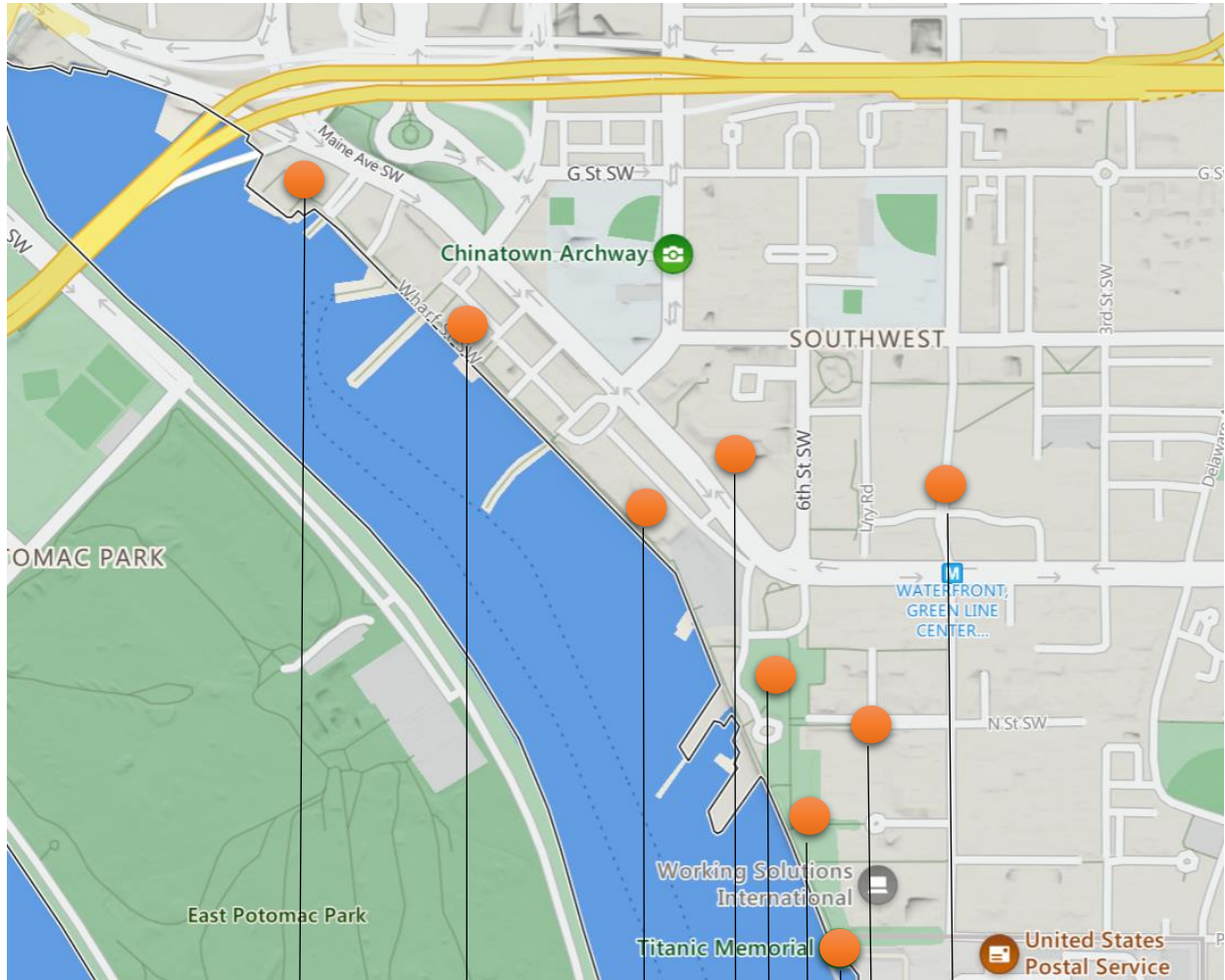


■ **JOG YOUR EYES** by *Gianni Brizzi, architect/urban planner*

■ **WASHINGTON SOUTHWEST -  
- WATERFRONT: THE WHARF AND TIBER ISLAND**



**Fish Market**

**The Wharf Phase I**

**The Wharf Phase II**

**Eleanor Holmes Norton Park**

**Arena Stage**

**Waterfront Park**

**Tiber Island Housing**

**Titanic Monument**

**Waterfront Station**

## ● WASHINGTON SOUTHWEST WATERFRONT

The area of Washington's Southwest Waterfront extends from the present I-395 freeway on the North to the military grounds of Fort McNair on the South. It is bounded by 4<sup>th</sup> Street SW on the East and the Washington City Canal on the West. The area is an historical part of the city. It includes some of its oldest buildings and establishments such as the Wheat Row block of townhouses which was built in 1793, Fort McNair which was developed in 1791, and the Fish Market which operates since 1805 and is the nation's oldest fish market establishment. Despite its privileged location close to the US Capitol, after the Civil War the area became one of the most neglected and poorest of the entire city. Its demographic composition mainly consisted of working-class European immigrants. Next to them, east of 4<sup>th</sup> Street SW, lived a large community of freed African Americans. Concerned by its dismal conditions, in the early 1950s, city planners working with the US Congress initiated a comprehensive renewal of the area combined with the wider renewal of the entire Washington Southwest. Most of the existing buildings were demolished and their residents relocated. Only a few buildings were left intact, notably the Fish Market, the Wheat Row townhouses, and the Thomas Law House.

The renewal of Washington Southwest and its waterfront marked one of the last great efforts of the late Modernist movement. Architect I. M. Pei developed the initial urban renewal plan and was responsible for the design of multiple buildings, including those comprising L'Enfant Plaza and two clusters of apartment complexes located in a larger development on the northern side of M St. SW, initially called Town Center Plaza. The renewal of the waterfront included the creation of a Waterside Mall, later replaced by the present Wharf DC complex, the construction of the nearby Arena Stage, later enclosed in a bigger structure, the development of the already mentioned Town Center Plaza, later partially erased and redeveloped, and several