On this self-guided walking tour of the Federal Triangle, historical markers lead you to:

- America’s Main Street and ceremonial route
- The home of the U.S. Constitution and Declaration of Independence
- Sculptures and murals that reveal the work of public servants on behalf of the nation
- The building whose proposed demolition launched the historic preservation movement in Washington, DC
- Washington, DC’s City Hall
- The National Aquarium
- A section of the Berlin Wall
- Washington’s third-tallest structure, open to the public for glorious views of the city

The grandeur of the Federal Triangle symbolizes the power and dignity of the United States of America. Follow this trail to meet the visionaries who planned and executed these neoclassical buildings, and to discover the tales their majestic art and architecture have to tell.
Strategically located between the Capitol and the White House, the Federal Triangle houses key government departments and agencies. Today public servants in thousands of offices carry out the Constitution’s mission where Washingtonians great and small once shopped, enjoyed theaters and billiard parlors, and lived their daily lives. *Make No Little Plans: Federal Triangle Heritage Trail* invites you to discover the old neighborhood while unlocking the secrets of the marvelous buildings that replaced it.

This keepsake guide summarizes the 16 signs of *Make No Little Plans*, Washington, DC’s 14th Official Walking Trail.

This finely crafted decorative bronze door is found inside the Department of Commerce’s Herbert C. Hoover Building.

*C. Highsmith Photography, Inc./U.S. General Services Administration via Library of Congress*
As you walk this trail, please keep safety in mind, just as you would while visiting any unfamiliar place.

Make No Little Plans: Federal Triangle Heritage Trail is a project of the U.S. General Services Administration, produced in collaboration with Cultural Tourism DC. Map by Bowring Cartographic. Design template used with permission of District Department of Transportation.

Make No Little Plans is the 14th DC Neighborhood Heritage Trail and an Official Washington, DC Walking Trail.

For more information on Federal Triangle buildings, please visit www.gsa.gov

For more information on DC neighborhoods and Cultural Tourism DC’s Neighborhood Heritage Trails, please visit www.CulturalTourismDC.org.

On the cover: Michael Lantz’s Federal Trade Commission sculpture, Man Controlling Trade.

Photograph by Theodore Horydczak, Library of Congress

Right: Craftsmen work on decorative bronze doors for the Commerce Department.

National Archives and Records Administration
Working under the direction of President George Washington and Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson, Pierre L’Enfant designed a plan for the new capital city of the United States of America in 1791. The plan overlaid broad diagonal avenues on a street grid, reserving certain areas for major buildings and parks. The most important avenue — later named for Pennsylvania — connected the sites where the president and the Congress would work.

The federal government moved from Philadelphia to Washington in 1800. Soon after, the blocks between the White House and the U.S. Capitol began to fill with markets, small businesses, and boarding houses. Low lying and subject to flooding, the area bordered the Washington Canal, once a key transportation route linking the Potomac and Anacostia rivers. By the 1860s, this section of the city had declined and the canal had degenerated into an open sewer. Saloons and hotels flourished, especially following the arrival of thousands of soldiers and civilians to Washington during the Civil War. Journalists called the neighborhood south of Pennsylvania Avenue “Hooker’s Division,” a pun on the name of General Joseph Hooker, commander of an Army division defending Washington.

Center Market was the city’s main food supplier until it was razed for the National Archives in 1931.
Improvements to the “Division” started soon after the war. A massive, red-brick Center Market replaced rickety shops and stalls on Pennsylvania Avenue between Seventh and Ninth Streets. The canal was filled and paved over. Construction of the massive (Old) Post Office Building between 11th and 12th Streets further upgraded the area. Yet overall progress was piecemeal.

When the United States won the Spanish-American War in 1898, national leaders expressed concern that their capital city did not reflect America’s growing importance in the world. In 1900, to commemorate the centennial of the federal government’s arrival in Washington, Senator James McMillan formed the Senate Park Commission to redesign the city’s monumental center and parks. Eminent American architects appointed to the commission included Daniel Burnham, the creative force behind Chicago’s 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition. Nicknamed the White City for its gleaming white Beaux-Arts style buildings, the exposition awed its 27 million visitors and inspired the City Beautiful movement in the United States. One of many late 19th-century civic reform movements, City Beautiful advocated order, beauty, and monumental grandeur in urban planning to improve the functioning and quality of cities.

