

Thomas E. Austin

Architect of the Capitol



On May 22, 2024, the bicameral Congressional Commission announced its unanimous selection of Thomas E. Austin to serve as the 13th Architect of the Capitol. In this role, Austin is responsible for leading the agency's mission to preserve and maintain the historic buildings and grounds across the Capitol campus.

Austin oversees facilities maintenance and operation of the historic U.S. Capitol, the care and improvement of more than 570 acres of grounds, and the operation and maintenance of 18.5 million square feet of buildings including: the House and Senate Office Buildings, Capitol Visitor Center, Library of Congress Buildings, U.S. Supreme Court Building, Thurgood Marshall Federal Judiciary Building, and other facilities. He is responsible for the care of all works of art in the U.S. Capitol as well as the maintenance and restoration of murals, outdoor sculpture and other architectural elements throughout the Capitol campus. He also serves as Acting Director of the U.S. Botanic Garden.



The Architect of the Capitol is a member of the Capitol Police Board and the Congressional Accessibility Services Board, as well as an ex officio member of the United States Capitol Preservation Commission. Additionally, the Architect of the Capitol is a member of the District of Columbia Zoning Commission, the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the National Capital Memorial Commission, the Art Advisory Committee to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority and the National Institute for Conservation of Cultural Property.

Professional Experience

In 2023, Austin retired from the U.S. Army as a Colonel after nearly three decades in engineering and leadership roles including serving overseas in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Bosnia, and as a Battalion Commander in the 18th Engineer Brigade. His last decade of service focused on construction and facilities management roles including assignments with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) and Arlington National Cemetery (ANC). As the NGA Chief of Facility Programs, Austin was responsible for policy, planning, budgeting, design and execution for facility repairs across multiple facilities and campuses totaling several million square feet of classified space; he also led the emergency management program. As the ANC Director of Engineering, Austin oversaw the design and construction of the 50-acre Southern Expansion Project which added over 80,000 interment spaces, relocated the operations complex, and integrated the Air Force Memorial into the cemetery. He oversaw the Memorial Amphitheater project to clean, preserve and enhance accessibility. He also directed the restoration of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier memorial and plaza, the reconstruction of the historic Ord and Weitzel Gate, and other restoration projects of all sizes. Most recently, Austin oversaw the construction management advisory team for the Cannon House Office Building Renewal in Washington, D.C.

Education

Austin earned his Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Michigan, Master of Engineering Management from the Missouri University of Science and Technology, Master of Business Administration from Webster University, and Master of National Resource Strategy from the Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy. He is a licensed Professional Engineer, Certified Construction Manager, and Project Management Professional. In the military, he was awarded the Bronze Star, Legion of Merit, Combat Action Badge, Ranger Tab, Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge and other honors.