residential complexes. The most noticeable of these complexes are on the area denominated Tiber Island south of M Street SW along the Washington City Canal. The Southwest Waterfront is enriched by the presence of a Riverfront Promenade with restaurants, shops, public piers, private marinas, private and public boating facilities. The Promenades leads to an extensive Riverfront Park. The southern part of it is a tribute to the original brutalist heritage of the adjacent residential developments; the northern part is a recent outstanding addition dedicated to Congresswoman Eleonor Holmes Norton.



Wheat Row Townhouses (left) and Thomas Law House (right)

## ●● THE WHARF DC

The Wharf DC is one mile-long. It sits on an area originally used for maritime transport and storage of goods. In the 1950s, the Washington Southwest Renewal Project converted the area in a waterside mall with recreational functions and a riverfront promenade flanked by a marina. Part of the waterfront was also used to provide docking facilities for river cruise boats and vessels of the DC Fire Department and the US Coast Guard. The Wharf DC is the result of a recent renewal of the entire area started in 2014 under the leadership of developers PN Hoffman and Madison Marquette. The operation was realized in two phases delivered in 2017 and 2023, respectively. Twelve different architectural firms contributed to the design of its buildings and structures. The Wharf DC includes residential and mixed-use buildings. Four hotels, numerous restaurants and shops animate the area which also offers to its visitors varied recreational facilities. On its northern edge the area integrates the Washington Fish Market, the oldest operating similar facility in the nation. Being on a protected body of water, the Wharf, as indicated by its name, continues and strengthens its function of haven for pleasure boats. Thus, it is dotted by peers and berthing facilities, including for river water taxis, a novelty in the city's history. The DC Fire Department and the US Coast Guard maintain their facilities at the southern edge of the development.



The Southwest Riverfront (Washington City Canal) in the early 1800s.



The Southwest Riverfront seen from the western side of the Washington City Canal in the 1970s (picture above) and in the present days (pictures below).



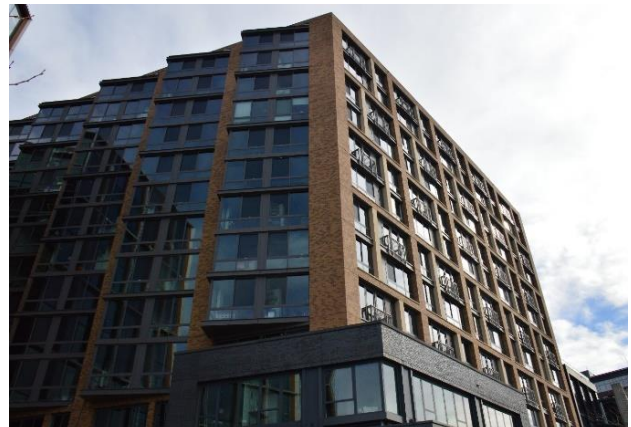
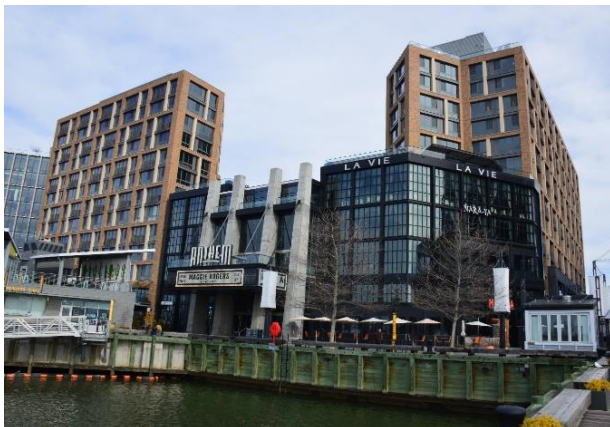
## ● THE WHARF DC, PHASE I

