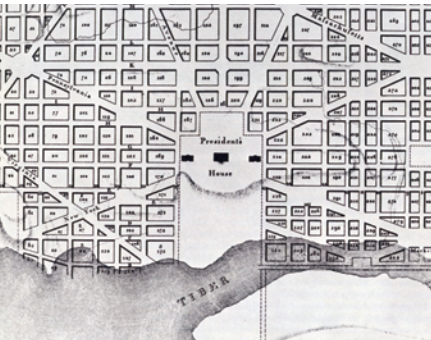


White House Open City Securing Access at the President’s Park

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Icon



Map of Washington, D.C., 1819

For nearly two centuries the White House was a cherished symbol of liberty, justice, and accountability in government. Though the symbolism sometimes seemed empty, the meaning of the People’s House was surprisingly resilient and remarkably enduring. Until today.

Our government tells us that we are at war with an enemy who wants to destroy us. Our government tells us that our most precious values and beliefs are under attack. Our government tells us that they hate us because we are free.

Our government responds by attacking our most precious values and beliefs. Our government responds by jeopardizing the very freedoms it claims to protect. Our government responds by tarnishing our reputation and besmirching our beloved icons.

The White House today is a symbol of obfuscation and opacity, of injustice and unaccountability. From behind a forbidding wall of Executive Privilege and National Security, the White House refuses to grant the people access. Fortress America has reached 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, and the President’s Park is now off limits.

Open City

In 2008, we, the people, respond by declaring the White House an Open City. Unfortified and undefended, it is thus exempt from enemy attack, whether this enemy dwells on foreign shores or occupies the Oval Office. In declaring the White House an Open City we intend, quite literally, to return the People’s House to the people, and to preserve this icon of freedom and democracy for future generations.

In declaring the White House an Open City, our idealism is tempered by realism. We recognize and respect the need to feel palpably connected to our elected leader and our government, but we also recognize and respect the need to protect the President and secure the White House complex. Neither is more important than the other; they must co-exist pragmatically and symbolically. For the good of the nation, White House Open City achieves this delicate balance. By securing access at the President’s Park White House Open City ushers in a new era in American history.



Inauguration of Andrew Jackson, 1829

Access



Aerial view of the White House, 1992

The tradition of public access to the White House stretches back to its beginnings. It was not a Presidential Palace but merely an Executive Mansion. And after it was whitewashed around 1800 the nickname it acquired was as plainspoken and populist as the people to whom it belonged: not a mansion, simply a white house. Even while the White House was under construction the people took possession of it, wandering in and out at all hours of the day and night. Though Thomas Jefferson ended this practice because too many people were disturbing the President’s sleep, he threw open the doors of the White House every day so that all visitors could enter freely and be welcomed by the Chief Executive.

By the time of Andrew Jackson’s inauguration in 1829, the polity took this public access almost as an inalienable right and raucous

crowds thronged to the White House grounds and reception rooms to celebrate the election of this earthy man of the people. Supposedly they trashed the place, but Old Hickory and his successors continued to greet White House visitors each day at noon.

The White House grounds were equally accessible. Even after the construction of a perimeter fence and multiple gate houses, the President’s Park was open to all from sunup until sundown. Visitors were free to stroll the grounds, to walk right up to the North and South Porticoes of the residence, and to tour the state rooms without prior arrangement. The public had virtually unfettered access to the White House and its grounds until December 1941, when security concerns following the attack on Pearl Harbor resulted in dramatic restrictions.

Securing Access



Guarding the White House after 9-11



White House Fence with Cops, 2008

The National Park Service’s oversight of the President’s Park (White House) provides the rationale for the secured access of White House Open City.

- In its 2007 report on the Future of America’s National Parks, the National Park Service stated its commitment to providing safe and accessible places for people to enjoy.
- In its 2007 vision statement for the President’s Park, the National Park Service described the White House as “home and office of the president, historic site, museum, tourist attraction, civic centerpiece, and world stage” and dedicated itself to enhancing “visitor understanding, appreciation and experience by providing multiple types and levels of educational and interpretive programming using the latest technologies available.”
- In his 2007 message to the President, Interior Secretary Dirk Kempthorne stated that one of the most profound challenges facing national parks in the 21st century is the simple fact that “modern technology and virtual experiences compete with authentic learning adventures and personal exploration of our nation’s nature and history.”

White House Open City helps the National Park Service realize its commitment to safety, accessibility, new technologies, and authentic experience by building on an existing infrastructure that, while it has the potential to transform the President’s Park into a national model, is not mentioned in either the Future of America’s Parks or the Centennial Strategy for the White House.

The National Park Service, through its United States Park Police unit, is currently engaged in public surveillance of the President’s Park (White House) through a network of cameras of unknown extent.

Accepting the Realpolitik of the 21st century, White House Open City proposes to secure access by extending the surveillance system already in place to every corner of the President’s Park and every building and room within the White House complex. Besides the contemporary example, this has obvious historical precedent: in 1971 Richard Nixon installed voice activated microphones in the Oval Office and the Cabinet Room and wire-tapped every phone in the White House. Now however, video technology adds a critical enhancement and a positive spin. Instead of Orwellian panopticonism, think Executive Branch C-Span. Total vision ensures total control which ensures total security allowing total access.

White House Open City acknowledges that most Americans--between 72-81% according to recent surveys--favor the use of surveillance cameras in public places, including national monuments; don’t believe that such cameras represent an invasion of privacy; and are willing to give up some of their personal liberties, including the right to privacy, in exchange for increased security.

White House Open City assumes that Americans will happily exchange their right to privacy for increased accessibility, especially if this will give them more freedom to enter the White House and grounds than they had in the days of FDR. 21st century Americans are not only comfortable with public scrutiny and exposure, they seek it out. If reality television and the mass exhibitionism/voyeurism of the World Wide Web are any indication, Americans will flock to White House Open City.

Through the urban park of America’s Lawn, through the orientation center of the Citizen’s Mediocracy, through the public White House of Hotel 1600, and through the transparent Oval Office of West Wing 24/7, White House Open City welcomes the American people back to the People’s House as part of the National Park Centennial Initiative.



