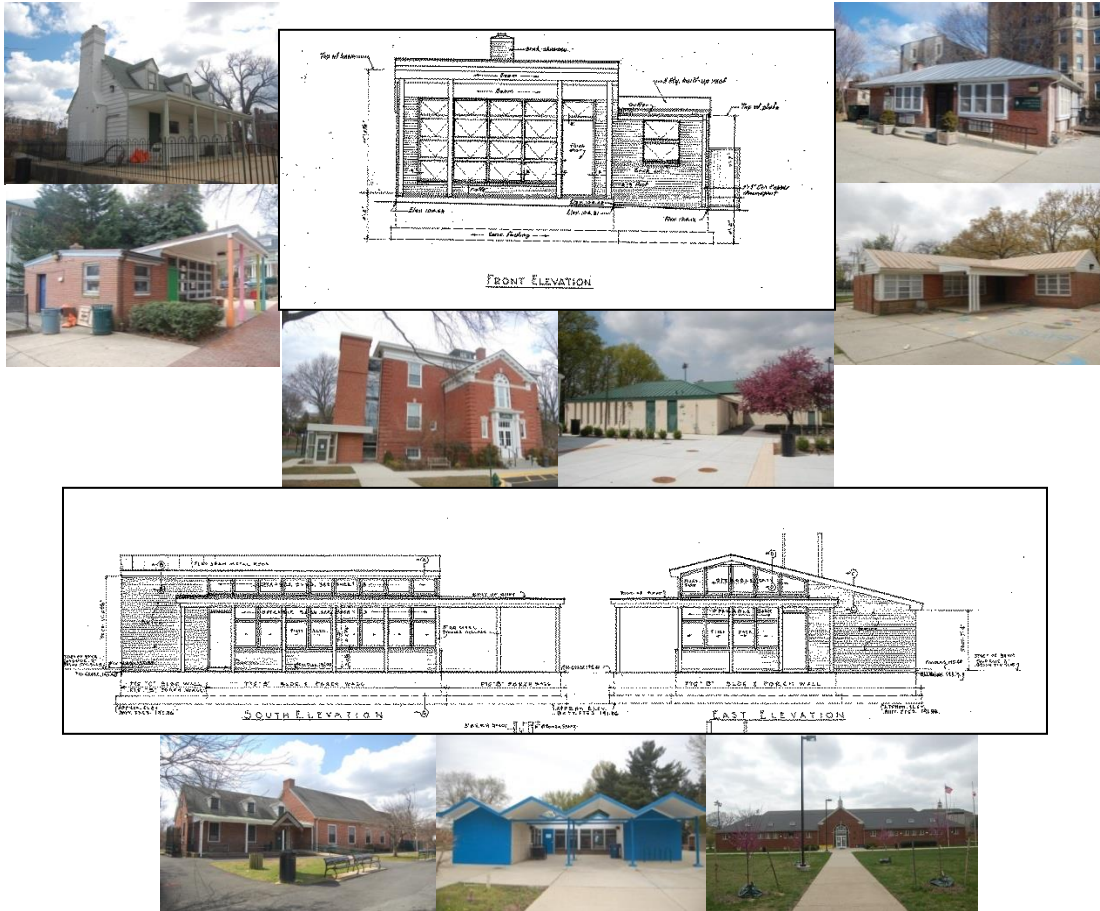


District of Columbia Parks & Recreation Master Plan

Historic Preservation Review



Prepared for the District of Columbia Office of Planning
and Historic Preservation Office

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Abstract

Existing Conditions Architectural Survey

In 2013, as part of master planning efforts for the District of Columbia (DC) Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), History Matters surveyed the exterior condition of 33 recreation centers that have been part of the DC public recreation system for more than 50 years. Surveyors documented the exteriors of the recreation centers and noted other permanent buildings located within each park's boundaries, including pool houses and community centers as well as hardscape features (swimming pools and splash pads; concrete and brick retaining walls, decks, and patios; concrete and brick steps; and tennis and basketball courts). In addition, surveyors cataloged the recreational features of the parks (baseball fields, football fields, tot lots, and playgrounds) and photographed each center's recreation structures and park features.¹

The 2013 survey data for each of the 33 centers was recorded on individual architectural survey forms that History Matters created to record the results of the 2013 survey and to update information about the 33 centers that was first recorded and published by the DC Department of Recreation in its 1984 publication, *Recreation's Heritage: A Preliminary Historical Resource Inventory*. (Abbreviated survey forms were prepared for six of the thirty-three parks after field surveyors determined that the parks' recreation centers had been extensively renovated or demolished and replaced.) In addition, the survey forms incorporate information about the sites that the DC Historic Preservation Office (HPO) has collected since 1984, including archeological data. The forms also note the architectural subtypes that History Matters and HPO developed during the survey that categorizes each center by its construction date and architectural style.

¹ Each survey also includes park acreage information. Surveyors calculated acreage by using square footage information provided by the DC Office of Planning's *Property Quest* system.

