

IV. Analysis and Evaluation

Introduction

The analysis and evaluation of the cultural landscape for the Lincoln Memorial grounds are based on an examination of the historical records and the documentation of existing landscape resources in the study area. A summary discussion of the cultural landscape components documents landscape patterns, relationships, and individual features within a site, which define the character of the designed landscape. With this information, the overall significance and integrity of the landscape is addressed according to national register criteria for landscapes.

To help present this complex information, there are two parts:

Overall Landscape	<i>Lincoln Memorial grounds</i>
Component Landscape	<i>Reflecting Pool area Lincoln Memorial circle and radial roads Watergate area</i>

The ***overall landscape*** is defined as the aggregate of sites (component landscapes) or features that define a cultural landscape which is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Whereas the ***component landscape*** is a definable physical component of a landscape that contributes to the significance of a National Register Property or in some cases, is individually eligible for the National Register. A ***component landscape*** can be further subdivided into smaller features and warrants individual documentation to adequately record the physical character of the property. These landscape features based on their significance and integrity are either *contributing* or *noncontributing* to the period of significance. For the majority of landscape characteristics, a contributing and noncontributing list is present which defines that particular characteristic. The list of contributing features can then be used to quantify the significant historic landscape for a national register nomination for the Lincoln Memorial grounds. Chapter five, “National Register Status,” provides a more in depth discussion of the criteria that is followed for this procedure.

Overall Landscape Characteristics

Land Use

West Potomac Park is the part of the monumental core of the nation’s capital and includes the Lincoln Memorial, Washington Monument and Jefferson Memorial. Once a part of the tidal “flats” of the Potomac River, the park was created from fill, dredged from the Potomac River. In 1902 the McMillan Commission defined a vision for the area that included not only parks but also memorials to great men and important events in American history. The Lincoln Memorial was the first such memorial to be constructed. It was sited on the continuation of the east/west axis planned by Pierre L’Enfant to extend from the capitol to the monument to George

Washington. Upon its completion, the Lincoln Memorial's classical form graced the river's edge as a symbol of reconciliation between the north and south. The parklike grounds of the commemorative landscape surrounding the memorial and other monuments were mostly designed to be used for passive recreation such as picnicking and walking. During the period of development, the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds set aside areas in West Potomac Park for active recreational activities. Areas north and northwest of the Lincoln Memorial were designated for activities such as golf. Bridle trails were also established along the Potomac River on the north, west and south sides of the memorial.



Figure 34 – Visitors enjoying the Reflecting Pool, 1931. Used by permission from the National Geographic Society.



Figure 35 - Model sailboats in the Reflecting Pool, 1931. Used by permission from the National Geographic Society.

A recent addition to the monumental areas of West Potomac Park are concession facilities and information kiosks, designed to serve the large numbers of visitors to the park. The services are

generally located near major pedestrian and vehicular circulation routes. At the Lincoln Memorial, visitor services are located southwest and northwest of the Reflecting Pool. Food concessionaires, tour bus fee collectors, a gift shop, first amendment rights vendors, and the National Park Service (NPS) ranger information facilities are the types of services available in these two areas. With the addition of non-contributing services, the park-like atmosphere near the main approachway to the Lincoln Memorial has been dramatically compromised. The National Park Service has attempted to control the impact of visitor services by clustering all these needs between the Reflecting Pool and the eastern side of the circular roadway. Even with this effort, the symbolic design of the approach to the memorial is congested.



Figure 36 - Grassy area north of Lincoln Memorial is used for active recreation, November 1996. LINC 11-29.

Passive recreation is still the primary use of this commemorative landscape. Active recreational uses have continued into the present, but are maintained in open spaces away from areas of major tourist visitation. To separate diverse uses, park officials have designated fields for a wide range of recreational opportunities. Use of the Lincoln Memorial grounds as a public forum developed over time, and considering the historical significance of the events staged there, precedence for such use has become well established. Large demonstrations and public assemblies will inevitably continue to be staged there for some time. See *Map 9 Overall Landscape - Land Use* for delineation of use areas.

Figure 37 - Visitors walking along the south Reflecting Pool path, November 1996. LINC 11-30.



<p>Contributing Features</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Lincoln Memorial commemorative landscape2. Reflecting Pool passive recreation3. Watergate area active recreation4. Active recreation within grass panels, Lincoln Memorial radial roads	<p>Noncontributing Features</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Service oriented area, French Drive, outside curb of Lincoln Circle
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