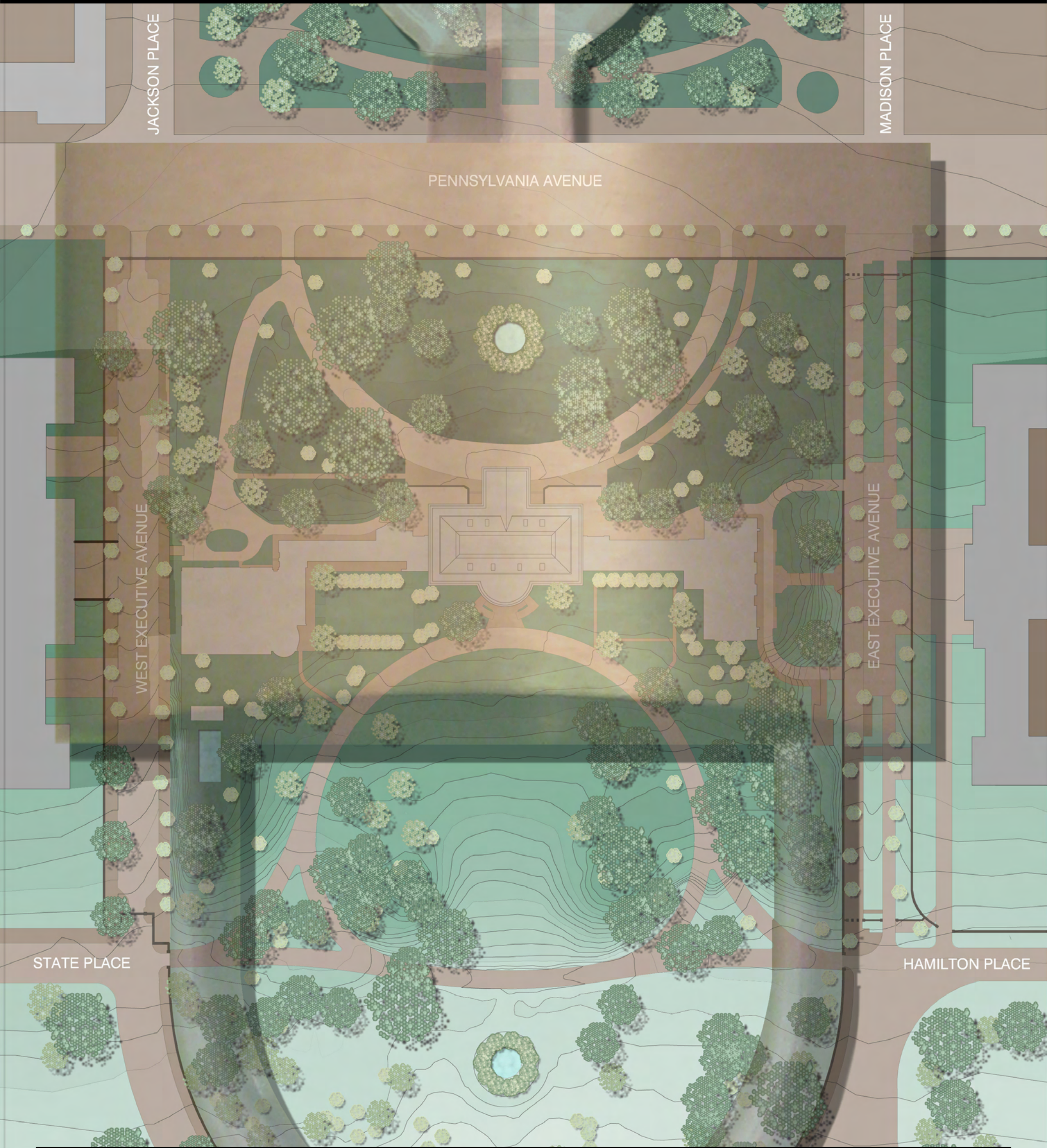
Surveillance at the White House

President's Park (White House)

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



President's Park
White House Open City
Washington, D.C.



Security



"Pass Holders and Appointments Only"

What World War II initiated, September 11th continued. And as the White House became increasingly more secure, it became progressively less accessible.

People without official appointments are no longer permitted to enter the White House grounds. People with official appointments are subject to careful scrutiny and screening. Visitors who wish to tour the White House must apply in writing at least one month in advance through their Members of Congress.

The White House perimeter fence, enclosing the 18 acres that contain the residence and the East and West Wings, is fortified with jersey barriers and permanent bollards. Armed policemen and uniformed Secret Service agents patrol the perimeter and the grounds twenty four hours a day.

A network of CCTV and OCTV surveillance cameras provides live and recorded video streams of the White House complex and the city streets that surround it. The exact number and location of

the White House surveillance cameras are unknown because the Department of Interior refuses to release this information, despite requests from the Government Accountability Office and from citizens using the Freedom of Information Act. What is known about the White House surveillance cameras is that they offer 360 degree views and, at a minimum, can magnify up to seventeen times.