Historic Context Narrative

While conducting the existing conditions survey, History Matters staff wrote a historic context narrative for the District’s recreation centers using archival sources and previous work about the history of the District of Columbia and the parks and recreation movements in the District and in the United States.² It documents shifts in responsibility for oversight of the DC recreation system from private philanthropies in the late 19th century to repeated transfers of ownership and oversight by the DC government and the federal government in the 20th century. In addition, the historic context describes the economic, social, and population changes that gave rise to the creation of the first playgrounds in DC and that drove development of the recreation system from 1870 to 1967. By tracing the evolution of recreation centers from simple play spaces in the early 20th century to Colonial Revival field and pool houses built in the 1930s, to the more utilitarian “Shelter House” styles of the 1940s, the “Mission 66” architecture of the 1950s, and the [National] Park Service modern style of 1960s facilities, it outlines how the shifts in and diffusion of responsibility affected the architectural style of the city’s recreation facilities and how these relate to broader historical trends in both the District and the United States.

Analyzed together, the existing conditions survey, the assembled survey documents, and the historic context for DC’s recreation centers can serve both DPR’s master planning efforts and HPO’s efforts to identify and protect the city’s historic resources.

² Sources included plans, blueprints, maps, transfer of jurisdiction information, period newspaper articles, historic aerial photography, and government documents (including annual reports, National Register of Historic Places (NR) documentation, past DPR master plans and surveys, and HPO-generated, archaeological Project Data Request Forms.

Recreation Center Buildings of Washington, DC, 1870-1967

Origins of the DC Recreation System

The recreation system of Washington, DC had its origins in the playground movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The main impetus for the early playground movement was to provide a place for young children to play safely. As the 20th century progressed, the playground movement became a movement for public recreation with the goals of creating safe playing areas for all children and creating public space for supervised sports, recreation, and educational activities for adults.

The late 19th and early 20th century in the United States was a period of tremendous population growth in the nation's industrial cities, much of which was fueled by immigrants from Europe and Asia who were drawn by political and religious freedom and economic opportunities. Once they arrived, immigrants found themselves living with their native-born counterparts in poor and crowded city neighborhoods. In response, many Americans sought ways to ameliorate the effects of the rapid rise of industrialization and to make life better for both native-born American citizens and recent immigrants alike. These "progressive" Americans tried new ways to help people and solve society-wide problems.

The settlement house movement in the United States was part of this larger social reform movement and was greatly influenced by the work of reformers in Great Britain, who believed that middle-class people could help their poorer neighbors if they lived together in the same neighborhoods and provided services to alleviate some of the problems of poverty and the new industrial economy. Between 1890 and 1920, civic activists would establish more than 400 "settlement" houses in the United States, primarily in cities in the Midwest and Northeast. Most famous among these was Hull House (1886) in Chicago, and the Henry Street Settlement in New

York City. Concurrently, distressed by the number of city children being killed and injured in accidents while playing in neighborhood streets, these and other civic activists began to construct city playgrounds built specifically for children. They did so in the belief that if children had their own places to play, rather than congregating in the streets, they would be protected and less likely to fall prey to the myriad dangers then associated with life in American cities.

In 1901, the founders of the new “Neighborhood House,” a settlement house located near 5th and N Streets, SW, turned its backyard garden into a supervised play space for local girls under the age of five.³ Soon Richard Brown, the Neighborhood House janitor and a gifted blacksmith, began to devise and build “teeter-toters,” “travelling rings,” and perhaps the “first slide devised for play” for the property’s play space. In 1902, with the help of the District of Columbia Commissioners and U. S. Senator James McMillan, the Neighborhood House obtained the use of a large, city-owned, vacant lot located at 7th and N Streets, SW to create an additional playground for area children.⁴

The Neighborhood House playgrounds were available only to the area’s white children.⁵ In 1903, Sarah Collins Fernandis, who had founded the Colored Social Settlement the year before, opened a playground for African-American children at 1st and L Streets, SW.⁶ At the time, the Southwest quadrant (where the Neighborhood House and the Colored Social Settlement

³ The Neighborhood House is the precursor of what is today the Barney House. Founded in 1901 by Charles E. Weller, Eugenia Winston Weller, and John Sleman and renamed the Barney Neighborhood House and Social and Industrial Settlement in 1933 in honor of its primary financial sponsor, Alice Pike Barney, its members worked in DC’s southwest neighborhood until 1960 when the organization relocated its offices to the Mount Pleasant neighborhood in northwest DC.

⁴ For more about the founders, Richard Brown, and the services they provided see Bernard S. Fortner, *A History of the Municipal Recreation Department of the District of Columbia (1790-1954)*, PhD dissertation (University of Maryland, 1956), pp. 39-42. James McMillan was a U.S. Senator from Michigan between 1889 until his death in 1902. Today, he is most remembered for the 1901-1902 comprehensive plan issued by the U.S. Senate Park Committee that he chaired. The “McMillan Plan” contained the first comprehensive park plan for Washington, DC.

⁵ In 1900, DC’s total population was 278,718. Of these, 191,532 were white and 86,702 were African American. Less than 500 people were counted as being of a race other than African American or white.