The first phase of the Wharf DC consists of a built area of more than 1.9 million square feet which are spread among an 11-story office building, 910 residential units in 5 separate residential complexes, numerous retail facilities, and three hotels. On its northern edge, it provides for a smooth integration of the city's historic Fish Market into the redeveloped areas. The highlights of the Wharf DC include spectacular piers, lively fountains, and a 6,000-seat entertainment venue.

Perkins Eastman DC led the preparation of the master plan and contributed to the design of public areas, including the piers. The firm also designed some of the buildings. The main structures are presented below. They are listed in successive order according to the 5 development parcels that they occupy. The listing is followed by the presentation of additional building and facilities worthy of attention.



Parcel 1. The parcel hosts an office building by the name of 1000 Maine. The building was designed by the architectural firm Kohn Pederson Fox.



Parcel 2. The parcel consists of two residential buildings totaling almost 500 units, some 40,000 square feet of retail space, and a large entertainment venue. The residential complex is named the Channel and was designed by Perkins Eastman DC.



Parcel 2. The entertainment venue, by the name of Anthem Theater, was designed by Rockwell Architecture.



Parcel 3. The parcel is dedicated to the hospitality industry. The building hosts an Intercontinental Hotel and was designed by BBG-BBGM Architects.



Parcel 4. The parcel includes the VIO & Incanto residential complex. Its design is due to Handel Architects.



Parcel 5. The parcel hosts two hotel accommodation facilities, notably Canopy by Hilton and Hyatt House. The complex was designed by the SmithGroupJJR.



Market Pier and Market Square Complex designed by Perkins Eastman DC.



District Pier designed by Perkins Eastman DC.



Recreation Pier designed by Perkins Eastman DC.



Riverside Baptist Church designed by GBR Architects.



The Banks apartment building with the Riverside Baptist Church attached to it.



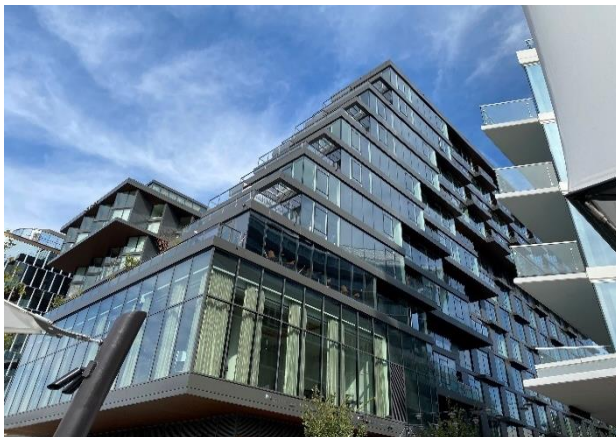
## ● THE WHARF DC PHASE II

The second phase of the Wharf DC consists of a built area of 1.15 million square feet which are spread among three office buildings, a 131-rooms de lux hotel, 350 residential units in housing complexes. The ground floors of most buildings accommodate retail space, coffee-bars and restaurants. The second phase also boasts three waterside buildings and an extensive marina which completes and strengthens the analogous facilities provided in phase I. Its highlights are the inner courts and little squares along the waterfront promenade and the Green Public Park located between the promenade and Maine Street in front of the Arena Stage. Worthy of attention is also the green connection from the waterfront promenade to the Eleonor Norton Holmes Park at the southern edge of the development.

As for phase I, Perkins Eastman DC led the preparation of the development's master plan. Various architects contributed to the design of its buildings, piers, and outdoor spaces and facilities. The buildings are listed in successive order according to the 5 development parcels that they occupy. The listing is followed by the presentation of additional worthy buildings and facilities.