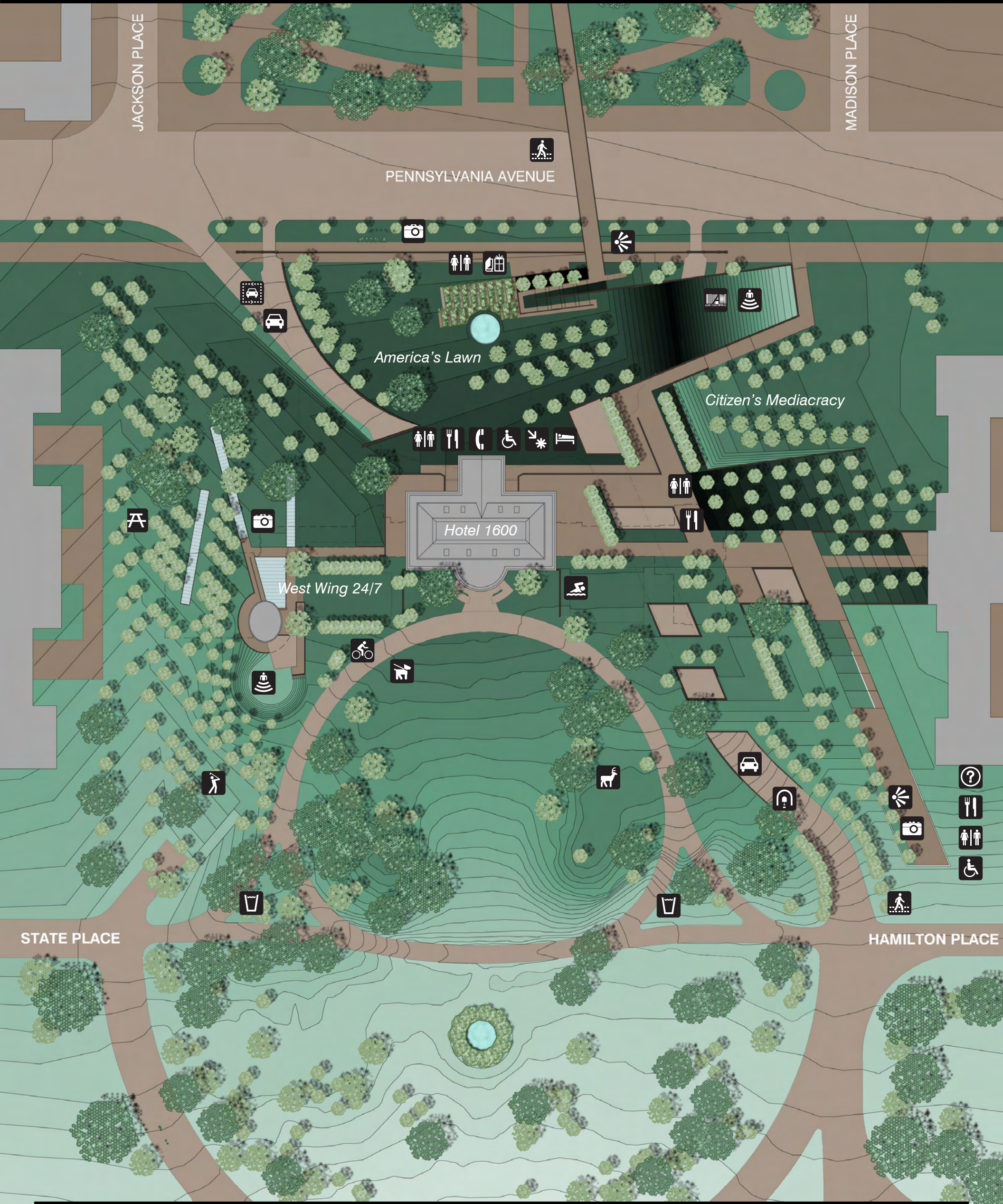
The White House and its grounds are now so perceptually inaccessible to the public that companies like Sanborn and Tele Atlas, which provide cartographic data to the most popular mapping sites on the internet, do not even identify the site as parkland. Instead of the green field that instantly identifies an area as a public park, the White House complex is shaded the neutral grey of private property. Here is a bitter irony: the White House complex, also known as the President's Park, is a national historic site administered by the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior.

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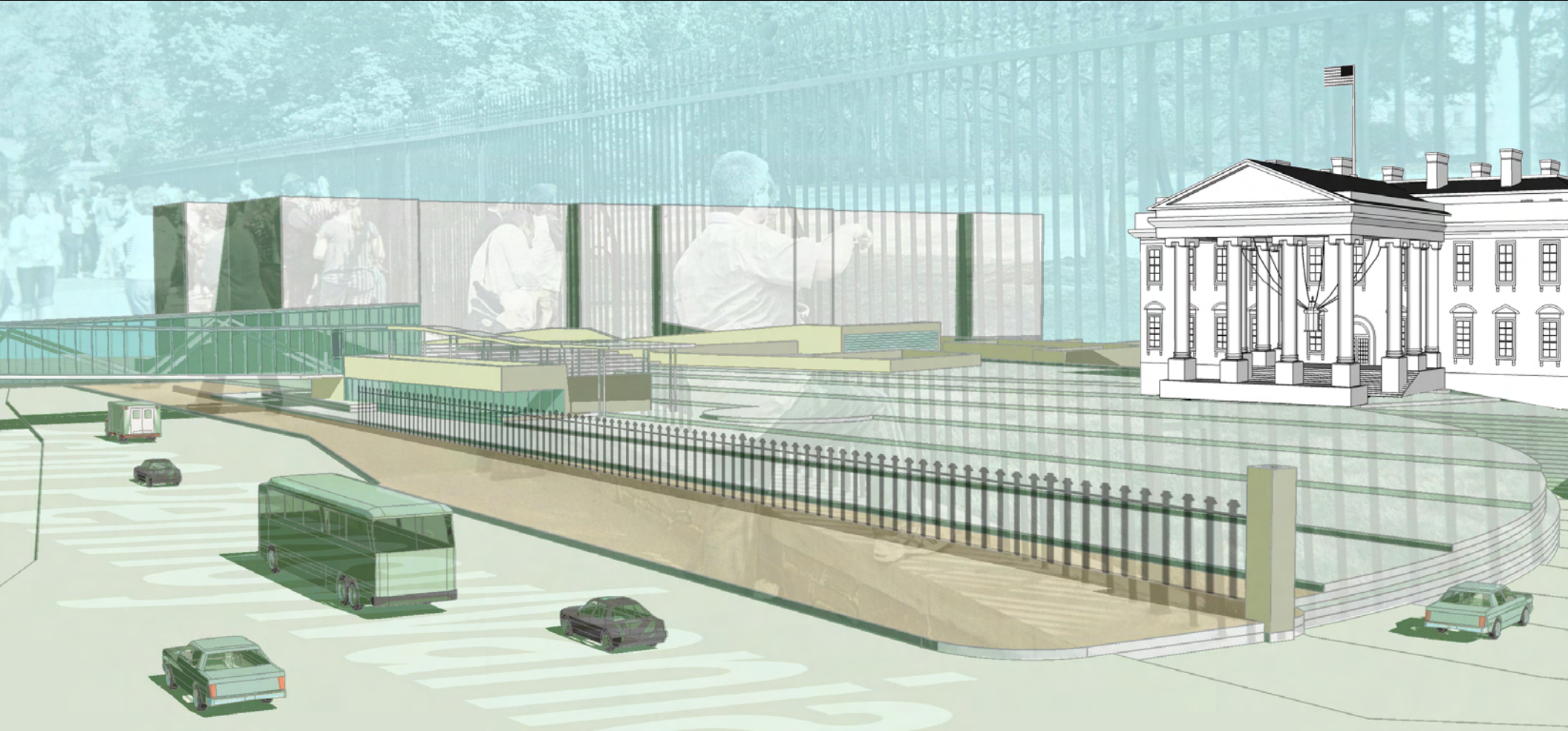
President's Park (White House Open City)