⁶ For more about Fernandis, see Crouse, Michael et al, *Pioneers in Professionalism: Ten Who Made a Significant Difference 1880-1930*, National Association of Social Workers, Maryland Chapter. <http://www.nasw-md.org/displaycommon.cfm?an=1&subarticlenbr=12>. (accessed August 8, 2013) and Jacqueline Brice-Finch’s entry about Fernandis in *Notable Black American Women, Book II*, ed. Jessie Carney Smith (Detroit, 1996), pp. 221-223.

playgrounds were located) was perhaps the poorest in the city.⁷ Later in 1903, the newly formed Public Playgrounds Committee, which included the Neighborhood House and Colored Social Settlement, created three new playgrounds--one at North Capital and L Street, NW; one at First and M Streets, NW; and one designated for “colored” children at First and P Streets, NW.⁸ By the end of 1906, the Public Playgrounds Committee reconstituted itself as the Washington Playground Association. Under the Association’s umbrella, eight more playgrounds were created on vacant lots, and the District’s Department of Education opened public playgrounds for summertime use on the grounds of eleven public schools.⁹

Playgrounds under Municipal Control

In conjunction with creating, equipping, and staffing playground spaces in the District, the major goal of the new Washington Playground Association was to convince the U.S. Congress that the District government itself should administer the city’s playgrounds. This was accomplished in 1911 when Congress approved legislation and allocated funds for the District of Columbia Municipal Department of Playgrounds.

In 1912, in his first report to the District Commissioners, Edgar S. Martin, the new Department’s supervisor, noted that “playground development has consisted mainly in the intensification of the present playground activities and the full use of the facilities already provided.”¹⁰ Before the creation of the municipal department, most of the ten city playgrounds were open only in the summer. By becoming part of the city government and securing more stable funding, the city was able for the first time to keep the ten playgrounds under Martin’s jurisdiction

⁷ For more about Southwest DC’s history see Keith Melder’s “Southwest Washington, Where History Stopped” in Kathryn Schneider Smith’s *Washington at Home* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), pp. 88-104.

⁸ Fortner, p. 50.

⁹ Fortner, p. 57.

¹⁰ “Playgrounds,” *Report of Commissioners of District of Columbia, 1911-12*, p. 17.

and to keep them open longer each year than just during the summer months.¹¹ Two of these playgrounds exist today, albeit largely altered, as the New York Avenue and Volta Park recreation centers.

Martin and his colleagues believed that children needed not only playground space, but access to other supervised recreational activities as well. They believed that it was the job of municipal governments to provide these activities for city children and, eventually, all city residents, including adults. Martin and others in the District argued that:

It is obvious that the playground movement is an educational movement as well as recreational. The interest displayed by the many visitors to the Capital City is evidence that it is becoming a national movement in every sense of the word, and that our municipalities are becoming more and more convinced that it is their duty to provide adequately for this social and civic need for their people.¹²

In 1917, these ideas were put into action when, using funding from the city's Department of Education, a new Community Center Department was created to work with the Department of Playgrounds to provide recreational and educational programs for children and adults. Together, the two departments supervised the District's recreational programs and facilities until 1942 when their work was folded into the duties of the Department of Recreation, a new city agency.

A Mix of Federal and Municipal Government, 1917-1942

Between 1917 and 1942, the city's recreational facilities and grounds were planned, built, and maintained by a mix of city and federal agencies. City departments included the city's architect and engineer as well as maintenance and operations divisions in the city's Department of Playgrounds and Department of Education. In 1924, Congress passed legislation to create the National Capital Park Commission (NCPC) to "provide comprehensive, systematic, and continuous development of

¹¹ The city school system continued to administer school playgrounds open six to eight months during the year.

¹² "Playgrounds," p. 18.

the recreation system of the National Capital and to direct land acquisitions for this purpose.”¹³ For much of the next decade, the NCPC was charged with helping to create the city’s playgrounds, parks, and recreation centers. NCPC greatly advanced the planning work for District parks in the 1920s; however, it was the 1930 passage of the Capper-Crampton Act that provided a large infusion of federal funds which enabled NCPC to acquire new parkland and to create plans for new parks and recreation centers.¹⁴

The election of Franklin D. Roosevelt to the U.S. presidency in November 1932 brought further change to park building efforts in the city. By the end of 1933, under the Roosevelt administration’s re-organization of the federal government’s administrative agencies, new parks and park structures in the District’s system became the responsibility of the newly created National Capital Parks (NCP) division of the National Park Service (NPS) in the U.S. Department of the Interior. For the most part, the NPS would maintain primary responsibility for the construction and maintenance of all park buildings until the District obtained home rule in the early 1970s.

Park Facilities, 1930s

In the early 20th century, playground and park facilities reflected the era’s focus on outdoor recreation by providing playing fields and courts for baseball, basketball, and tennis. Most structures within the parks included rudimentary equipment sheds (also known as field houses) that provided locked storage for sports equipment. This changed in 1930, when a new, larger type of field house

¹³ Fortner, p. 421 and Frederick Gutheim and Antoinette J. Lee, *Worthy of the Nation: Washington, D.C. from L’Enfant to the National Capital Planning Commission* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006) pp. 167-219. In 1952, NCPC’s name was formally changed to the National Capital Planning Commission.

