

# Pierre-Charles L'Enfant



Born in France, L'Enfant applied French architectural styles to U. S. government buildings during the era of the early republic. He volunteered to fight in the American Revolution and wintered at Valley Forge in 1777, where he served as captain of engineers for a time. After the war, President George Washington commissioned him to design the emblems for the Society of the Cincinnati. L'Enfant converted the Old City Hall in Philadelphia to Federal Hall, to serve the U.S. Congress. When Washington, D.C. was chosen as the new site of the federal capital, Washington asked L'Enfant to design the city. L'Enfant was dismissed in 1792 because he did not listen to directions, overspent the budget, and ignored the claims of previous owners. Nonetheless, his plan is evident in the modern layout, with the White House and Capitol on high ground and the streets intersecting at landmarks. He helped shape communities by helping design Washington, D.C. and many of its buildings, such as the Capitol, Congress and the White House, applying French architectural styles.