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

President's Park
White House Open City
Washington, D.C.



Legend			
Picnic area	Amphitheater	Scenic viewpoint	Bicycle trail
Restrooms	Camera	Book and souvenir shop	Live audio description
Swimming	Tennis	Self-guiding trail	Viewing area
Telephone	Tunnel	Food service	Golfing
Wheelchair-accessible	Driving tour	First aid	Pedestrian crossing
Automobiles	Swimming	Drinking water	Deer viewing
			Point of interest
			Information
			Litter receptacle
			Lodging
			Pets on-leash



An Urban Park



Running Trails on America's Lawn

The President's Park is comprised of 82 acres of urban parkland that includes three major components: the White House grounds, Lafayette Park to the north, and the Ellipse to the south. Before the introduction of White House Open City (OC), only Lafayette Park and the Ellipse were fully accessible to the public. The grounds of the White House, by contrast, were surrounded by a 6-foot tall iron fence on a raised plinth and punctuated by a series of guard houses. Additional security measures, including perimeter fencing and jersey barriers were added at times of heightened national security, most recently after 9/11.

America's Lawn restores the White House grounds to the President's Park--and to the American people--by removing all physical barriers to the 18-acre site.

This simple intervention utterly transforms the grounds: what had been a high-security zone and looked like one, remains a high-security zone, but doesn't look like one. Using the same advanced surveillance technology found throughout White House OC, America's Lawn now serves as the nation's 21st century front and back yards. To the north, America's Lawn aggressively connects White House OC to the urban fabric of Washington, including the restoration of traffic on Pennsylvania Avenue; to the south, America's Lawn becomes a pastoral, historic landscape of graceful trees, rolling lawns, curving footpaths. Open to all, at all times.

America's Lawn boasts a wide range of recreational and cultural facilities that are highly prized in an urban environment like the District of Columbia. Facilities include tennis courts, putting green, outdoor pool, showers and changing rooms, bowling alley, running trails, historical interpretive trails, scenic viewpoints, picnic areas, fountains and memorials, and public restrooms. (See White House OC site plan for locations.) These are free and open to the public. Recreational facilities are available on a first come, first serve basis, unless reserved by the residents and guests of Hotel 1600, including the President and the First Family. Visitors can check availabilities at the Citizen's Mediocracy, on-site and on-line.

North Fence



Protestors Chained to White House Fence

Originally erected during the Presidency of James Monroe (1817-25), this wrought iron fence historically prevented physical access to the White House grounds while allowing visual access. Until recent times, it was the only visible concession to security needs. Especially in the 20th century, the northern length of the fence, facing Pennsylvania Avenue and Lafayette Square, served as an important site for the political protest that is a critical part of the democratic process. Using it as a backdrop and prop, citizen protestors, from Suffragettes and Civil Rights activists to Anti-War demonstrators, have chained themselves to this fence or jumped the fence to express displeasure with government policy. White House OC preserves a portion of the north fence to provide citizens with a physical focal point for protest and a potent reminder of the time when citizens were regularly excluded from the White House and grounds.



Protestors at the North Fence, before 1920

White House Drive-Thru

With vehicular traffic returned to Pennsylvania Avenue and the removal of all gates and barriers, motorists now have direct access from the street to the historic White House North Drive. As they enter the President's Park motorists will catch a glimpse of the Oval Office to the south before passing directly in front of the famous North Portico where Presidents have traditionally met distinguished visitors. From here they will gradually descend into

a video tunnel beneath the Citizen's Mediocracy. Surrounded on all sides by display screens, motorists are able to view at a glance the myriad activities taking place throughout White House OC. Motorists exit the tunnel at grade and continue to Pennsylvania Avenue. A traffic signal at the intersection of Pennsylvania and West Executive Avenues controls the flow of cars into the Drive-Thru.

Pennsylvania Avenue Walk-Over

In its idealized form the American City is friendly to both drivers and walkers. Thus, restoring vehicular traffic to Pennsylvania Avenue is only one step in weaving White House OC back into Washington's urban fabric. The other is the proper accommodation of pedestrians. An ADA compliant elevated walkway connects Lafayette Park to America's Lawn just west of Madison Place. This glass and steel Walk-Over not only provides safe, direct foot access from Lafayette Park to America's Lawn, it offers a number

