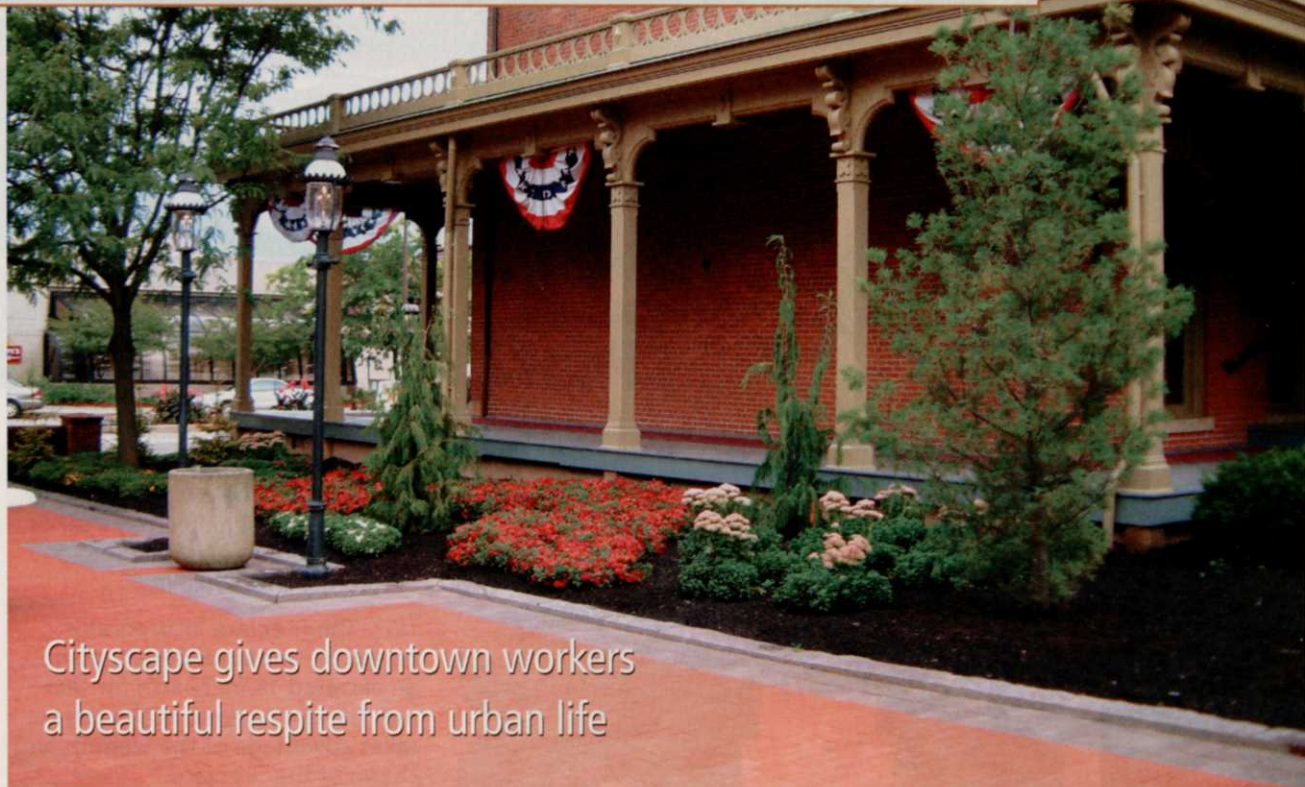


## First Ladies National Historic Site



Cityscape gives downtown workers a beautiful respite from urban life

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS / Managing Editor

Some of the most honored individuals our country has ever known are recognized in Canton, OH. No, not football players at Canton's NFL Hall of Fame. We're referring to First Ladies.

The First Ladies National Historic Site honors the better halves of the 43 men who have held our country's highest office. And a visit in 1993 by the current occupant of the White House gave Todd's Enviroscapes Inc., in nearby Louisville,

OH, just three weeks to overhaul the site's 12,000-sq.-ft. garden courtyard before Laura Bush arrived.

