

HOW SUSTAINABLE LAND TRANSFORMS THE NATION'S CAPITOL

BARTHOLDI PARK AT THE U.S. BOTANIC GARDEN

Washington, D.C. | Project Size: ca. 1 acre | Certification: SITES Gold



Created in 1932, Bartholdi Park at the U.S. Botanic Garden (USBG) has served as a demonstration garden for more than 80 years and until 2016 had not undergone a complete renovation since its original construction. The renovation of Bartholdi Park provided an opportunity to increase accessibility, showcase SITES principles in action and demonstrate USBG's commitment to sustainability. The USBG is an original partner in the development of SITES along with the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at the University of Texas at Austin and the American Society of Landscape Architects.



WATER

Ten rain gardens capture rainfall and allow it to soak into the ground, diverting runoff from D.C.'s combined sewer system. The rain gardens can accept up to 4,000 cubic feet of water in a 24-hour storm event – equivalent to 256 bathtubs of water. The project also used permeable paving and reduced the amount of impervious surface.



PLANTS

The gardens in Bartholdi Park showcases plants native to the Mid-Atlantic region and a collection of edible plants in permanent and seasonal plantings in a new kitchen garden. The project team was able to save multiple large trees and shrubs; other plants were reused on Capitol Hill and in D.C. Public Schools.



SOIL

During the renovation, topsoil was removed and saved off-site, amended with organic compost and returned to the park for the new plantings. In areas where plants were saved, the soil was also protected from compaction.



MATERIALS

Existing concrete sidewalks were crushed and then used as the base layer under the new sidewalks. Previous stone walls were disassembled, and their stones were reused in the new walls for the raised kitchen garden. Flagstone from previous pathways was also salvaged to create new paths. To include locally sourced furniture, a Virginia company-built seating and tables from a white oak that had fallen naturally during a storm.



HUMAN HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The park connects people to nature through programming that includes yoga and nature-in-motion walks. Additional seating, a water fountain, and bicycle parking were added. Tours and signage explain the sustainable features, providing inspiration for how to apply these principles at home.

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CERTIFIED: SITES GOLD, MAY 2018

SITES SCORECARD SUMMARY	POSSIBLE POINTS	POINTS EARNED
Site Context	13	10
Pre-Design Assessment + Planning	3	3
Site Design		
Water	23	11
Soil + Vegetation	40	13
Materials Selection	41	21
Human Health + Well-being	30	18
Construction	17	10
Operations + Maintenance	22	15
Education + Performance Monitoring	11	7
Innovation or Exemplary Performance	9	9
TOTAL POINTS	200	117

CERTIFIED = 70 | SILVER = 85 | GOLD = 100 | PLATINUM = 135

SITES is administered by Green Business Certification Inc. (GBCI) and is based on the understanding that land is a crucial part of the built environment. The certification program creates regenerative systems and fosters resilience; ensures future resource supply and mitigates climate change; transforms the market through design, development and maintenance practices; and enhances human wellbeing and strengthens the community. SITES-certified projects can help reduce water and energy demand, improve air quality and promote human health and wellbeing. [Learn more at sustainablesites.org](https://www.sustainablesites.org)