The Senate Park Commission’s plan revived and expanded elements of L’Enfant’s original 1791 vision for Washington. Known as the McMillan Plan for the senator who organized the commission, it proposed that the area bounded by 15th and Sixth Streets, B Street (now Constitution Avenue), and Pennsylvania Avenue be set aside for offices for the expanding federal government. Design competitions produced plans for new structures, but only one was realized before World War I: the 1908 District Building (now the John A. Wilson Building).

It was not until 1926 that Congress authorized a massive building program based on the McMillan Plan. President Calvin Coolidge assigned Treasury Secretary Andrew Mellon with a model of the Federal Triangle project, around 1929.
Secretary Andrew Mellon to work with leading architects to produce designs for the monumental buildings that form today’s Federal Triangle.

In 1929 President Herbert Hoover laid the cornerstone for the first new structure, the Department of Commerce building bounded by Pennsylvania and Constitution Avenues, and 14th and 15th Streets, NW. Within months, the world’s economy collapsed. The Federal Triangle project proceeded, however, providing needed jobs for construction workers, as well as for the artists and craftsmen who embellished the buildings with sculpture, mosaics, murals, and ornamental metalwork.

By 1938 seven majestic new buildings filled the Federal Triangle. They share certain features — limestone façades, red-tiled roofs, and classical colonnades — but, following traditions of the Paris École des Beaux-Arts (School of Fine Arts), each building’s architectural details illustrate the mission of the government department or agency for which it was built. The single exception is the Old Post Office, which predates the Triangle.

Attempts to raze it failed, and it remains an example of an earlier Romanesque Revival style.

A second attempt to raze an existing structure also failed. Planners envisioned a Great Plaza across 14th Street across from the Department of Commerce, requiring demolition of the existing District Building, the first example of the Beaux-Arts style in the Federal Triangle. With war looming in the late 1930s, plans for the Great Plaza were dropped, the District Building survived, and the surrounding area remained a parking lot for the next six decades.

The 1998 dedication of the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center where the parking lot once stood marked the completion of the Federal Triangle. It also marked the fulfillment of visionary architect Daniel Burnham’s counsel: “Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men’s blood. Make big plans.”
America’s Main Street

700 Block Pennsylvania Avenue NW

The broadest and most important street in Pierre L’Enfant’s 1791 plan for the nation’s capital connects the U.S. Capitol and the White House.

Pennsylvania Avenue. Almost every American knows its name. As America’s Main Street, Pennsylvania Avenue is where Americans practice their rights to free speech and assembly. It is our ceremonial stage, where the nation comes together to celebrate — new presidents, national holidays, and victories — and to mourn, as at funeral processions for seven of the eight presidents who died in office.

L’Enfant’s plan called for a grid of streets broken by wide diagonal avenues offering visual connections among the city’s important buildings. The avenues would be named for the states. Pennsylvania, home of the nation’s seat of government at the time of the Revolution, was later honored with the most central avenue.

The area around Seventh Street and Pennsylvania Avenue developed as early Washington’s main marketplace. In 1871 the ornate, red-brick Center Market arose on the south side of Pennsylvania Avenue and shops, wholesalers, and other small businesses clustered nearby. In the 1930s the market district disappeared, replaced by the stately, classically detailed National Archives and other Federal Triangle buildings.

Thirty years later, the north side of the avenue had grown shabby. President John F. Kennedy noted this as he traveled the parade route from his inauguration at the U.S. Capitol to the White House in January 1961. President Kennedy appointed scholar and policy expert Daniel Patrick Moynihan to plan the restoration of this “great thoroughfare of the city of Washington.”
The National Archives, keeper of the nation’s founding documents and the most important records of the federal government, occupies this key spot halfway between the U.S. Capitol and the White House. Before the Archives building was constructed, federal records were stored haphazardly all over town. The nation’s first archivist began bringing them under one roof here in 1935.

