

PROJECT CASE STUDY

# FRANKLIN PARK: The Recurring Wellspring

*The site of a natural spring, water has been the timeless and unifying character feature of Franklin Park, providing fresh drinking water to the White House as Washington, D.C. took form following L'Enfant's 1791 plan. In desperate need of revivification, this 4.79-acre National Park Service site informs the urban forest, the District's stringent stormwater requirements, and serves the breadth of the community.*

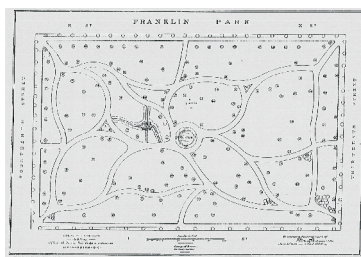


*As L'Enfant's Plan took shape, the meadow from which the springs emerged were incorporated into farmland, then formalized into urban lots, and eventually secured by the government in 1832 defining what is now Franklin Square.*

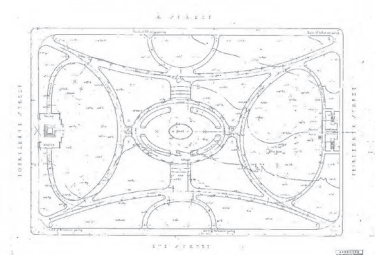
*The original square's picturesque design memorialized the spring in a rough-hewn central spray fountain, described by a perimeter circle and an arching jet d'eau. The subsequent redesign of the park into a symmetrical, Beaux Arts construct redefined the fountain into an elongated quatrefoil bowl fountain with two insignificant vertical expressions of water.*



FIRST 100 YEARS

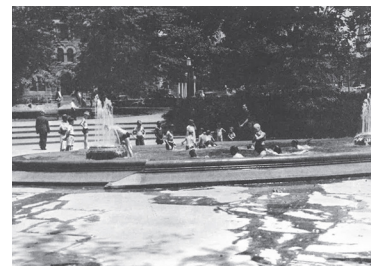


PAST 100 YEARS



1851 - 1933

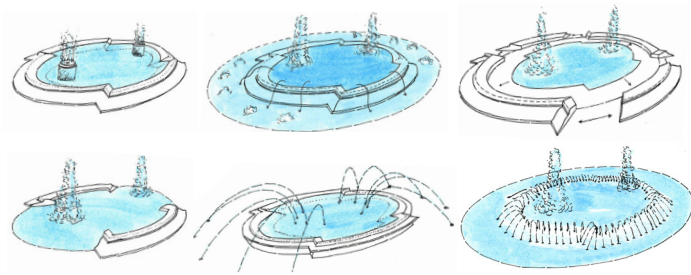
RESOURCE  
WANDERING  
AD-HOC



1933 - 2020

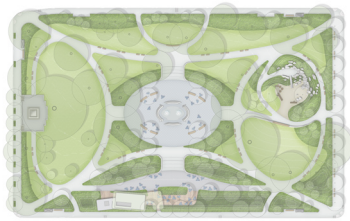
AXIAL  
FORMAL  
DIGNIFIED





In an effort to describe the park's potential third century, explorations into an accessible fountain were explored, describing degrees of preservation balanced with the potential for contact with water, and in particular, access for those with physical challenges.

**NEXT 100 YEARS**



2020 - 2120

ACTIVE  
 SUSTAINABLE  
 HISTORIC (REVERENT)  
 CONNECTIVE  
 INCLUSIVE



In celebration of the wellspring that was the *raison d'être* of the square, the refurbished central fountain coping is described in granite, rather than sedimentary stone – more resilient to the chemical additives that allow engagement with the water – and the bowl has been flattened to a minimal depth that will allow a new central jet d'eau to function. Flanking the refurbished historic fountain, new choreographed basin-less fountains dance to the delight of engaged children. This new, reverent composition recalls the origins of the park in the wellspring that made life possible in and around the park.

**Phillis Wheatley (18th Century)**

"Through Winter frowns to Fancy's raptur'd eyes  
 The fields may flourish, and gay scenes arise;  
 The frozen deeps may break their iron bands,  
 And bid their waters murmur o'er the sands."

**Emily Dickinson (19th Century)**

"Water, is taught by thirst.  
 Land—by the Oceans passed.  
 Transport—by throe—  
 Peace—by its battles told—  
 Love, by Memorial Mold—  
 Birds, by the Snow."

**Zitkala-Ša (20th Century)**

"A wee child toddling in a wonder world, I prefer  
 to their dogma my excursions into the natural  
 gardens where the voice of the Great Spirit is heard  
 in the twittering of birds, the rippling of mighty  
 waters, and the sweet breathing of flowers. If this is  
 Paganism, then at present, at least, I am a Pagan."

**Robert Frost (20th Century)**

"Others taunt me with having knelt at well-curbs  
 Always wrong to the light, so never seeing  
 Deeper down in the well than where the water  
 Gives me back in a shining surface picture  
 Me myself in the summer heaven godline  
 Looking out of a wreath of fern and cloud puffs."

The central plaza is embraced on four sides by a new granite curb that complements the new fountain coping. On each, stanzas from four poems – one from each of the three centuries of the park's life, as well as one stanza from an indigenous tribe – focus on wellspring and the rejuvenation it affords.