



Historic American Landscapes Survey **The American Society of Landscape Architects**

History and Background:

In late 2000, the National Park Service, the Library of Congress, and the American Society of Landscape Architects entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that established the Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS) to document landscapes that serve as tangible evidence of our nation's heritage and development. The creation of HALS is also supported under the authority of the 1935 Historic Sites Act and the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act, as amended in 1980 (16 U.S.C. 470).

Mission:

The mission of the Historic American Landscapes Survey's (HALS) is to record historic landscapes in the United States and its territories through measured and interpretive drawings, written histories, and large-format black and white and color photographs. The National Park Service oversees the daily operation of HALS and formulates policies, sets standards, and drafts procedural guidelines. The Prints & Photographs Division of the Library of Congress preserves the documentation for posterity and makes it available to the general public.

What Are Historic Landscapes?:

Historic Landscapes are important touchstones of national, regional, and local identity. In character they range from small gardens to large national parks, rural to urban, and agricultural to industrial spaces. Estate gardens, cemeteries and other memorials, farms, battlefields, quarries, suburbs, and abandoned settlements may all be considered historic landscapes.

Why HALS was established:

Landscapes are fragile places that are affected by the forces of nature, commercial and residential development, vandalism, and neglect. They undergo changes that are often unpredictable and irreversible. For these reasons and for the benefit of future generations, it is important to document these places.

Moreover, historic site documentation has expanded from an initial focus on grand buildings to include engineering sites and everyday architecture. Given this precedent, it is natural to further broaden recording efforts to include historic landscapes. With the growing vitality of landscape history, preservation, and management, the proper methodology for documenting the American landscape must be addressed.

Since its inception, HALS has made progress in identifying, and documenting significant American landscapes, establishing recordation prototypes, and developing a strong network of support within the professional community. HALS has undertaken numerous documentation projects, which has made it a valuable and recognizable preservation program within the National Park Service and the larger preservation community.

HALS and Property Rights:

Because HALS is a documentation program it does **not** limit property rights or involve the purchase of land. HALS sites are documented through drawings, written histories, and photographs which are then preserved in the Library of Congress for public use and enjoyment.

Funding for HALS:

Since its inception, HALS has received limited federal funding within the National Park Service budget. Specifically, HALS has received some funding from the Cultural Resources' Heritage Documentation Programs budget for the salary of one NPS employee. Additional funding to carry out HALS documentation projects comes from outside volunteer efforts.

ASLA continues to seek congressional funding for HALS to support core staff, including landscape architects, historians, and geographic information systems (GIS) specialists, as well as allow the program to provide technical assistance and small seed grants to local groups.

This year, the American Society of Landscape Architects is working with Congressman Russ Carnahan (MO) to request funding for HALS in the fiscal year 2010 Interior Appropriations Bill. With this support, citizens nationwide can initiate and complete HALS projects and help document nationally significant landscapes. Because of inadequate funding levels, HALS has been unable to carry out the mission of the program and as a result many important HALS projects are awaiting documentation.

Documentation Programs and the National Park Service:

The Heritage Documentation Programs of the National Park Service administers HALS along with three other companion programs, HABS (Historic American Building Survey), the Federal Government's oldest preservation program, HAER (Historic American Engineering Record), and CRGIS (Cultural Resources Geographic Information Systems). Documentation produced through these programs constitutes the nation's largest archive of historical architectural, engineering, and landscape documentation. In many instances documentation of these important sites serve as critical information used for their maintenance and preservation.

Recent Significant HALS Projects:

To date, several HALS sites have been submitted for documentation, including Hale O Pi'ilandi Heiau, HI, Mt. Vernon Square, Baltimore, MD, Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Sculpture Garden, Richmond, VA, Briarwood and Kidatchi, LA, Woodlands Cemetery, Philadelphia, PA, Antietam National Battlefield, Sharpsburg, MD, and several Veterans cemeteries across the country.

Recently, HALS has partnered with Tech University School of Architecture to document the San Antonio Riverwalk or Paseo Del Rio, a 2 ½ mile stretch of waterfront along the San Antonio River in San Antonio, TX which has a rich history that dates back to the sixteenth century.

HALS has also recently completed a major comprehensive documentation with measured drawings, written histories, and large-format photography of Roosevelt Island in Washington, D.C. HALS documentation began as part of the National Capital Region of the National Park Service's upcoming restoration of the 88.5 acres wooded island in the Potomac River dedicated to the memory of President Theodore Roosevelt.

Finally, HALS is currently working on documentation of the White House Grounds, Washington, D.C., also known as Reservation Number One of the L'Enfant Plan of Washington, D.C. The White House Historical Association has been working closely with the National Capitol Region of the National Park Service and HABS to produce comprehensive HALS documentation of the approximately 18 acres that comprise the grounds. HALS and HABS documentation will serve as a basis for maintaining and interpreting the grounds.