In 1900, with the approach of the centennial of the federal government’s arrival in Washington in 1800, national leaders and eminent architects promoted a new vision for the city’s monumental core. Under the leadership of Senator James McMillan, the Senate Park Commission developed a comprehensive plan that revived elements of Pierre L’Enfant’s original vision but in the context of the early 20th century’s City Beautiful movement. The McMillan Plan, as it became known, redesigned the National Mall and designated this 70-acre triangular area for new government offices. Planners drew on the City Beautiful movement’s Beaux-Arts building style, which promoted classically inspired groupings of public buildings. Before World War I intervened, however, only the John A. Wilson Building (originally the District Building) was completed to serve as the DC city hall at 13th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue.

In 1926 President Calvin Coolidge signed the Public Buildings Act and revived the McMillan Plan. Coolidge assigned Treasury Secretary Andrew Mellon to work with leading American architects to create the Federal Triangle. It stands today as one of the largest public building projects combining neoclassical architecture and sculpture in the nation.

The U.S. Navy Memorial, across the avenue from the National Archives, was dedicated in 1987, the Navy’s 212th anniversary.
THANKS TO POPULAR MEDIA, the Federal Bureau of Investigation may be one of the better-known government agencies. Since the 1930s Hollywood has found great stories among the “G-men” (government agents). The FBI often cooperates in these productions.

The FBI was established in 1908 as the Justice Department’s detective unit. Its agents investigated allegations of investment fraud, opium smuggling, munitions trafficking, and other federal crimes. The agency’s power increased during national security crises and as it brought mob figures and other violent criminals to justice. Under the half-century directorship of native Washingtonian J. Edgar Hoover, the bureau grew in responsibility and helped professionalize modern law enforcement, emphasizing scientific analysis. Drawing on a century of experience, the modern FBI protects the nation against terrorist and foreign intelligence threats, enforces U.S. criminal laws, and provides leadership for the nation’s law enforcement organizations.

Formerly housed in the Department of Justice building, the FBI relocated across Pennsylvania Avenue in 1975. Architect Charles F. Murphy’s modern Brutalist style (from the French “béton brut,” or raw concrete) contrasts with the earlier buildings of the Federal Triangle.

The Justice Department’s classically inspired Art Deco style night doors, torchières (light fixtures), and other decorative aluminum features are visible from the corner of 10th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. High over the doors is a colorful mosaic ceiling by local artist/craftsman John Joseph Earley.

Along 10th Street looking south, the city’s street grid continues as Federal Triangle buildings frame the view to the National Museum of Natural History.
The massive granite Old Post Office building was completed in 1899 to house both the U.S. Post Office Department and the city post office. Designed by U.S. Treasury Department architects under Willoughby J. Edbrooke, it was Washington’s first steel-frame building.

Three decades later, the building almost fell to the wrecking ball. Its Romanesque Revival architecture did not match the Beaux-Arts style planned for the Federal Triangle, and it stood where construction of a wing of the IRS building and a circular court on 12th Street was planned. Demolition was delayed, however, following the 1929 world economic crash. In 1934 the Post Office Department moved across 12th Street, making way for other federal agencies here.

Another attempt to raze the building in 1971 was opposed by the citizens’ group Don’t Tear It Down (later DC Preservation League). Two years later, the building was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The DC city council subsequently adopted the DC Historic Landmark and Historic District Preservation Act of 1978, one of the nation’s stronger local preservation laws.

In Washington only the Washington Monument and the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception are taller than the Old Post Office tower.

The statue of Benjamin Franklin in front of the Old Post Office originally faced the Washington Post building at Tenth and D Streets (replaced by the FBI Building). Although Post founder Stilson Hutchins commissioned the statue to honor Franklin as a publisher and printer, Franklin also served as America’s first postmaster general, making this a fitting spot for the tribute.
The imposing Ariel Rios Building at the center of the Federal Triangle opened in 1934 to house the U.S. Post Office Department, then among the nation’s largest non-military employers. Architect William A. Delano, of the New York firm Delano and Aldrich, drew inspiration from Paris and other European cities to design the building’s unusual hourglass plan. The curved building, with its ground-level arcade and Parisian-inspired slate mansard roof, was intended to face a circular court spanning 12th Street. The plan, however, required demolition of the Old Post Office, which never occurred.