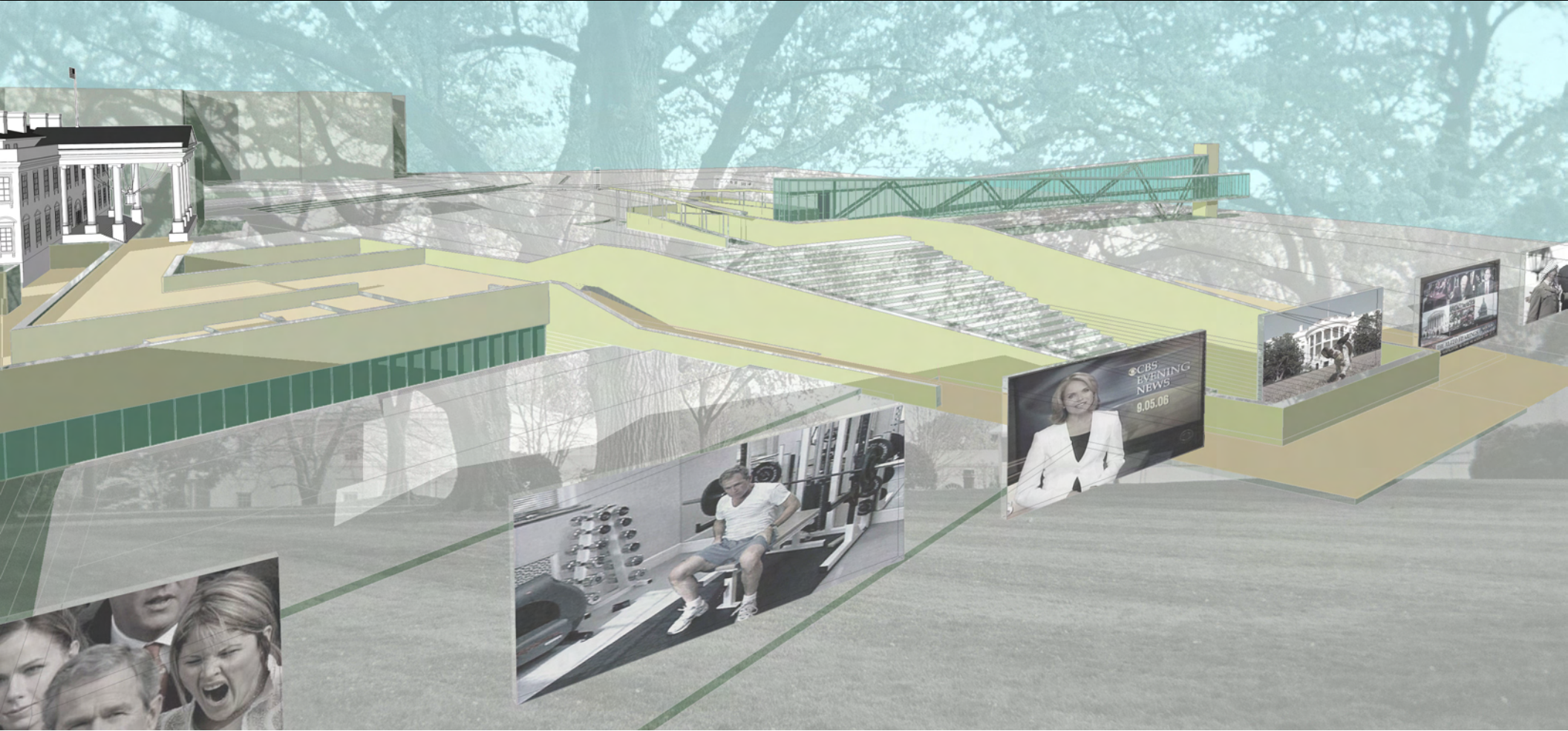
of scenic viewpoints of the Citizen's Mediocracy, Hotel 1600, the Oval Office, and the grounds. The advantages of the Walk-Over are clear: visitors can enjoy majestic vistas of our nation's capital without concern for the vehicular traffic on Pennsylvania Avenue. Equipped with electronic signage the Walk-Over also provides important information about White House OC; in case of national emergency it can be programmed with public service announcements.

Citizen's Mediocracy

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



President's Park
White House Open City
Washington, D.C.



Orientation to Access

The Citizen's Mediocracy is the public-access nerve center of White House OC. While recognizing the dominance of mass media over society, especially the powerful influence it asserts upon government, the Citizen's Mediocracy simultaneously affirms democracy by transforming this power dynamic through citizen engagement at the nexus of media and government that White House OC embodies. The Citizen's Mediocracy harnesses the sophisticated technologies of the information age to create a physical gateway and a virtual portal for direct participation in and real-time observation of the Executive Branch of government.

Located in the northeast quadrant of America's Lawn, the Citizen's Mediocracy replaces the existing Visitor Center in the Commerce Building and serves the primary function of introducing and orienting visitors to the variety of buildings, landscapes, programs and activities that are a part of White House OC. It also includes a café, bookstore, and gift shop whose sales support White House OC's ongoing public access efforts.

Living Heritage Center



White House Park Ranger

Promoting the President's Park as a national treasure and cultural resource is a critical dimension of White House OC. This promotion happens primarily through an innovative series of National Park Service Ranger-led interpretive programs known as Living Heritage.

Part educational experience, part professional development, part reality programming, Living Heritage connects citizens to their government by providing unparalleled opportunities to participate in the day-to-day operations and activities of the Executive Branch. Modeled on initiatives like the White House Internship Program and AmeriCorps, Living Heritage has a broad purview to oversee every job function within White House OC, from janitor to Commander-in-Chief.

Citizens interested in Living Heritage must first evaluate their personal availability and commitment to government service in

order to determine the appropriate level of participation. Short-term Living Heritage vacations allow citizens to serve as vol-untourists who donate their skills and talents for periods of time ranging from two weeks to twelve months.

For a more intensive experience, citizens may choose to participate in Living Heritage Competitions. Though the length of competitions and appointments varies according to job requirements, most involve a commitment of between twelve weeks and four years. Given the importance of the position, it is not surprising that the longest-running Living Heritage program involves the President of the United States, who competes for election in Survivor: Pennsylvania Avenue and serves out his or her term in West Wing 24/7.

Whether on-site or on-line, the Living Heritage Center is the first stop for all citizens interested in voluntourism or competition.

