

Washington University Hilltop Campus, 1899-1951, NR



Washington University's Hilltop Campus is one of two St. Louis County sites designated as National Historic Landmarks, the other being White Haven. It is acclaimed by architectural historians as one of the finest Collegiate Gothic ensembles in the country, and although its buildings were constructed at different times, they remarkably preserved the character of the master design of Cope and Stewardson of Philadelphia. The firm, headed by Walter Cope, won the 1899 contest for Washington University's campus, organized by the trustees in recognition of the need for the university to move out of its downtown location.

In Washington University's design, Cope & Stewardson recalled England's medieval colleges, where buildings from different periods naturally created an irregular, asymmetrical layout. This resulted in an atmosphere of balance between open areas and well-fitting intimate spaces, imparting a surprisingly friendly feeling. Architectural historians have noted how Cope & Stewardson followed the medieval practice in assuming that no side door or secondary tower was too insignificant to be well designed and in creating rich visual connections between the buildings.

The new campus was erected with the help of distinguished St. Louis benefactors, whose names these buildings bear. Busch, Cupples, Liggett Halls, Ridgley Library and University (later called Brookings) Hall were all started in 1900 and 1901. Occupancy of the campus was expected in the fall of 1902, but by that time plans for the Louisiana Purchase Exposition had been made and its organizing committee wanted the emerging campus for its administrative headquarters.

In the fall of 1904, the university grounds were host to the Third Olympic Games, the first such event to be held in the United States. Then in 1905 Washington University finally moved into its campus. During the following decades, new buildings were added, and the successor architects, James P. Jamieson and George Spearl, helped maintained the Gothic style.

Brookings Hall, Skinker and Forsyth Blvds., 1901, Cope & Stewardson, NR



Brookings Hall is a Gothic style building built in 1900. The building was originally named University Hall and was used as the administrative office for the 1904 World's Fair, but after 1927 the buildings name was changed to Brookings Hall. Robert Brookings, who in 1895 became president of the Board of Directors of Washington University, had made a fortune of several million dollars by the age of forty as a partner in the firm of Samuel Cupples and Company, which controlled more than half the nation's trade in woodenware and willowware. He retired from the business to accept the university post. He continued to lead Washington University as president for 32 years and during this time he superintended the design of the new campus. After leaving St. Louis he established a center for the study of economics and government in Washington D.C. in 1922. The center became known as the Brookings Institute in 1927. The Hall is now the administrative building for Washington University.

Francis Field Gate, 1914, James P. Jamieson, NR



The Francis Field Gate was built by James P. Jamieson as a memorial to the third Olympic Games in 1904 that were held on the Washington University campus. The Field and Fieldhouse were named after former governor David R. Francis, who served as president of the World's Fair Company. He was first a successful wholesale grain dealer and then worked as a banker, publisher of the St. Louis Republic, Mayor of St. Louis (1885-9), Governor of Missouri (1889-93) and secretary of the interior (1896-97)