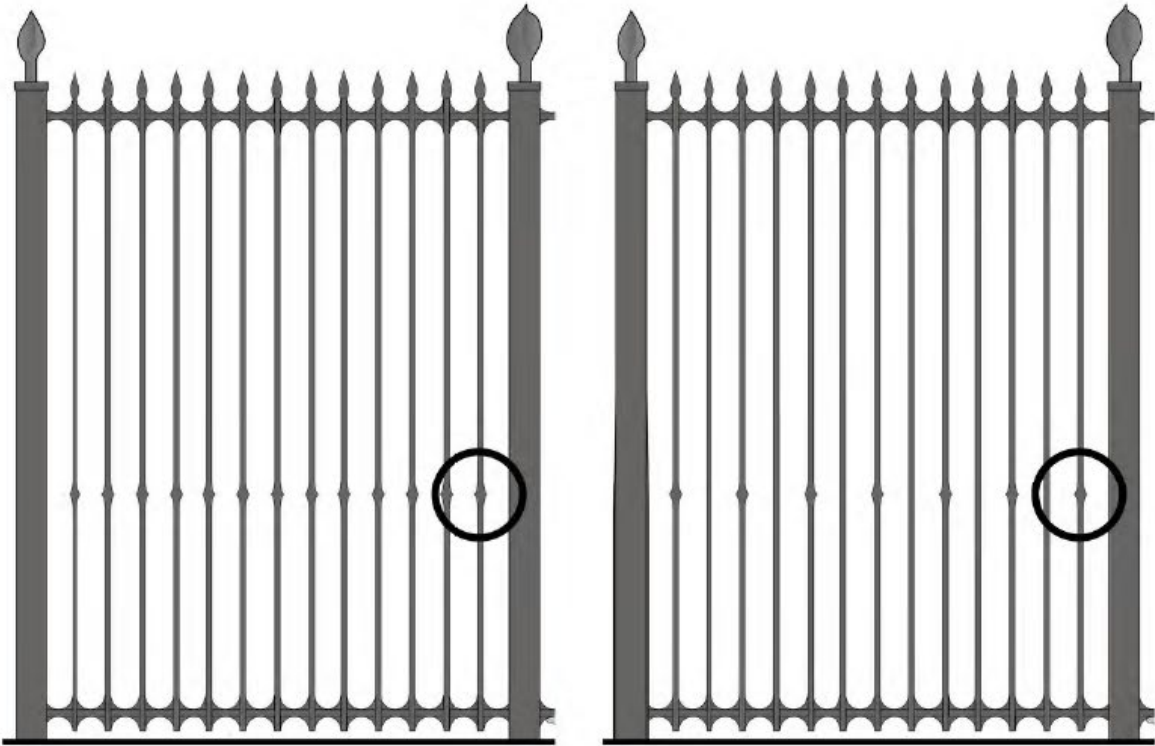
Character Exploration – Picket Elements

Various fence bases positioned throughout Lafayette Square and President's Park are displayed to the right. Below are some potential options for fence bases which will align with the character of the park as well as security standards.



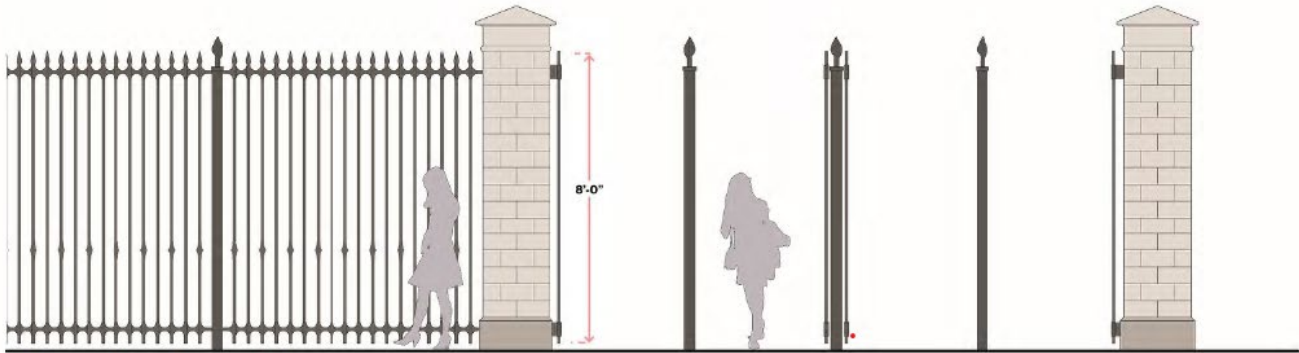
Character Exploration – Picket Elements

Various knuckles and c-scrolls positioned throughout Lafayette Square and President's Park are displayed to the right. Below are some potential options for fence knuckles which will align with the character of the park as well as security standards.