Witness to History Zone



Cabinet Meeting, 2006

However satisfying Living Heritage might be for participants, the reach of these programs is far greater than one individual's direct experience of government. As mandated by the NPS, Living Heritage "uses exciting media and technology," including state-of-the art webcam, live feed, and simulcast system to provide electronic video and audio distribution of all Living Heritage activities, i.e. of all activities taking place in White House OC. From the Cloak Room to the Oval Office, what was once behind the scenes is now center stage on the televisions, computers, and ipods of the nation and the world.

Within White House OC, these activities are also on view in the Witness to History Zone. Intended for casual visitors and tourists who prefer to watch the operations of government rather than directly participate in them, the Witness to History Zone is an outdoor theater with bench seating and a multi-screen HD LED display. Witnesses can enjoy continuous daytime and nighttime programming that is as exciting or as dull as the government itself. From state visits to emptying the garbage, if it happens in the White House it can be seen in real time in the Zone.

The Witness to History Zone also features a secondary bank of outdoor screens along East Executive Avenue as well as indoor viewing areas, including small-scale screening rooms and individual screening booths. Visitors with web-enhanced pda's can access the Witness to History Zone via the Living Heritage on-line portal as they tour America's Lawn, Hotel 1600, and West Wing 24/7.



Video is the Media of Access at the White House OC

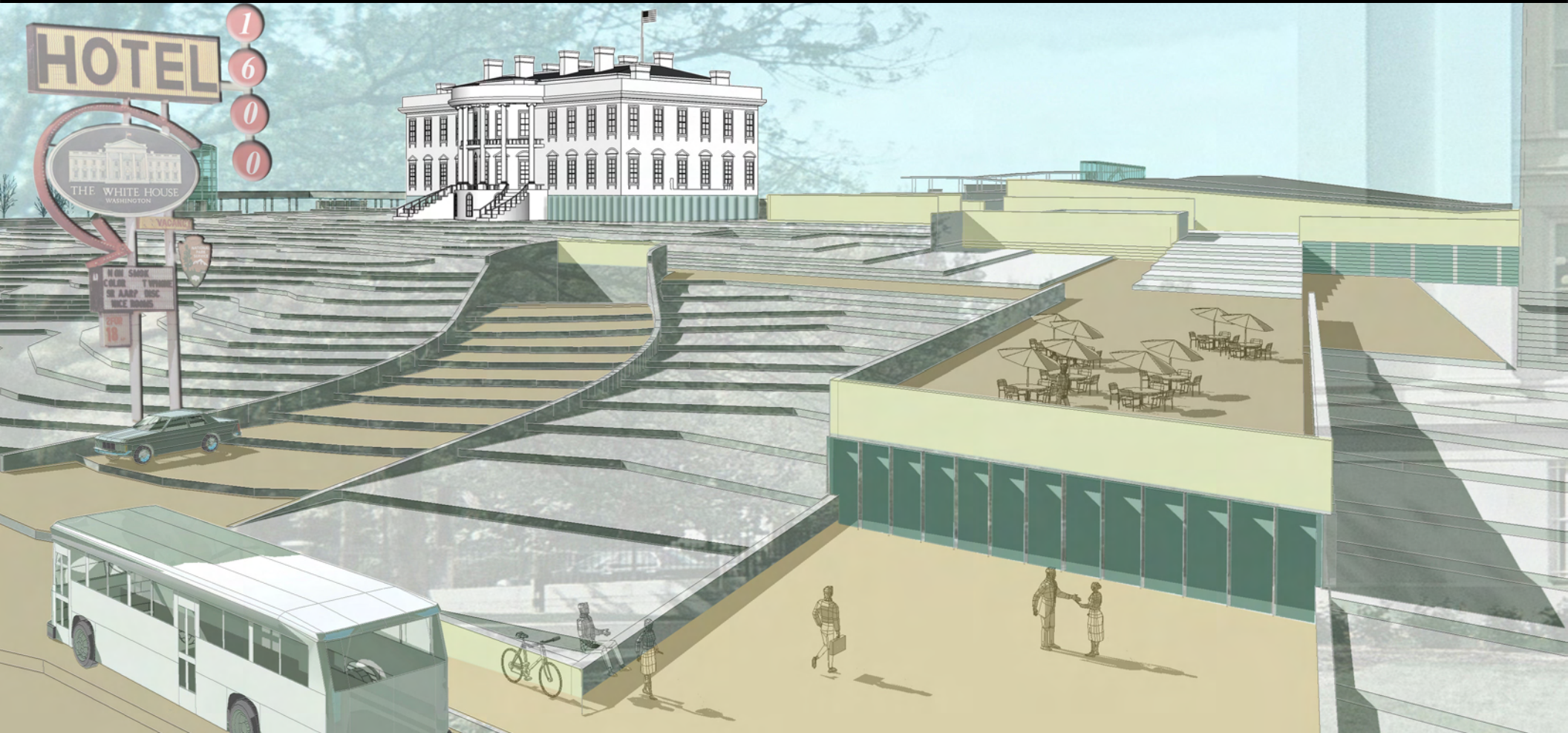


Gerald Ford roasts an English Muffin, 1974

Hotel 1600 (Public White House)

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

President's Park
White House Open City
Washington, D.C.



The Residence



State Dining Room, 1960



Alonzo Fields, Chief Butler under President Truman

The White House has always had much in common with the grandest hotels in America, offering long-term and short-term residence, large-scale and intimate spaces for receptions, dinners, and meetings, and extensive facilities for recreation and relaxation. Unfortunately, its requisite exclusivity meant that it was the “people’s house” only in the most symbolic way. Hotel 1600 changes that, making the White House a premier hospitality destination for all people. Foreign and domestic visitors, dignitaries and common folk now have the chance to rub shoulders with the President, the First Family, and members of the Executive Branch. Hotel 1600 is THE place where history, political and personal, happens.

The newest member of the National Trust’s Historic Hotels of America, Hotel 1600 offers accommodations and facilities of unsurpassed quality and unparalleled historical significance. With its faithfully maintained architecture and ambiance, Hotel 1600 sets a new standard of excellence in the hospitality industry while continuing to serve its original function as a place of private residence and public reception. Hotel 1600 also sets a new standard in the public-private partnerships mandated by the President and Congress to provide for the maintenance and preservation of America’s treasured resources. Finally, and most importantly, Hotel 1600 sets a new standard for providing public access and experience opportunities in National Park sites.

