



ANACOSTIA WATERSHED SOCIETY

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Anacostia Watershed Society Headquarters Receives SITES® Certification for Sustainable Landscapes

Groundbreaking initiative brings sustainable design full circle

Bladensburg, MD, April 1, 2015 – Anacostia Watershed Society’s headquarters, the George Washington House (circa 1752) joins a select group of projects certified under the national Sustainable Sites Initiative® (SITES®) program for sustainable land planning, design, construction and maintenance.

The George Washington House was awarded a Three-star rating by the SITES program led by the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at The University of Texas at Austin, the United States Botanic Garden, and the American Society of Landscape Architects. The program has established best practices and performance-based benchmarks for developing and rating landscapes that have sustainable elements.

The George Washington House is one of the final 12 projects in 20 states to be certified using the pilot 2009 SITES guidelines. As such, the project helped test the rigorous, scientifically based content that led to the [SITES v2 Rating System and Reference Guide](#).

Achieving certification with the SITES 2009 Rating System meant Anacostia Watershed Society’s headquarters site had to fulfill 15 prerequisites, such as having an integrated approach to how landscape architects, engineers, and others develop a site. The project was then awarded one to four stars based on 51 potential credits, with points awarded for performance in credited areas such as the initial site selection, water, soil, vegetation, materials, human health and well-being, construction, and maintenance.

The Anacostia Watershed Society redesigned the half acre surrounding the historic George Washington House as a public demonstration of a practical, aesthetic way to address the flow, collection, and management of stormwater runoff from the site. Years of adjacent road realignments that raised the grades of surrounding lands had created

poor drainage patterns throughout the site. With the help of volunteers, interns, staff and local business donations, AWS was able to install permeable paving, a rainwater cistern, brick and dry-stream channels and rain gardens. The project demonstrates how sustainable stormwater management can be successfully incorporated within historic sites challenged with a limited budget and very restrictive site constraints.

“We are pleased to be among those taking a lead in applying the SITES rating system to enhance the environmental, social and economic aspects of our work restoring the Anacostia,” said Jim Foster, President of the Anacostia Watershed Society. “By achieving this level of sustainability at the historic George Washington House we honor the heritage of the Anacostia and the communities of the watershed.”

Project team members include:

- Client: Anacostia Watershed Society
- Lead Project Team Member: Mary Abe, RLA
- Project Team Members: Erin Borgeson Castelli, Jim Foster, Christopher Myers, Margaret Noonan, Simon Plog
- Contractor Partners: Ernest Maier Block, Aggregate Industries, Ottery Group

The SITES program staff has been working for seven years in conjunction with a diverse group of stakeholder organizations to transform land development and management practices with a comprehensive, voluntary national rating system for sustainable landscapes. The guidelines apply to any type of designed landscape, with or without buildings, including shopping malls, streetscapes, subdivisions, corporate and academic campuses, transportation corridors, parks and single-family homes.

The 46 total certified pilot projects informed the June 2014 release of the SITES v2 Rating System and Reference Guide. Negotiations are under way with the Green Building Certification Institute to provide project certification to the requirements of the SITES v2 Rating System and a related professional credentialing program.

About the Anacostia Watershed Society (AWS)

The mission of the Anacostia Watershed Society is to protect and restore the Anacostia River and its watershed communities by cleaning the water, recovering the shores, and honoring the heritage. The vision is to make the Anacostia River and its tributaries swimmable and fishable by 2025, in keeping with the Clean Water Act, for the health and enjoyment of everyone in the community. Community involvement is critical to achieving this vision and AWS seeks strong partnerships and coalitions with all parts of the community, government, and other stakeholders. Anacostia Watershed Society’s programs include environmental education, stewardship, recreation, and engaging the community through advocacy and volunteer opportunities. www.anacostiaws.org