¹⁴ In addition to providing funds to acquire land for parks and recreation centers in the District, the Capper-Crampton Act (46 Stat.482) provided funds to acquire and develop land to create the George Washington Memorial Parkway and additional land in Maryland and Virginia to supplement the park and parkway system of the National Capital near Washington, DC. The legislation was named for Senator Arthur Capper and Representative Louis Compton. Arthur Capper (1865-1951) was the chair of the U.S. Senate District Committee in 1930. Capper served as a Republican Senator from Kansas between 1919 and 1948. Louis Crampton was Capper’s counterpart, serving as the chair of the House of Representatives’ District Committee in 1930. Crampton served as a Republican representative from Michigan between 1913 and 1930.

began to be constructed at some city parks. These updated field houses increased the functionality of the parks and also illustrated an influential architectural movement prevalent throughout the United States in the late 19th and early 20th centuries: Colonial Revival.

Colonial Revival architecture was a highly patriotic and picturesque evocation of America's past, harkening to the simpler era that preceded the "fragmenting industrial and commercial society" of the highly populated and urbanizing country.¹⁵ The designers of Washington, DC's Colonial Revival field houses drew inspiration from colonial traditions such as the mid-Atlantic, hall-parlor plan houses with dormered, gable roofs or Georgian-style houses with symmetrical, rectangular massing. With many regional variations, the Colonial Revival style was immensely popular for public and institutional buildings throughout the country.

Field houses in the 1930s reflected the changing role of playgrounds and recreation centers as not just supervised play areas, but integrated centers for education and recreation. The new centers were intended to provide not only storage for outdoor recreation equipment, but also offices for park managers, rest rooms for the public, and enclosed spaces for indoor recreation and classes. The Colonial Revival-style field houses of the 1930s were one-and-one-half-story, side-gable, frame or brick buildings with dormers and an exterior end chimney; the three to four-bay buildings had full-width porches for additional, sheltered activity space. This type of DC field house still stands on the grounds at Mitchell Park (1930), Park View (1932), Palisades (east wing; 1936), and Chevy Chase Playground (1938). They were designed by Albert Harris, who worked in the DC Office of the Municipal Architect, and by architects from the NCP division of the NPS. In 1935, NPS architects also repurposed an 1870 stone cottage located on the former Highlands estate into a recreation

¹⁵ Dell Upton, *Architecture in the United States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) pp. 80-81.

center.¹⁶ Located within what is now known as Hearst Playground, the building was renovated to include a full-width rear porch to conform to the Colonial-Revival recreation centers of the era.

The 1930s also saw the growing popularity of swimming as a form of recreation in the city. DC built several swimming pool complexes which included outdoor pools with Colonial Revival-style bath houses (a term used interchangeably with “pool house”) to provide changing rooms and showers. Examples of bath houses designed in the 1930s for city pools include those at Anacostia (1932) and Banneker (1936). The Takoma Community Center bath house, which was built in 1958, was based upon a NPS design that was developed in 1933.¹⁷ These bath houses are one-and-one-half-story, brick buildings clad with hipped roofs. They have multiple bays and entrances centered on their primary elevations.

Park Facilities, 1942-1967

By the early 1940s, city officials and the U.S. Congress realized that the pressures of a wartime city with a burgeoning population in need of leisure-time activities necessitated more and better recreational facilities. In 1942, the U.S. Congress enabled a major development for the city’s recreation system by creating the Recreation Board of the District of Columbia and giving it the power to establish a recreation department and appoint a superintendent of recreation.¹⁸ The Recreation Board adopted a plan that divided the city into 26 major areas; each area would have a large recreation center and several neighborhood playgrounds. From 1942 to 1945, the NCPC worked to acquire land for playground purposes guided by the 1942 plan. However, war restrictions

¹⁶ The Highlands estate house is the present day administration building for Sidwell Friends School.

¹⁷ For more information on Banneker Recreation Center, which was not a part of this survey, see: Amy Friedlander and Martha Bowers, *Banneker Recreation Center*, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Washington, DC: Louis Berger & Associates, Inc., August 1984.

¹⁸ Fortner, p. 247. The U.S. Congress passed Public Law 534 on May 29, 1942.

on building materials and the lack of available personnel to staff the recreation facilities prevented much progress.

Following the end of World War II in 1945 and continuing into the immediate postwar period, DC built recreation centers to meet the pent-up demands and needs of a city population that had grown from slightly under 500,000 in 1930 to just over than 800,000 in 1950.

During this period, architects in the National Capital Park's Planning Division and Design and Construction Division produced two models for recreation centers that were built in several locations throughout the city with minor variations. These brick "Shelter Houses" replaced outdated and dilapidated storage structures in existing parks and were important elements of development plans for new parks. Like the park system's Colonial Revival field houses, they illustrate the city's continuing focus on building recreation centers that provided enclosed activity space as well as offices for park managers, storage facilities for equipment, and rest rooms for the public. Instead of fitting those spaces inside the typical Colonial Revival hall-parlor plan, the more utilitarian buildings were designed to fit their function. In addition, their designs feature rows of windows which indicate an emphasis on well-lit spaces with good air circulation. A natural urban outgrowth of the NPS's more rustic architectural tradition for park and recreation structures, the Shelter House type evoked the simple shapes, low lines, and uncomplicated roofs of the typical park structure found in the "natural" parks throughout the country, but with more "finished" materials such as brick rather than stone or log.