Postal service dates to 1775, when the Continental Congress, representing the 13 colonies, appointed Benjamin Franklin the first postmaster general. The ability of colonial military commanders to communicate by mail gave them an advantage over the British during the Revolution. In the new nation, postal service furthered democracy and economic growth by linking elected representatives with their constituents and businesses with their customers.

Although the Post Office Department became the U.S. Postal Service in 1971 and moved from the Federal Triangle, the building’s plentiful inscriptions, sculptures, bas-reliefs, and evocative interior murals preserve its stories and mission of binding the nation together. The embellishments also remind viewers of the thousands of laborers, artists, and craftsmen who found much-needed work here during the Great Depression (1929-1941).

This building was later occupied by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and renamed to honor Special Agent Ariel Rios, who was killed in the line of duty. It now houses the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency headquarters.
Woodrow Wilson Plaza honors U.S. President Woodrow Wilson, scholar and former president of Princeton University. The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, located in the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center on the plaza's west side, is the nation's memorial to our 29th chief executive. This nonpartisan institution studies national and world affairs.

The plaza showcases monumental sculptures by two Washington-born artists: the cast aluminum Federal Triangle Flowers by Stephen Robin and the hammer-formed and welded bronze Bearing Witness by Martin Puryear. Robin's rose and lily reflect the traditional use of flowers as architectural ornamentation. The familiar yet mysterious shape of Puryear's work allows viewers to create their own associations. The sculptures, commissioned by the U.S. General Services Administration, continue a long history of government-sponsored art for public buildings.

Bas-reliefs (sculptures slightly raised from their backgrounds) by Adolph Alexander Weinman and Anthony De Francisci adorn the former Post Office Department (now Ariel Rios) building. Just under the roofline at either end of the curved facade are The Transmission of Mail by Day and The Transmission of Mail by Night. A timeline of postal service history and a romantic statement of mail delivery's effect on American life are inscribed between the sculptures. Just below them, a series of plaques by Weinman and Joseph R. Rennie illustrates communications developments: carrier pigeons, smoke signals, and drums. Benjamin Franklin tops the list of postmasters general carved into the facade.

Passageways leading to 12th Street and to the National Mall via Constitution Avenue evoke architectural traditions of older European cities.
Washington, DC: Capital and City

**The John A. Wilson Building** is Washington’s city hall, home to DC’s mayor and city council.

When completed in 1908, it was known as the District Building (for District of Columbia). Cope and Stewardson of Philadelphia won the competition to design it in the Beaux-Arts style favored by the McMillan Commission, which was charged with remaking this area in 1901. The new DC government headquarters arose on a lot left empty after a spectacular 1897 fire destroyed a streetcar company’s “absolutely fireproof” electric powerhouse.

The building originally housed three presidentially appointed commissioners who, with congressional supervision, governed DC from 1874 until 1974. Passage of the Home Rule Act of 1973 ended exclusive federal control over city affairs and allowed DC citizens to elect a city council and mayor. The DC Council creates the city’s laws and budgets, though its actions remain subject to oversight by the U.S. Congress.

The Federal Triangle plan that emerged in the late 1920s called for demolition of this building in order to build a Great Plaza on 14th Street. But critics argued it would be wasteful to raze such an impressive marble structure, and citizens rallied to save it.

The building’s name honors the late civil rights leader, home rule activist, and former DC Council chair, John A. Wilson.

Pershing Park, across 14th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, is a memorial to World War I and to General John J. Pershing, hero of World War I and mentor to World War II military leaders. Directly across Pennsylvania Avenue is Freedom Plaza, where a portion of L’Enfant’s Plan for Washington is rendered in white marble and black granite.
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE’s Herbert C. Hoover Building anchors the Federal Triangle and features a base of rusticated granite blocks, a colonnade with Doric capitals, and a cornice embellished with eagles. Upon completion in 1932, the structure was the world’s largest office building, covering almost eight acres and filling three city blocks with 3,300 rooms. It brought under one roof offices that had been scattered among 20 locations in Washington. The massive Hoover Building has six interior courtyards that bring light and air into offices. Exterior sculptures, plaques, and inscriptions illustrate the department's historically wide-ranging activities.

