

Governor's Mansion Visitor Center Project, Denver, CO



Terrace garden



View of Ellipse and Cabinet Room



Granite steps and water chadar



View of terrace garden and ellipse

The challenge of the project was how to introduce new site elements and planting that were sensitive to the history of the site and yet meet the evolving needs of the First Family. In addition to creating several new spaces, a large addition was added to the existing Carriage House to serve as a new Visitor Center and Cabinet Room. A significant goal of the project was to make the gardens accessible to all; the site has 25' of grade change from the Mansion down to the Carriage House.

The solution keeps within a Beaux Arts plan and makes the forms and details more contemporary as one moves further away from the Mansion and the closer to the new Cabinet Room.

Plant species were selected for their historic significance as well as their xeric qualities. Notable features of the new gardens include an alpine garden along the west side of the Mansion, a terraced garden planted with ornamental grasses reminiscent of eastern Colorado, and an elliptical turf area with a pergola. The finale of the sequence of terraces are granite steps and water chadar that cascades down to the Cabinet Courtyard. The brick courtyard space is flexibly designed for formal press conferences as well as casual bar-b-ques.

The preliminary design phase was prepared by Civitas.