One type of these 1940s Shelter Houses is identified by a hipped roof that covers an L-shaped, brick building and corner porch. Other features included: inset corners on the same elevations as the porches; interior-end, brick chimneys; three-bay porches with brick corner posts and paired metal or wood medial posts; triple windows in flat, projecting bays with full-sized center windows flanked by two, narrow windows; double-hung, wood sash windows in wood surrounds

with rowlock brick sills; and restrooms that featured hopper windows. Among the recreation centers surveyed, the hipped roof Shelter House type is found at Rose Park (1945), Kalorama (1947), Fort Greble (1949), and Ridge Road (1949-1950).

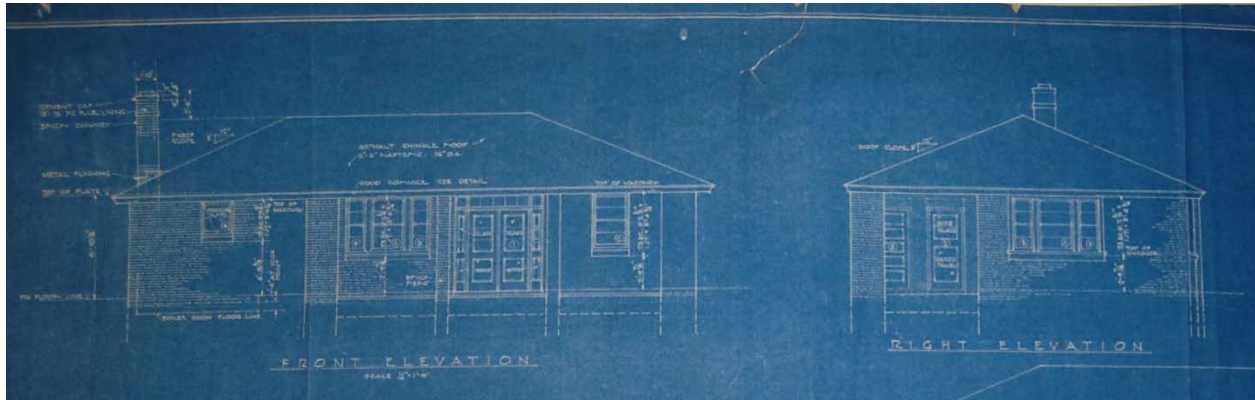
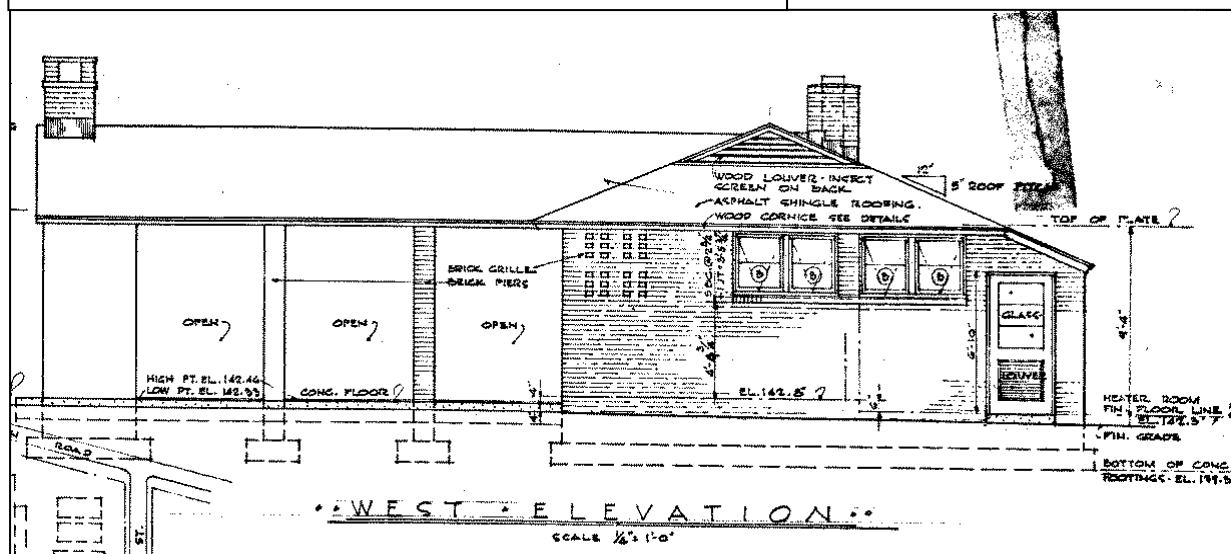


Figure 1. Plans for a Shelter House, 1945.

The other type of Shelter House utilized a T-shaped, gable-roof design that located office, storage, and rest rooms in the main building with general purpose space attached as the leg of the “T.” The T-Shaped Shelter House is found at Congress Heights (1943) and Edgewood (1945).

Figure 2. Plans for Edgewood Recreation Center, 1944.