Hotel 1600 and its grounds are staffed almost entirely by voluntourists, but Living Heritage competitors (and competition winners) occupy many of its key personnel positions. Ongoing competitions mean that highly-skilled interior decorators, museum curators, gardeners and landscapers, chefs, events planners, trainers, entertainers, and even doctors, are hard at work 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year. Their dedication to their craft and determination to win enable Hotel 1600 to offer exemplary service in exquisite facilities that reflect a deep commitment to the living heritage of the White House.

At the heart of Hotel 1600’s success is an innovative administrative structure that fosters relationships between government and industry through a dignified exploitation of branding and product placement. The country’s leading manufacturers and retailers are invited to sponsor and underwrite both our living heritage competitions and official state functions through in-kind contributions. In exchange, corporate logos are discreetly displayed throughout the Hotel, always within the bounds of good taste and diplomatic protocol. As with official Olympic sponsorship, these corporations may then use the White House/Hotel 1600 logo for marketing and advertising purposes. In addition, especially generous supporters of Hotel 1600 are permitted to provide the crawls and bugs used in White House web-casts and video feeds of Living Heritage competition.

Occupancy of the First Family Residence, including its bedrooms, sitting rooms, studies, kitchen and dining room, is limited to two four-year terms and is awarded to the winning competitor in *Survivor: Pennsylvania Avenue*. After his or her inauguration, the new President moves to the top of Hotel 1600’s VIP list.

The Lincoln Bedroom & Hotel Suites

Since the middle of the 20th century the Lincoln Bedroom has served as a guest room for distinguished overnight visitors to the White House, and the privilege of sleeping there has frequently been a reward for political loyalty to the President. In Hotel 1600, the Lincoln Bedroom, along with such fine accommodations as the East and West Bedrooms and the Queen’s Bedroom, are open

to everyone. Guests can book rooms year-round and prices are dependent on whether or not the President and the First Family are in residence. Alternately, rooms are made available to the public through a lottery system open to voluntourists. Finally, short term and long term stays are offered as prizes in many of the living heritage competitions made possible by White House OC.