The monumental structure reflects the nation’s prosperity when Louis Ayres of the New York firm of York and Sawyer designed it. President Herbert Hoover laid the cornerstone in May 1929. A few months later, however, the world economy crashed, launching the Great Depression. Fortunately construction on the Federal Triangle proceeded, creating jobs that became harder to find as the depression deepened.

When the Commerce Department was founded in 1903, it took in the Census Bureau (established in 1790), Bureau of Navigation (1789), Lighthouse Service (1789), Patent Office (1802), Coast and Geodetic Survey (1807), Bureau of Steamboat Inspection (1838), and Bureau of Fisheries (1871). The new building also housed the bureaus of Mines, Foreign and Domestic Commerce, and Aeronautics, as well as the Radio Division. Changing times have consolidated or eliminated many bureaus but the department’s mission of supporting the American economy remains constant.
Make No Little Plans: Federal Triangle Heritage Trail is an Official Washington, DC Walking Trail. Its 1.75-mile route is defined by 16 illustrated historical markers, each capped by an H.

Sign 1 is located in the 700 block of Pennsylvania Avenue, near the entrance to the Archives-Navy Memorial-Penn Quarter Metro Station on Metrorail's Green and Yellow lines, but you may begin your tour at any sign. The walk offers about one hour of gentle exercise.
Completing the Triangle

200 BLOCK 14TH STREET NW

The Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center, named to honor the 40th president, filled the last open space in the Federal Triangle. When former First Lady Nancy Reagan dedicated it in 1998, the redevelopment of this part of Pennsylvania Avenue, begun by President John F. Kennedy in 1961, was complete.

This is the only Federal Triangle building to house both private and government offices, including the U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Department of Commerce, and the U.S. Customs Service. James Ingo Freed of Pei Cobb Freed & Partners, New York, designed its limestone exterior as a modern re-working of the neoclassical style of its neighbors. The structure’s 3.1 million square feet of space make it the second-largest federal office building. Only the Pentagon is larger. The public is encouraged to explore the soaring atrium, food court, and exhibits located inside this building.

The Reagan Building houses an unusual artifact of the Cold War era. In 1987 President Ronald Reagan made a speech at the Berlin Wall in West Berlin. “Mr. Gorbachev,” he challenged the Soviet Union’s leader, “tear down this wall!” Two years later the wall came down, reflecting the end of Soviet domination and reuniting Germany. A section of the wall, the gift to America of grateful Berliners, may be seen inside.

On the 14th Street plaza of the Reagan Building is a memorial to diplomat and former Secretary of Labor and Commerce Oscar S. Straus (1850-1926). Appointed by President Theodore Roosevelt, Straus was the first Jewish American cabinet member. The privately funded memorial features two cast-bronze sculptures by Adolph Weinman: Liberty of Worship and The Voice of Reason.
Soon after the federal government moved to Washington in 1800, the southwest portion of the Triangle attracted shops and stables to serve the new residents. Where Constitution Avenue runs today, Tiber Creek flowed — and often flooded. In 1815 engineers transformed it into a canal.

By 1860, however, the Washington Canal had deteriorated into an open sewer. Impoverished families, both African American and white, lived in small wood-frame houses along unpaved, often muddy streets and alleys. Crime was rampant.

The Civil War (1861-1865) brought thousands of soldiers and civilians into the capital, and brothels and saloons thrived. This area became known as “Hooker’s Division,” a pun on the name of General Joseph Hooker, who commanded an Army division defending Washington.

After the war, Alexander “Boss” Shepherd, head of Washington’s powerful Board of Public Works, filled and paved over the canal. Reformers such as the Central Union Mission and Anti-Saloon League moved here, as did industrial enterprises. Yet the old businesses continued — despite the 1908 arrival of the District Building, home to the city government and police department — until Congress outlawed prostitution in 1914 and Prohibition closed the saloons a few years later.

The Division, including a church and a school, was bulldozed for construction of the Federal Triangle in 1926. Five years later, Congress renamed B Street, NW, the old canal route, Constitution Avenue.