During the Korean Conflict (1950-1953), construction of recreation facilities once again slowed due to the renewed restrictions on construction materials.¹⁹ Construction resumed in the mid-1950s and continued into the 1960s, in part due to funding provided by Mission 66, a billion dollar, ten-year, NPS program that Congress funded in the early 1950s to enable the NPS to improve and expand its facilities throughout the U.S.²⁰ With Mission 66 funding, NPS architects produced contemporary building designs for visitor centers and other types of buildings throughout the national park system. DC recreation centers during this period were designed by the same architects and engineers as other Mission 66 projects; the recreation centers reflected the increasingly modern style and larger footprint of NPS architecture.²¹ Mission 66 represented a heroic optimism in the post-war era, and was intended to facilitate park access to millions of increasingly mobile Americans. The newly conceived park visitor center was the building type most closely associated with the Mission 66 program, although other buildings and landscape structures such as shelters and roads represented the accomplishments of the program. Practitioners of Mission 66 architecture often utilized the most current, economical, and efficient building practices such as curtain wall construction, innovative uses of steel and concrete, and extensive applications of glass.²²

Developed by NPS architects circa 1954, Type I recreation centers in DC have a distinctive two-part design that features a side-gable portion and a shed-roofed portion where the roof extends to cover a three-bay porch.²³ Under the porch, the façade includes a bank of single windows. Original examples of Type I centers among the recreation centers surveyed include: Macomb (1954),

¹⁹ Fortner, p. 377.

²⁰ The NPS named the funding program Mission 66 to indicate its goal: to have a physical infrastructure which could support the projected visitation figures for 1966, the agency's 50th anniversary.

²¹ During this period, two additional parks, Stead (1888; DPR, 1953) and Guy Mason (1902; DPR, 1954), were developed around buildings repurposed to serve as recreation centers.

²² Ethan Carr, *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2007) pg. 137

²³ Plans for this type of recreation center were labeled "Type I" in the D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation archives.

Hamilton (1958), and Lafayette (1958). Harrison Park drawings show that its recreation center was constructed as a Type I facility in 1955, but that it underwent substantial renovation in the 1990s.

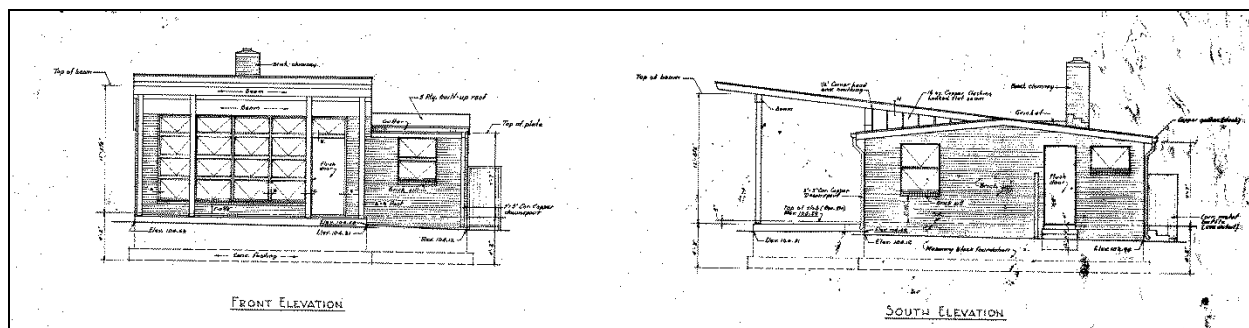


Figure 3. Type I Plans for Harrison Recreation Center, 1955

Type II recreation centers, which were designed by NPS architects circa 1958, are distinct for their cross-gable roofs and the placement of main entrances on both the front and rear of the building.²⁴ These one-story, brick buildings feature one elevation with an entrance under a small, open porch and a row of five, double-hung windows on the front. On the rear elevation, the corner porch is covered by a shed roof supported by triple, metal posts. Triple windows and a row of five, double-hung windows pierce the elevations, and stone facing covers the area beneath the windows on one side. Among the centers surveyed, Friendship (1958) and Takoma (1958) are examples of Type II centers in mostly original condition. The Upshur Recreation Center's (1958) shed-roofed porch was enclosed with roll-up doors in a later renovation. At Fort Stevens (1958), the shed-roofed porch has been changed to a side-gable, brick addition and, circa 2000, major wings were added to the west side.

²⁴ The plans for this type of recreation center were labeled "Type II" in the D.C. Department of Parks and Recreation archives.