Make History at Hotel 1600



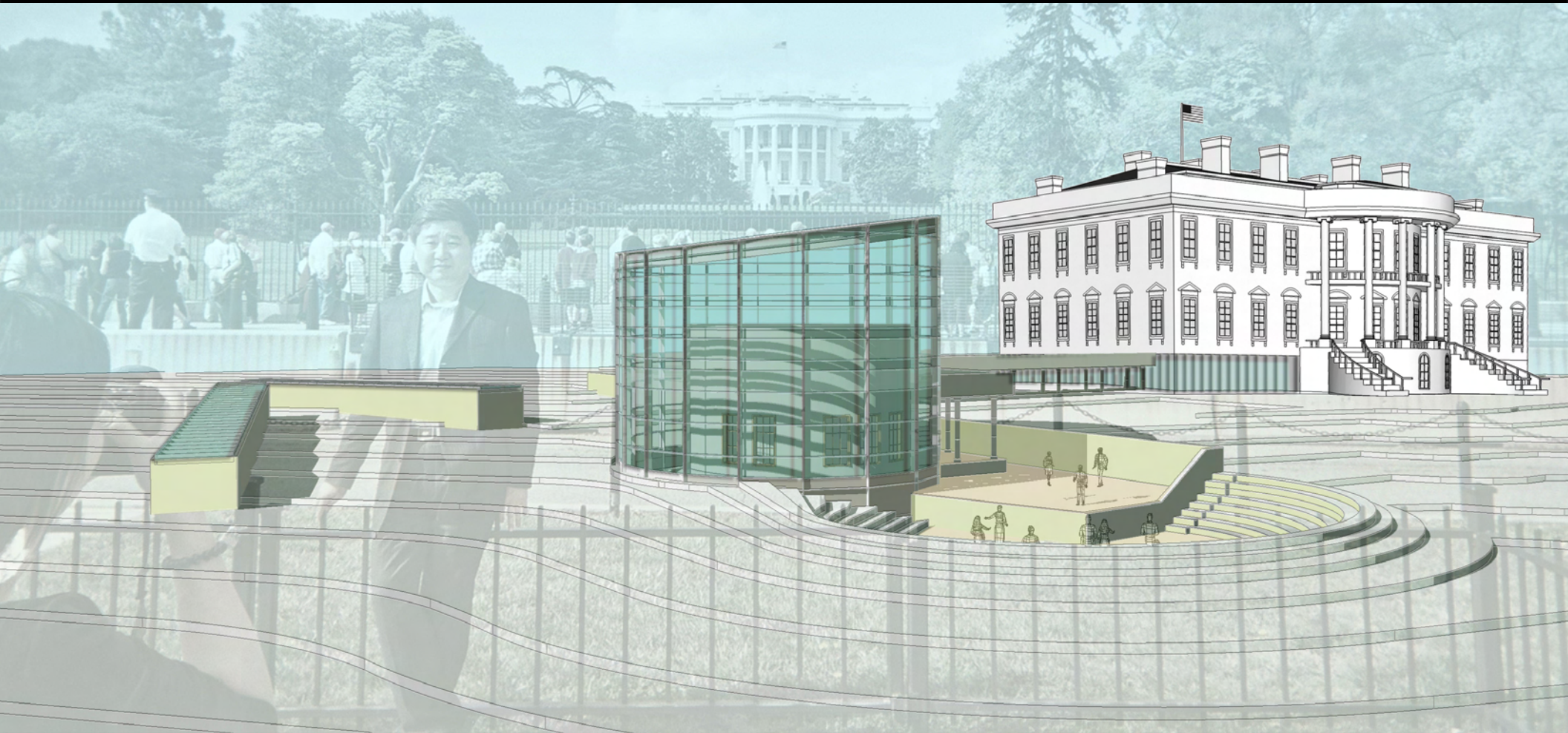
John Travolta and Princess Diana

Lobby 1600 is a sequence of grand spaces at the heart of the public White House and includes the North Portico, Entrance Hall, Cross Hall, Grand Stair, south Portico, all on the first floor. From receiving lines to informal congregations, Lobby 1600 welcomes official guests and casual visitors alike. Unlike in a traditional hotel, Lobby 1600 inverts Sigfried Kracauer’s “negative church” in that guests have come here to encounter one person in particular. Whether through fixed engagement or chance, they are here to see the semi-permanent occupant of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. While waiting for the President, guests may admire the lobby’s fine art and historic furnishings or enjoy light refreshments. If there are no scheduled events, they are also free to wander through the adjoining State Rooms. Lobby 1600 restores to the White House a tradition of unscheduled visits by members of the public with little or no restrictions imposed upon them. An Enlightenment ideal made possible by Information Age technology.

While the principal reception and dining rooms of the White House are often in use for official state affairs, Hotel 1600 is proud to host a full schedule of events for private citizens including weddings, birthday parties, graduations, conferences, and meetings. What better way to make a special event really special than to hold it at the most prestigious address in the world? From the East Room to the State Dining Room, from the Blue Room to the Family Dining Room, Hotel 1600 can accommodate parties of almost any size and type with superb service in historic surroundings. Drawing on two centuries of social etiquette and protocols, the East Wing Hospitality staff can help you literally make history as you plan your next event. And with a little luck, the President and First Family might decide to crash your party! All profits derived from non-state special events held at Hotel 1600 support public access mission of White House OC.



President's Park
White House Open City
Washington, D.C.



The Executive Branch



Exterior view of the Oval Office

West Wing 24/7 is the most important of the Living Heritage programs of White House OC, viewed by millions of people everyday via the on-site and on-line Witness to History Zone. *West Wing 24/7* is also the center for operations of the Executive Branch. Virtually all activities in the White House complex are directly influenced by the decisions made in the offices and meeting and conference rooms it contains. What is true of the White House is also, to a degree, true of the nation and the world.

The Living History participants who staff the *West Wing 24/7* include the most dedicated and highly skilled voluntourists and competitors, as well the ultimate winner of *Survivor: Pennsylvania Avenue*. These talented politicians, policy makers, administrators, and clerical workers deserve the best workplace the nation can provide, one that meets 21st century standards for organization and efficiency, as well as security and accessibility.

Fully reconstructed as a priority of White House OC, *West Wing 24/7* is now a state-of-the art facility occupying the site of the 20th century West Wing. Much of facility is now below grade, returning a considerable amount of the building's previous footprint to proper park usage. The West Colonnade and Rose Garden, for example, are now seamlessly integrated into America's Lawn.

In keeping with the flatter hierarchies preferred by the younger generation now staffing the West Wing, the offices feature ultra-flexible layouts that prioritize teamwork and the free-flow of information and can be reconfigured for openness or compartmentalization as needed. The Chief of Staff, policy advisors, and communications specialists find this arrangement especially useful.

The only dedicated work spaces in *West Wing 24/7* are those that require permanence and location by function or tradition, including the Press Corps, the Situation Room, and the President's Cabinet. As the President's Conference Room, and a site of great historical significance, the latter retains its original spatial relationship to the Executive Office, as well as its original décor and furnishings.



Daily News campaign coverage, 2008

The Oval Office



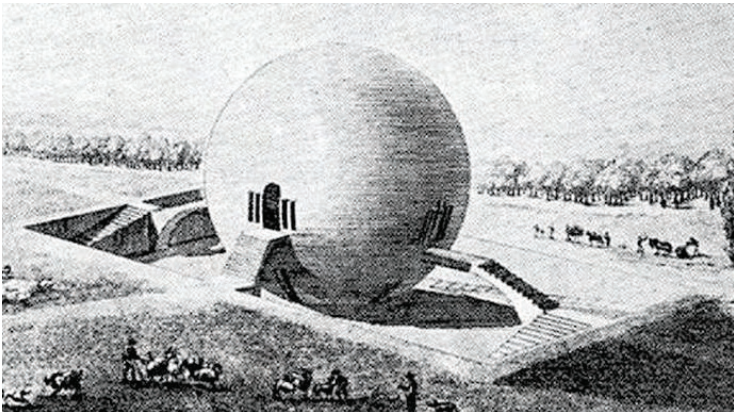
The White House OC and its many programs are made possible through corporate sponsorships.

Occupying the southeast corner of the 20th century West Wing, the Oval Office stands today much as it was when it was completed in 1934 as a first floor room opening directly onto the West Terrace. For wheel chair-bound FDR the location of the Oval Office within the White House complex was a question of accessibility. It still is, and in 2008, the Oval Office is more accessible than ever before.

While retaining its historical integrity, *West Wing 24/7* gives the Oval Office the visual and physical prominence it deserves as the site of the literal seat of executive power. Though its serene proportions, symmetrical doors and windows, classical molding, and presidential seal are fully intact, the Oval Office has been liberated from the bounding walls of the old West Wing. Standing free, but protected by an ovoid glass cylinder, the Oval Office is now instantly recognizable and unforgettably iconic.

Whether strolling across America's Lawn, bearing witness in the Citizen's Mediocracy, or simply enjoying the pleasures of Hotel 1600, visitors, voluntourists, and Living Heritage competitors alike are awe struck by the revelation of the Oval Office. And as they encounter this prismatic volume, they are reminded of the Enlightenment principles upon which this great nation was

founded, principles that White House, Open City has restored and extended. After a period of darkness, when the operations of the government were shrouded in secrecy and cloaked in paranoia, the transparent Oval Office offers to American citizens and to the entire world a model of government transparency.



Claude Nicolas Ledoux House of Agricultural Guard

Ledoux's geometric explorations illustrate the power of geometric forms on the horizon, creating legible hierarchies, which are modulated by multiple modes of access that secure views and a position of privilege.