The arched South Passage to Constitution Avenue showcases a picturesque Federal Triangle cobblestone walk.
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, whose mission is to protect human health and the environment, has occupied the majority of offices in this block since 2001. This building, the adjacent Mellon Auditorium, and the EPA East building share one continuous, monumental façade designed by Arthur Brown, Jr.

Because this 1934 building originally housed the Department of Labor, its most prominent sculptures are monumental pediments showing products of American labor. In Abundance and Industry by Sherry Fry (west end), the female figure symbolizing abundance pours a vase of apples and pomegranates, the fruits of industry. In Labor and Industry by Albert Stewart (east end), the male figure portraying industry sits amid corn and wheat, the fruits of the soil.

The Labor Department was created to promote the welfare of workers, improve their working conditions, and advance their opportunities for profitable employment. Frances Perkins, the first secretary of labor to occupy this building, was the nation's first woman cabinet member.

Edgar Walter's colossal Columbia holding the torch of freedom crowns the ornate portico west of the South Passage. Six Doric columns mark the entrance to the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium, named in honor of the treasury secretary who spearheaded the creation of the Federal Triangle. The auditorium hosted President Franklin Roosevelt as he read numbers drawn in the nation's first peacetime draft lottery, conducted less than a year before the United States entered World War II. After the war, the NATO Treaty was signed in the same auditorium.
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is the youngest agency housed in the Federal Triangle. Established as an independent agency in 1970, EPA protects human health and the environment through science, transparency, and the rule of law.

This building, designed by San Francisco architect Arthur Brown, Jr., originally housed the Interstate Commerce Commission, which regulated transportation of goods between the states. Like its Federal Triangle neighbors, the building was richly finished inside with limestone and marble ornamented with decorative paintings and carvings. Adorning the pediment on the east end of the building is Interstate Transportation by Edward McCartan, its nude female reclining on a seahorse amid dolphins symbolizing the energy of interstate transportation. On the west end, Wheeler Williams’s Commerce and Communications is dominated by the messenger Mercury leaning against his steed while being blown through the clouds. An American eagle perches majestically over his shoulder.

To showcase EPA’s presence in the complex, these buildings were rehabilitated between 1994 and 2001 by the U.S. General Services Administration and the EPA. While adhering to strict historic preservation standards, the renovations introduced 21st-century green design innovations.

The buildings overlook Constitution Avenue, the path of the old Washington Canal. Conceived by city designer Pierre L’Enfant and designed by architect Benjamin Latrobe, the canal transformed Tiber Creek into a navigable waterway connecting the Potomac and Anacostia rivers. At first it carried barges of building materials for the new city but eventually became an open sewer. It was paved over in the 1870s.
WHILE ONLY CONGRESS — the people’s elected representatives — can impose taxes and decide how they are spent, the Internal Revenue Service, a bureau of the U.S. Treasury, ensures those taxes are collected fairly and efficiently.

The IRS building reminds citizens what their tax dollars buy. In the words of the great jurist Oliver Wendell Holmes engraved over the building’s entrance, “Taxes are what we pay for a civilized society.” Revenues collected by the IRS — including income, corporate, estate, excise, gift, and employment taxes — pay for everything from national defense and highways to weather forecasts and food safety inspections.

Louis A. Simon, superintendent of the architectural section of the Treasury Department, designed the IRS building to be the least ornate in the Federal Triangle because it houses a bureau, rather than a department of government. The building’s French Renaissance style is similar to its neighbors, but its only embellishments are two eagle sculptures and four carved limestone panels flanking the entrance.

Congress enacted the first income tax to finance the Civil War, and in 1862 President Abraham Lincoln appointed a commissioner of internal revenue to collect it. A decade later the income tax was repealed and not revived until 1913, when the 16th Amendment to the Constitution authorized Congress to enact a permanent income tax. The first Form 1040 was issued that year, and Americans began paying one percent tax on personal incomes greater than $3,000, and six percent on incomes greater than $500,000.
Equal Justice
Under the Law

900 BLOCK CONSTITUTION AVENUE NW

The roots of America’s top law enforcement agency, the Department of Justice, reach back to 1789. That year the first Congress created the Office of the Attorney General to prosecute lawsuits in the Supreme Court and advise the president and the Cabinet on matters of law. In 1870, after the Civil War spurred an increase in lawsuits and in demands on the attorney general’s office, Congress created the Department of Justice. Today the Department enforces the laws and defends the interests of the United States, protects the American people against terrorism and other threats to national security, prevents and controls crime, seeks just punishment for lawbreakers, and ensures equal justice for all citizens.