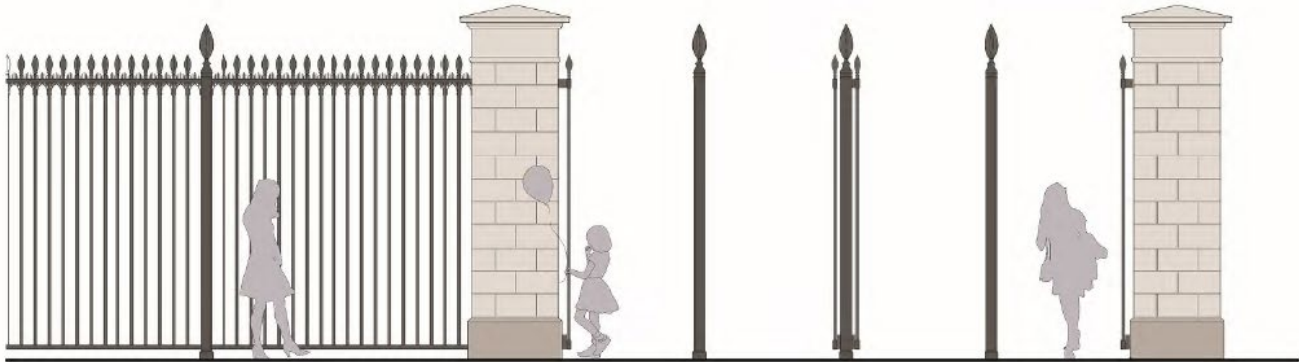


Character Exploration – Comparison to White House Fence

Various piers positioned throughout Lafayette Square and President's Park are displayed to the right. Below are some potential options for piers which will align with the character of the park as well as security standards. The top option is the proposed fencing character for Lafayette Park with added piers, and the bottom option is a scaled representation of the White House fence transposed into the dimensions and specifications of a potential Lafayette Park fence. To the right, images of the current White House piers and fence are shown.