Parcel 6 &7. The parcel hosts two twin mirrored glass buildings designed by SHoP Architects.



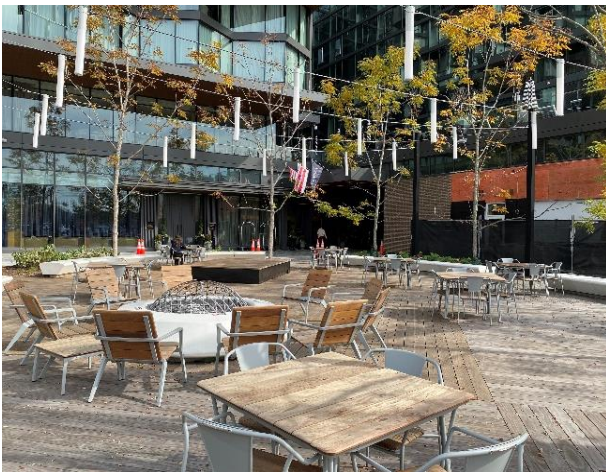
Parcel 8. The parcel hosts an articulated complex of buildings which comprises 235 apartments and 131 hotel rooms. The complex was designed by ODA.



Parcel 9. Amaris Condos complex designed by architect Rafael Viñoly.



Parcel 10. Atlantic Offices building designed by Morris Adjmi Architects.



Pendry Corner on the Waterfront Promenade by Wolf / Josey.



Water building 1 by Hollwich-Kushner Architects.



Water building 2 by S9 Architects.



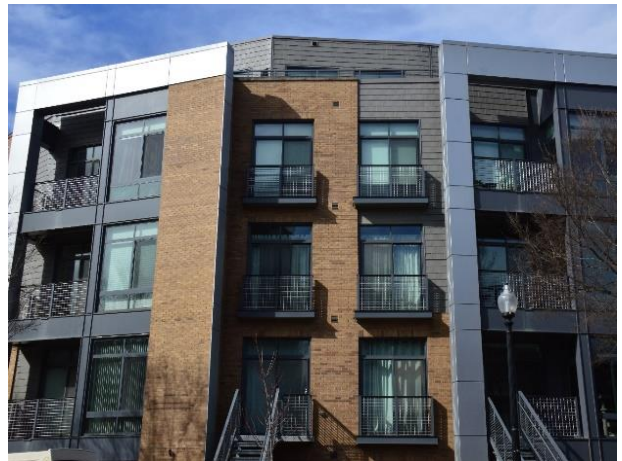
The Green Public Park by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates.



Pier 4. Marina building designed by McGraw Bagnoli Architects.

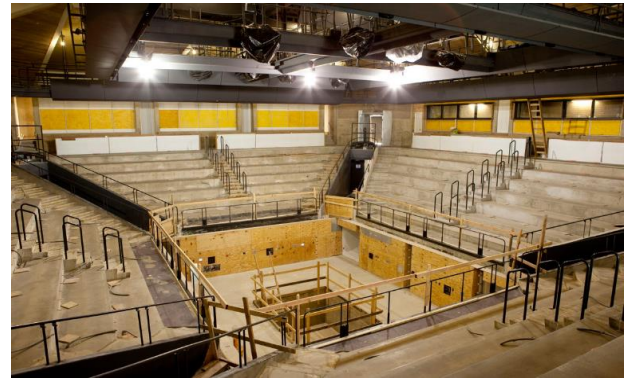
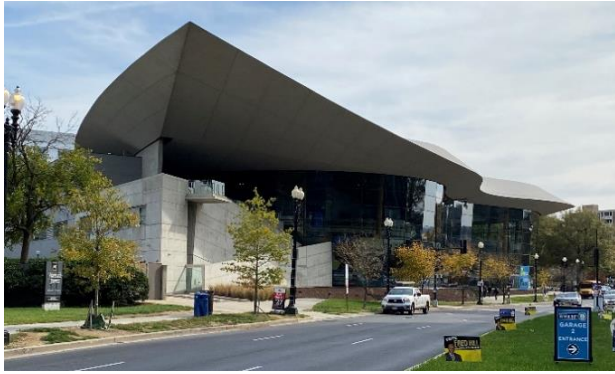


St. Augustine's Episcopal Church designed by MTF Architecture.