For the Department’s first permanent home, Philadelphia architects Clarence C. Zantzinger and Charles L. Borie, Jr., showcased Art Deco ornamentation. The 20-foot-high night doors on the south façade and most of the building’s decorative fixtures are made of aluminum instead of the traditional bronze. Colorful mosaics by Washingtonian John Joseph Earley adorn entranceway ceilings. C. Paul Jennewein designed 57 interior and exterior sculptural pieces, including the spectacular Art Deco torchières lighting the entrances.

Distinctive 1930s-era murals inside the building illustrate how law improves American life. Painter George Biddle had persuaded his old schoolmate President Franklin D. Roosevelt to fund public murals, including Biddle’s work for the Department. Roosevelt’s New Deal went on to commission works of art throughout the Federal Triangle and the nation.

In 2001 the building was renamed to honor Robert F. Kennedy, the slain former attorney general.
The National Archives building was the first permanent repository for records of the federal government, including the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.

More than one million people visit each year to see those records and others on exhibit. Thousands research their family histories using census, land, or military pension records. Others delve into the records of Congress and the Supreme Court, military records from the Revolution onward, documents pertaining to Native Americans, and more.

For decades Congress debated where and how to store America’s most precious documents. Over time, many were damaged or destroyed. In 1913 Congress directed the secretary of the treasury to plan a National Archives building. Construction began in 1931, and three years later President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed legislation creating the National Archives as a government agency.

John Russell Pope, architect of the Jefferson Memorial and the National Gallery of Art, designed and oriented the Archives building to stand out from the rest of the Federal Triangle. With 72 Corinthian columns and elaborately sculpted pediments, it embodies the importance of safeguarding historical records.

At the stairs are two sculptures by James Earle Fraser: Heritage, with a mother holding a baby and an urn filled with ashes of past generations; and Guardianship, whose sword and lion skin safeguard records for future generations.

The National Archives and Records Administration maintains billions of records in presidential libraries, regional archives, federal records centers, and a facility in College Park, Maryland.
The Federal Trade Commission, which has occupied this building since its completion in 1938, defends the American public against unfair methods of competition and unfair or deceptive acts or practices. One of the oldest independent federal agencies, the FTC was created in 1914. It works to protect the competitive marketplace and rights of consumers through litigation, consumer education, public hearings, and enforcement of regulations such as the Do Not Call rule.

Considered the capstone of the Federal Triangle project, the FTC building stands at the apex, or point, of the Triangle. As the Great Depression deepened in the 1930s, Congress twice cut funding for the project, which originally called for costly Beaux-Arts embellishments similar to those on other Federal Triangle buildings. Eventually Congress funded Edward H. Bennett’s simpler, less ornamented “stripped classicism” design.

Softening the building’s severity is artwork illustrating trade activities. Exquisitely detailed aluminum night gates depict the maritime industry’s growth, while bas-reliefs above each entrance show forms of commercial exchange. The dramatic limestone figures titled *Man Controlling Trade* flanking the Sixth Street façade of the building symbolize the FTC’s role in protecting competition. The well-muscled men represent government holding back the wild stallions of unregulated business. New Yorker Michael Lantz was a 29-year-old struggling artist when he won the 1938 competition to design these sculptures. Lantz was the younger brother of Walter Lantz of “Woody Woodpecker” fame.
**Sources**

The information on the 16 signs of *Make No Little Plans: Federal Triangle Heritage Trail* is drawn from a rich array of sources on the history of these 70 acres in the center of Washington, DC. For more information, please consult the Washingtoniana Division, DC Public Library and the Kiplinger Library of the Historical Society of Washington, D.C. In addition, see:


General Services Administration, Pennsylvania Avenue National Historic Site website, http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/102202


James Worsham, “Our Story: How the National Archives Evolved Over 75 Years of Change and Challenges,” *Prologue* (summer 2009).
6. Civil War to Civil Rights: Downtown
Follow the footsteps of Abraham Lincoln, Frederick Douglass, Walt Whitman, and the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Download the free audio tour from CulturalTourismDC.org.

