

National Museum of African American History & Culture

STUDIO 431
landscapeforms

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Landscape Forms Elements:

Custom Benches

Design Partner:

GGN Ltd.

Drawing the open, pastoral nature of the Washington Monument grounds through the National Museum of African American History & Culture site, the design creates important connections to the surrounding, historic context including the adjacent Washington Memorial and the White House. The two entries into the site are marked by a gently curving plinth of highly polished stone and an entry fountain of moving and still water.

After crossing these symbolic thresholds of stone and water, broad sweeping paths draw visitors in through a landscape that is both continuous and sequential, layered with trees native to the Southeast. The site is designed to encourage visitors to extend the museum experience outside, and to linger and reflect on the important narratives being told within. Our Studio 431 team manufactured the ornamental seating elements found on the lawn located in the reading grove. These steel structures are designed for a range of postures both for individual and group interactions.

The museum building is African American history and culture writ large on the National Mall of the United States. Its location and its design represent the past, present, and future of the African American experience in ways tangible and symbolic. It is a place where all Americans can learn about the richness and diversity of the African American experience, what it means to their lives, and how it helped us shape this nation.

Many of the world's great buildings have integrated their architectural form with their function or purpose. The museum follows this principle in the sense the building embraces its content—the American story told through the lens of African American history and culture. Fulfilling a decades-long dream, the museum building is a community resource that helps visitors learn about themselves, their histories, and their common cultures.