"We laid 40,000 brick in one week working double shifts," says Terry Pesek, a landscape designer with Enviroscapes. "They had an existing garden courtyard there that they wanted to renovate. We needed to do both paver work (hardscape) and plantings, the greenscape. We had to make it look like a lovely park. It's very beautiful."

An architect designed the overall look for the \$200,000 project, but the details were left to Enviroscapes.

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The Saxton home, built in 1841, is part of the National Parks Service.

(Bottom) Workers had to be extra careful because of the pedestrian traffic in an urban environment

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"You're looking for something year round, when people are going through the garden, regardless of what time of year it is, it has some interest and beauty," Pesek says. "You're looking for things that stay green as well as spring bulbs that give you that burst of color after a long winter. In fall, the deep color of mums brings that space alive."

Enviroscapes faced numerous challenges, not the least of which was the shortened time frame.

"The fact that it's an urban setting, means it has to include things that are salt tolerant," Pesek says. "It has to be material that can withstand traffic and, of course, our climate. You're looking for more durable than the delicate plants that you might find in a residential garden. But they still had to look beautiful."

Because it was an urban setting, workers had to take extra care when cutting brick because of all the people wandering about. (Belden Brick, one of Canton's founding companies, supplied the bricks.)

"It was a wonderful way for the city of Canton to be represented on a national level," Pesek says. The harsh environment was only one of the challenges.

"We had to leave the existing granite curbing and the original concrete base under the pavers, which makes it a little bit difficult, because it is easier to demo everything rather than selectively demoing," Pesek says. "When you selectively demo, you have to be very careful not to damage what you want to save."

With the hardscape in place and the plants in place it was time to make sure the courtyard sparkled for the First Lady's arrival. "We popped in 1,500 mums to give a blast of fall color," Pesek says. "The mums weren't quite ready to bloom. Mother Nature wasn't working with us on the timing side. We took about 1,700 pounds of ice and spread it around the mums to try to get them to pop, so they would be looking their best when she arrived."

It worked. Although she did not get to meet Mrs. Bush, Pesek did hear the First Lady was complimentary of the garden. One

Enviroscapes worked double shifts to lay more than 40,000 pavers.



## IN THE GARDEN

Some of the less common plants used in the Ladies' garden to add style and flair:

Botanical	Common	Selected for its
<i>Pinus strobes 'Torulosa'</i>	Contorted White Pine	Cool twisted needles
<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	Sculptured Scotch Pine	Interesting structure
<i>Picea orientalis 'Skylands'</i>	Golden Oriental Spruce	Beautiful gold branch tips

## OTHER PLANT MATERIAL THAT IS THE BACKBONE OF THE DESIGN

Botanical	Common	Selected for its
<i>Chamaecyparis nootkatensis 'Pendula'</i>	Weeping Alaskan Cedar	Drama and evergreen
<i>Hydrangea paniculata 'Tardiva'</i>	Tardiva Hydrangea	Late summer flowering
<i>Buxus</i>	Boxwood	Winter interest and formality
<i>Picea pungens glauca globosa</i>	Dwarf Blue Spruce	Striking blue color all year round
<i>Rosa 'Knock Out'</i>	Knock out Shrub Roses	Low maintenance and bloom all summer
<i>Ginkgo biloba</i>	Maidenhair Tree	Great urban tree with unique leaf shape, one of the oldest trees on earth, estimated at 150 million years

In the planters, Enviroscapes was looking for plants that provided a blast of color, were hardy enough to stand the urban environment and were drought tolerant. The company settled on begonias, geraniums, millet, colocasia (elephant ear) for its heart shaped, colorful foliage and cannas for their height and striking foliage.

of the features of which Pesek is most proud are the large planters situated next to the street.

"It really enhanced the city landscape," she says.

The city of Canton liked the planters so much Enviroscapes was asked to add several more along Market Street, the city's main drag, to match those near the garden.

"It really added to the downtown area, as well," Pesek says.

The job earned the company a PLANET National Distinction Award, one of many honors the company has received over the years. **LMI**