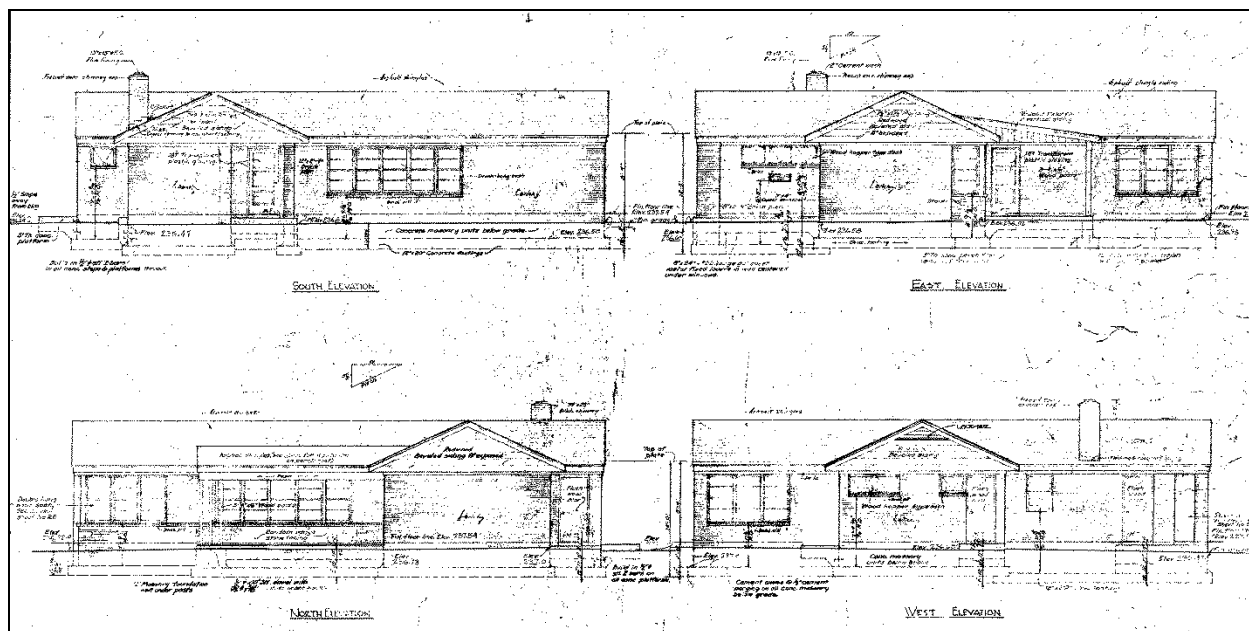


Figure 4. Type II Plans for Takoma Recreation Center, 1958.

By the mid-1960s, NPS designs for DC recreation centers began to move away from a single building model and to new models that can be grouped as Park Service Modern in style.²⁵ The new centers were constructed with materials that included steel framing, concrete, and glass, as well as new, prefabricated materials. The new designs were stripped of overt decorative elements, but often contained fenestration that differed from previous designs; the new fenestration included clerestory windows, windows set in deep embrasures, and prefabricated panels of metal and glass. Among the centers surveyed, examples of the Park Service Modern include: Hardy (1961),²⁶ Petworth (1965),²⁷

²⁵ "Park Service Modern" is a term developed by Sarah Allaback in her *Mission 66 Visitor Centers: The History of a Building Type* (Washington, DC: NPS, 2000) pp. 22-24.

²⁶ A variation on the Type II recreation center, Hardy is L-shaped with a full cross-gable roof, and a hipped roof over the main wing. It also has a porch that stands in the corner of two wings, rows of five and six, double-hung windows that pierce the elevations, and stone facing that covers part of the façade.

²⁷ Petworth's original rectangular building featured an L-shaped porch that wrapped around the southeast corner, a side-gable roof with uneven sides, and clerestory windows under the short side of the roof. In 1993, the recreation center was renovated extensively with one-story additions made to most sides.

Benning-Stoddert (1965)²⁸, New York Avenue (1965)²⁹ and Arboretum (1966).³⁰ Also in 1966, the 1912 building at Randall was repurposed to serve as a recreation center.

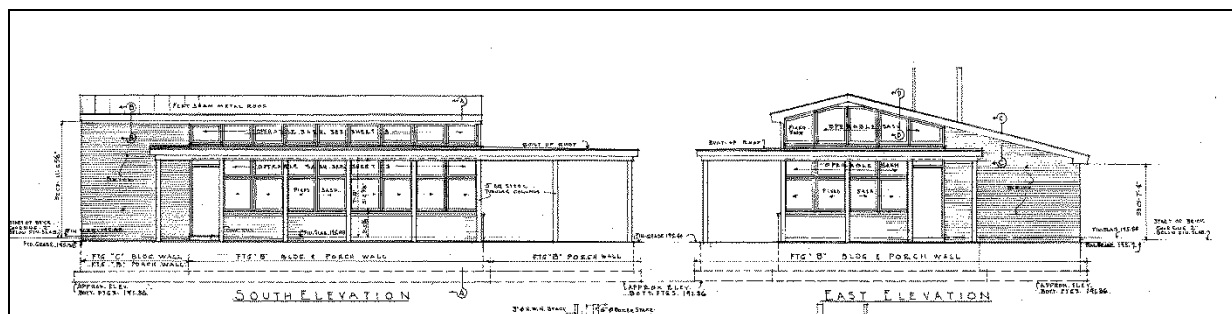


Figure 5. Park Service Modern Style Plans for Petworth Recreation Center, 1965.

Park Facilities, Post 1967

Within a few years of the appearance of the Park Service Modern recreation centers in DC, the administrative setting under which the DC park system operated changed. In 1968, anticipating the Home Rule Act of 1973 that restored elected city government, NPS began transferring oversight and ownership of local recreation facilities to the DC Department of Recreation.³¹

In the 1990s and 2000s, after a prolonged period of little or no capital funding, the city government began to greatly increase capital improvement projects throughout the city. During this era, some recreation centers acquired major additions to accommodate the trend toward creating larger indoor recreation spaces. At the same time, while grappling with the reality of limited land then available for developing public recreation areas, the city demolished some of the smaller recreation centers and replaced them with multi-use, multi-story buildings. Examples of these new,

²⁸ Benning-Stoddert's three-part building features a central entryway between two wings; the east wing is a concrete building with embrasure windows and a triangular bank of windows. The west wing is a two-story, concrete block gymnasium.