Proposed Fencing Character with Piers

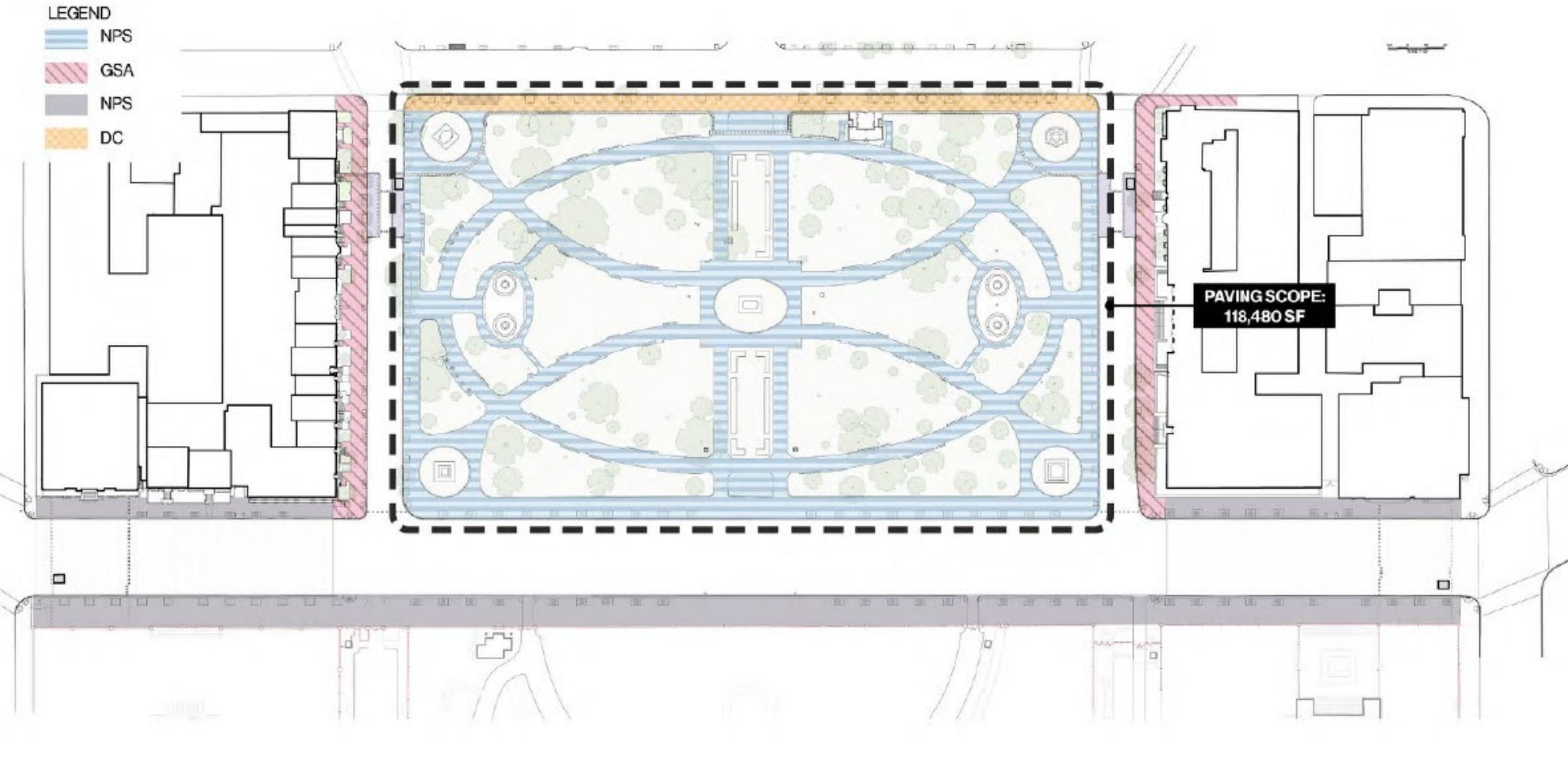


Adaptation White House Fence Scaled with Piers



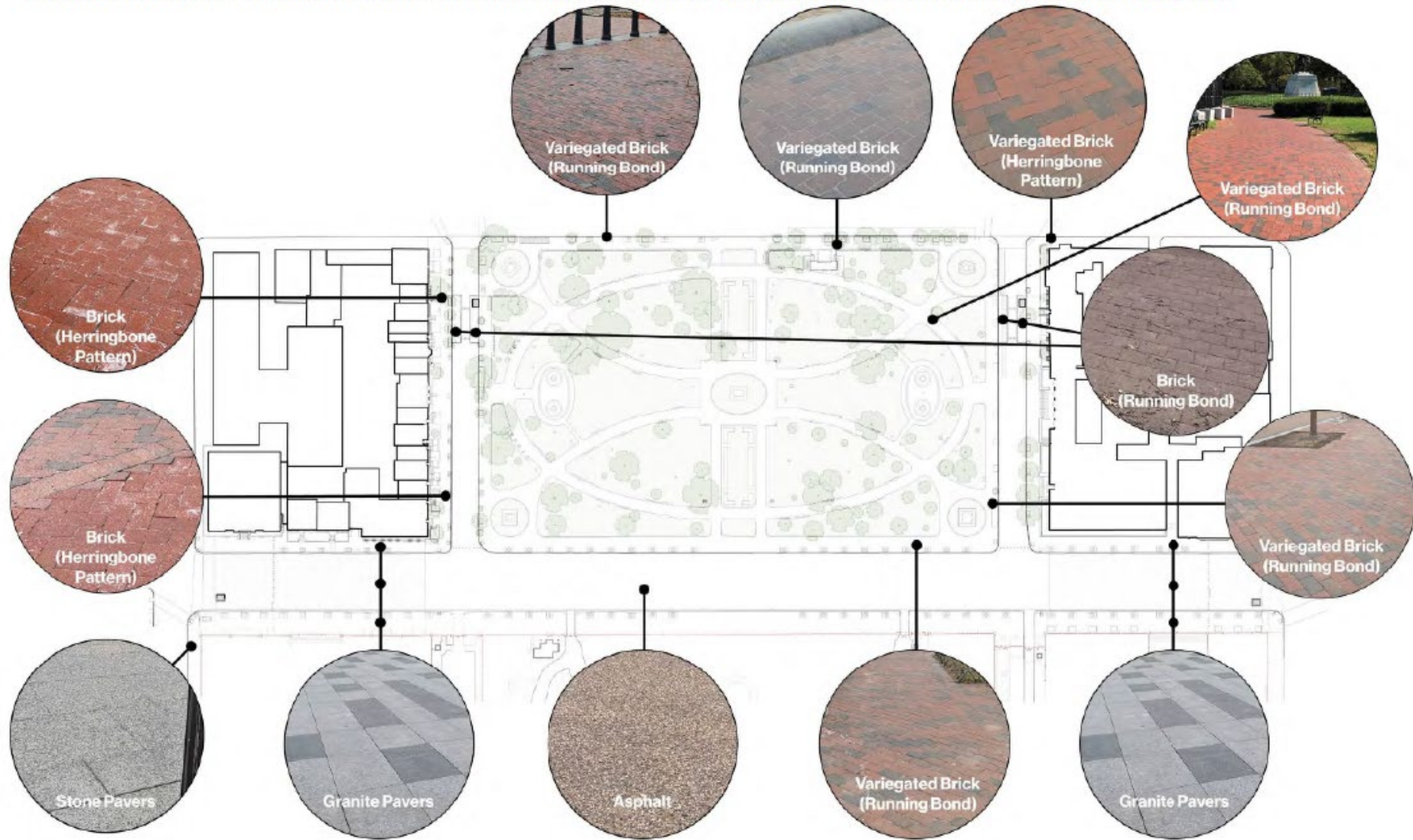
Park Hardscape

Multiple agencies, including the District of Columbia, the NPS, and the U.S. General Services Administration have jurisdiction within the project area. The map below demonstrates which agencies lead in different portions of the park, and it further illustrates the complexities of maintaining and administering updates to the park.