525 Water at The Wharf designed by SK+I Architecture.

## ●● THE ARENA STAGE PERFORMING ARTS COMPLEX



The Arena Stage has a rich history. Though it began in the 1950s, the theater found a permanent home only in the 1960' when Harry Weese, the legendary architect of the Washington Metro stations, designed it first structure. This structure was followed by the addition of another theater in 1971, a modified thrust stage, also designed by Weese. Both buildings were expression of the brutalist architectural movement which also inspired the urban renewal of the Washington Southwest Waterfront. They were significant enough to be listed as Historic Structures. Capitalizing on its success, in the late '90s the Arena Stage direction decided to expand the original complex. Bing Thom Architects (BTA) won the commission. Faced with the challenge of maintaining the original listed historic structures while effectively doubling the size of the overall facilities and improving their acoustics, BTA devised an ingenious plan. They created a building which wraps as a gigantic container the original historic structures, a new theater and open and enclosed spaces dedicated to lobby, foyer, service and administrative functions.

## ●● TOWN CENTER PLAZA

Town Center Plaza was the core of a set of residential complexes located in the city blocks comprised in between I, M, the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 6<sup>th</sup> streets SW. With the arrival of the green metro line and the opening of a metro station in 1991, many of the original buildings were replaced with new structures. Among the new buildings deserve attention the mixed-use complex of Waterfront Station straddling 4<sup>th</sup> Street SW. The complex totals 1.2 million square feet and consists of office and residential buildings encompassing, among others, specialty shops and a large supermarket. Among the surviving buildings of the 1950 Washington Southwest Renewal Project are four residential complexes designed by I.M. Pei. They display sophisticated implants over ground pillars, harmonious volumes, and polished façade designs.

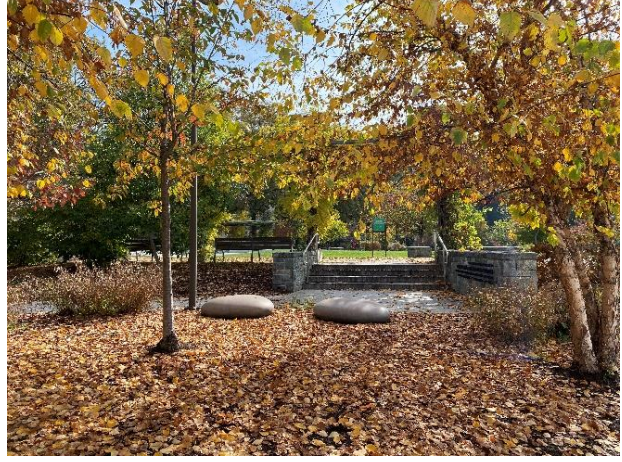


Waterfront Station complex designed by Shalom Baranes Associates and completed in 2009.



Waterfront Tower designed by I.M. Pei in the 1950s.

**TIBER ISLAND, ELEONOR HOLMES NORTON PARK**



Eleanor Holmes Norton Park (opened in 2017). Images (above and below).



Historical Thomas Law House (1796), designed in Federal style by architect William Loring.

● TIBER ISLAND, WATERFRONT PARK



Waterfront Park completed in 1965. Images (above and below)



Titanic Memorial. The memorial honors the men who gave their lives so that women and children might be saved during the RMS Titanic disaster. John Horrigan made the sculpture from a single granite piece. Unveiled in May 26, 1931 the monument was originally at the foot of Rock Creek Park. In 1968 it was removed and re-erected in its current location.



## ● TIBER ISLAND, HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

The master plan and the residential complexes of Tiber Island represent one of the most significant urban renewal and urban development programs implemented in the 1960s not only in Washington DC but in the entire nation. The program is significant for its balance between built and green areas, its innovative modernist architecture, and, more importantly, its integrated multiracial construct.

Below are presented its most interesting residential complexes. Tiber Island Condominium is inspired to Le Corbusier's architectural lexicon, Harbor Square Cooperatives with its expansive ponds creates an imaginative building context, River Park Townhouses are a daring expression of technological prowess, and Riverside Condominium represent a compelling closure of the southeastern edge of the entire Tiber Island urban renewal program.



Tiber Island Condominium (1966) designed by Keyes Lethbridge & Condon.



Harbor Square Cooperatives (1966) by architect Clotheiel Woodard Smith.



River Park Townhouses (1967) by architect Charles M. Goodman.



River Park Apartments (1967) by architect Charles M. Goodman.



Riverside Condominium (1965) by Morris Lapidus.