

## **FAQ's**

### **1. Discuss the history of planning of Washington D.C. between 1791- 1800.**

In early 1791, President Washington appointed Pierre (Peter) Charles L'Enfant to devise a plan for the new city in an area of land at the center of the federal territory that lay between the northeast shore of the Potomac River and the northwest shore of the Potomac's Eastern Branch.

Pierre L'Enfant, a French volunteer in the Continental Army, presented a Baroque city plan for the new Capital inspired by French city planning, particularly the plan of Chanteloup.

The city is oriented north along the 16<sup>th</sup> street and bounded by the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers and Boundary Street (modern-day Florida Avenue), which follows the base of the Piedmont Escarpment.

Notoriously difficult to work with, L'Enfant, he was eventually dismissed from the project and the final plan for the city was based on surveys conducted by Andrew Ellicott with modifications made by Jefferson.

The new plan shifted and straightened Massachusetts and Pennsylvania Avenues as well as eliminating the destination quality of the reservations L'Enfant had set aside for "Statues, Columns, Obelisks, or any other ornaments"

### **2. Discuss the Pennsylvania Avenue Redevelopment Plan briefly.**

Urban deterioration in the Capital lead to two very different urban solutions on either side of the Mall. On the southern side, existing neighbourhood fabric was demolished to make way for a new highway and large-footprint federal buildings. North of the Mall, the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation learned many of the lessons of Urban Renewal and courted a

more contextual solution.

### **3. What are the chief elements of the urban fabric of Washington D.C.?**

Washington is made up of five types of building blocks,

- the partywall, office building,
- the rowhome,
- the detached bungalow,
- the neoclassical institution, and
- the urban villa.

Each makes a distinctive type of block and fabric. The attached buildings have given Washington the necessary density to make it second only to Manhattan in terms of jobs located in its urban center.

The neoclassical institution and urban villas serve a symbolic purpose idealizing the democratic values the new nation purported to embody. The detached home was a typical trend in suburban development in this country as residential neighbourhoods attempted to maintain a pastoral ideal while remaining in close proximity to the urban economy. A reliable public transit infrastructure has made these neighbourhoods some of the most desirable in the District.

### **4. Discuss the characteristics of two typical roads in the planning of Washington D.C.**

Massachusetts Avenue is one of L'Enfant's planned "grand traverse Avenues", set out at 160 feet side, with 80 feet of carriage way and 80 feet of trees and pedestrian way. Modern-day Massachusetts Avenue still more or less follows L'Enfant's dimensions. Buildings in Washington are limited to 135 feet and share party walls. Along Massachusetts Avenue, they frame the space, which is further delineated by setbacks, landscaping, trees, and a parking lane.

Q Street is representative of one of L'Enfant's "other" streets, laid out at either 90 or 110 feet. Residential in

nature, Q street's buildings are traditionally three or four story row homes. Front yard setbacks, trees, and a parking lane divide the space.

**5. Discuss the qualities of the 'Rat Park' in Washington D.C.**

Parque De Las Ratas , locally know as Rat Park, the intersection of Sixteenth Street, Harvard, and Columbia Road falls outside of L'Enfant's plan and is an example of the use of residual space at the intersection of late Nineteenth Century residential developments for urban purposes. Framed by large-footprint apartment buildings and churches, the park is an amenity for the surrounding neighbourhoods.

**6. Explain an example of good urban space in city of Washington D.C.**

Washington's DuPont Circle is an example of good urban space. Located at the intersection of the office district and residential neighbourhoods, the adjacent density of people is large enough to populate the space. Legibility is obtained through party-wall buildings, consistent heights, and obvious routes in and out of the space. Despite being an overtly pedestrian area, the Circle also serves a substantial traffic role, being the intersection of three of the District's busiest diagonals.