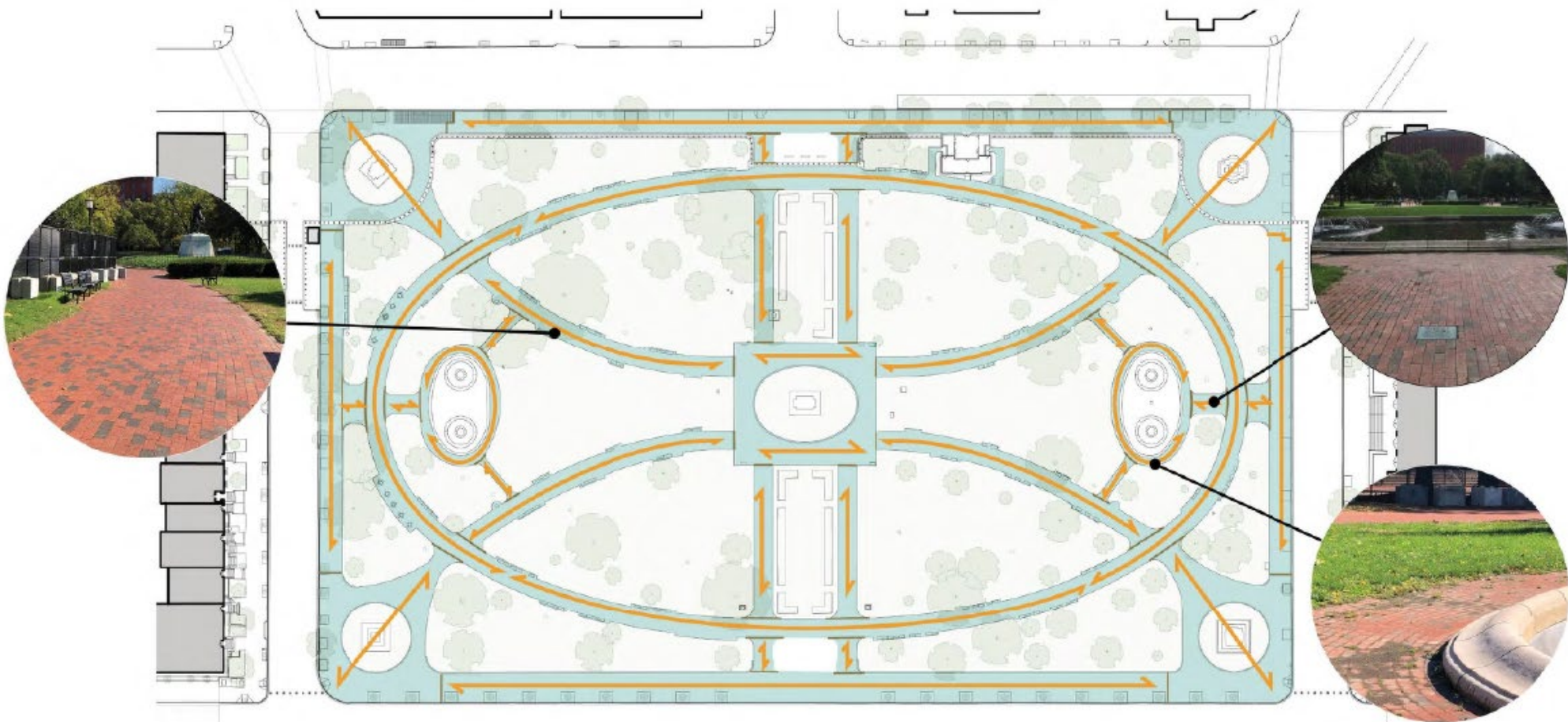
Park Hardscape – Existing Paving Types

Multiple paving types are located throughout the project area. This variety of paving types can result in a disjointed look throughout the park and work against a unified look for the park.



Park Hardscape – Existing Paving Direction

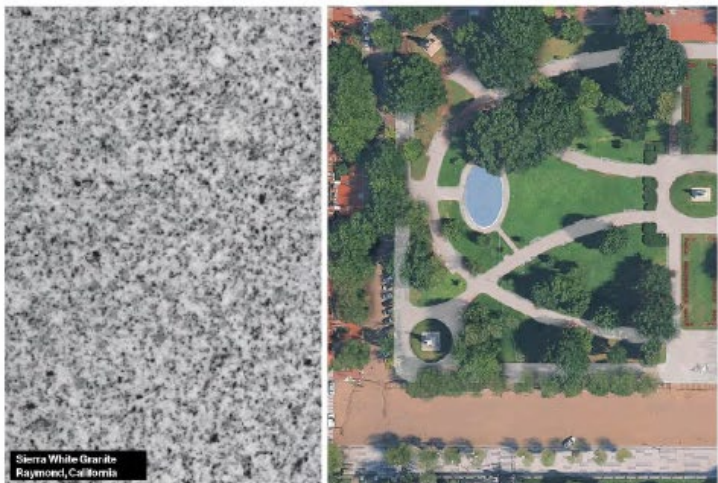
The direction of the brick pattern along walkways within Lafayette Park depends on its location. This variety of paving directions can result in a disjointed look throughout the park and work against a unified look for the park.



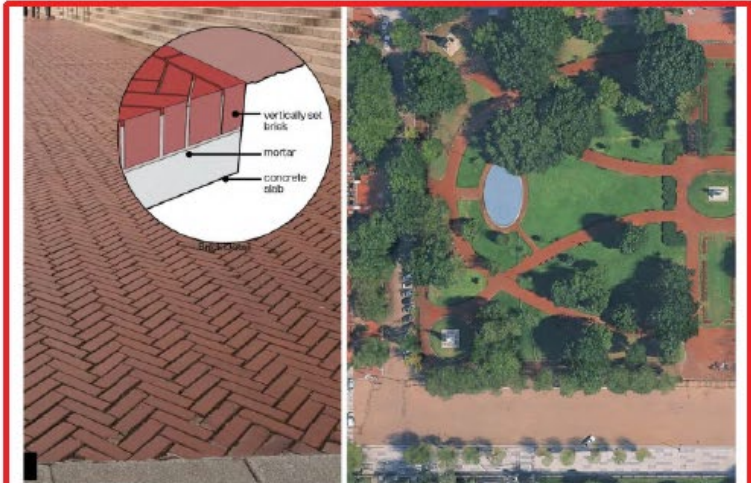
Park Hardscape – Options Considered

Multiple material options were considered for the walkways in Lafayette Park. The options below include the most considered types of granite that could be used for pavers within the park. Below are renderings of the material options, along with aerial views of the park with the applicable materials.

☒ Recommended Alternative



Sierra White Granite



Red Brick



Radiant Red Granite



Lac Du Bonnet Granite