Archives-Navy Mem’l-Penn Quarter. Sign 1 on Seventh St. across Pennsylvania Ave.

8. Hub, Home, Heart: Greater H Street NE
Walk the neighborhood that the railroad and the streetcar made, a proud working-class and immigrant enclave finally rising from the devastation of 1968.

Union Station. Sign 1 is at First St. and Massachusetts Ave.

9. Village in the City: Mount Pleasant
Trace the path from country village to fashionable streetcar suburb, working-class neighborhood, Latino barrio, and hub of arts and activism.

Columbia Heights. Two blocks west to Sign 1 at 16th and Harvard Sts.

10. Midcity at the Crossroads: Shaw
Immigrants and old-timers, the powerful and the poor have mingled in Shaw since DC’s earliest days.

Mt. Vernon Square/7th St–Convention Center to Sign 12.

11. River Farms to Urban Towers: Southwest
Visualize historic, ethnic Southwest amid today’s now-classic Modernist architecture, the result of mid-20th-century urban renewal.

Waterfront-SEU to Sign 1.

12. Top of the Town: Tenleytown Heritage Trail
Visit traces of the village that grew up around John Tennally’s 18th-century tavern, and experience the neighborhood that played a key role in two world wars and in the development of modern communications.

Tenleytown to Sign 1.

13. City Within a City: Greater U Street
Discover the historic center of African American DC, where Duke Ellington got his inspiration, Madame Evanti composed, and Thurgood Marshall strategized. Download the free audio tour from CulturalTourismDC.org.

U St/African-Amer Civil War Memorial/ Cardozo. Sign 1 is at 13th St. exit.
A Message from the U.S. General Services Administration

Although influenced by European classicism, the true inspiration for the architecture of the Federal Triangle arose from the plains of mid-America: the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair that introduced the City Beautiful Movement in the United States.

Early 20th-century political leaders such as Senator James McMillan of Michigan and Treasury Secretary Andrew Mellon joined leading architects in envisioning a magnificent grouping of government buildings in the heart of Washington. That vision was made into reality by thousands of talented workmen — stonemasons, bricklayers, engineers, carpenters, sculptors, plumbers, metal workers, electricians, painters, and other craftsmen — who hailed from across the nation.

Indiana provided the limestone from which most Triangle buildings were constructed. Marble came from Maine, Vermont, Maryland, Tennessee, and Missouri; granite from New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and North Carolina; terra cotta from West Virginia and Illinois; soapstone from Virginia; travertine from Georgia; Mankato stone from Minnesota. Steel and bricks arrived from Pennsylvania; wood from Ohio and Michigan. New York provided aluminum, bronze, and glass. Wisconsin contributed ornamental iron work, and New Jersey supplied leather for interior doors.

As you explore the Federal Triangle, be reminded that while it was conceived by men of power and architects of genius, all America helped to build it.

ROBERT PECK
Commissioner
Public Building Service
U.S. General Services Administration

The United States General Services Administration

Steward of more than 480 historic buildings, the U.S. General Services Administration is pleased to present the Federal Triangle Heritage Trail as part of an ongoing effort to foster the enjoyment and appreciation of America’s public buildings. GSA implements innovative green solutions and manages an ever-growing inventory of historic buildings throughout our nation’s capital and our country.

For more information on Federal Triangle buildings, please visit www.gsa.gov/vpb.

Cultural Tourism DC

Cultural Tourism DC is an independent, nonprofit coalition of more than 230 culture, heritage, and community organizations throughout the Nation’s Capital. We help metro-area residents and visitors experience Washington’s authentic culture and heritage.

Neighborhood Heritage Trails are the Official Walking Trails of the District of Columbia.

For more information on DC neighborhoods and walking trails, please visit www.CulturalTourismDC.org.

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