²⁹ Similar to the hipped-roof Shelter House design, with a corner porch and enclosed spaces both under one roof, the New York Avenue recreation center is a side-gable building. Park Service Modern elements include a steel frame, large brick and concrete walls, pre-fabricated panels, and rows of windows. It has a larger footprint than the hipped-roof Shelter Houses.

³⁰ The Arboretum features a zigzag roof over the porch and wings and one over the main block of the building. Rows of windows and concrete panel exterior walls illustrate new construction technology using prefabricated materials.

³¹ Gutheim and Lee, p. 315

larger centers include those constructed at Harry Thomas Sr. Park (1999), Emery Park (2003), Volta Park (2004), Lamond Park (2006), Trinidad Park (2007) and Raymond Park (2013).

Conclusion

Understanding the evolution of the city's recreation centers helps illuminate the city's economic and social fabric throughout the 20th century. Their construction and use over time reflect the effects of rapid population growth in the first half of the 20th century and population contraction in the second half. It also shows the underlying influence of the federal government in the development of the city's built environment; the DC parks and recreation system often found itself both the beneficiary of federal support and subject to federal ownership and oversight of DC parklands.

Recreation centers evolved from simple play spaces in the early 20th century to Colonial Revival field and pool houses built in the 1930s, to the more utilitarian "Shelter House" styles of the 1940s, the "Mission 66" architecture of the 1950s, and the [National] Park Service modern style of 1960s facilities. The shifts and diffusion of responsibility between the federal and DC governments affected the development of the city's recreation facilities and how DC's recreation movement related to broader historical trends in both the District and the United States.

Survey Methodology

In March and April 2013, in order to gather information about centers that have been part of the DC parks and recreation system for more than fifty years, History Matters surveyed the exteriors of 33 of the District of Columbia's 74 park recreation centers. **(For a complete list of the 33 centers that were surveyed, see Appendix A.)**³² In May and December 2013, after reviewing its survey findings with HPO, History Matters developed working subtypes for the centers that generally define them by their date of construction and their style of architecture. **(For photographic illustrations of the categories and subtypes, see Appendix B.)** Along with the preparation of a narrative historic context for the recreation centers and documenting the existing condition of the buildings, the survey findings and the discussion of the development of recreation center subtypes are intended to aid future evaluations that could contribute to the development of a Multiple Property Document Form (MPDF) for historic DC Park Recreation Centers.³³

As part of its survey efforts, History Matters' staff documented the exteriors of the recreation centers and noted other permanent buildings located within each park's boundaries, including pool houses and community centers. Staff also documented hardscape features, including swimming pools and splash pads; concrete and brick retaining walls, decks, and patios; concrete and brick steps; and tennis and basketball courts. In addition, the survey forms list the recreational features of the parks, including baseball fields, football fields, tot lots, and playgrounds, and included

³² The D.C. Historic Preservation Office (HPO) selected the 33 centers that were surveyed. When the 2013 survey project began, HPO and History Matters determined that both the Anacostia Recreation Center (1944-1945) and Banneker Recreation Center (1936) had been documented within the last five years; thus, they were not included in the 2013 survey.

³³ A MPDF is a document used to nominate individual properties and historic districts that share a similar time period, geographic distribution, historic themes, and significance.

photographs of recreation structures and major park features.³⁴ Park acreage was calculated by using square footage information provided by the DC Office of Planning's *Property Quest* system.

This survey updates information first provided in the 1984 *Recreation's Heritage: A Preliminary Historical Resource Inventory*, which was produced by the then-named Office of Development and Planning of the D.C. Department of Recreation (DPR). When available, the survey incorporates information about the sites that the HPO has collected since 1984.³⁵

During the course of the survey, History Matters noted that the original recreation centers in six of the 33 parks selected (Emery, Lamond, Langley, Raymond, Trinidad, and Volta), have either been extensively renovated or demolished and replaced by new recreation centers. Accordingly, History Matters created abbreviated survey forms for these six parks.

Sources Consulted

In order to prepare a historic context for the recreation centers and to provide historical information for the survey forms, History Matters drew mainly from primary archival sources and secondary sources about the history of the District of Columbia and of the parks and recreation movements in the District and in the United States. The primary sources, which included plans, blueprints, maps, transfer of jurisdiction information, annual reports, and historic newspaper articles, came from several archives and offices around the city.

History Matters reviewed hard copies of original plans and blueprints, as well as vertical files when available, at the Columbia Heights Community Center at 1480 Girard Street, NW; the former DPR headquarters located at 3149 16th Street, NW; and the former Office of Property

³⁴ History Matters did not include service-related buildings, such as equipment sheds, in the survey.

³⁵ As of January 2014, HPO had provided archaeological survey information for 19 of the 33 parks surveyed: Arboretum, Benning Stoddert, Chevy Chase, Congress Heights, Edgewood, Fort Greble, Fort Stevens, Friendship, Harrison, Langley/Harry Thomas, Macomb, Mitchell, Palisades, Park View, Raymond, Ridge Road, Stead, Takoma, and Upshur.

Management's archival library in the basement of the Franklin D. Reeves Municipal Center, located at 2000 14th Street, NW. History Matters also reviewed digital plans and blueprints located on a computer database at the current DPR headquarters at 1250 U Street, NW.

History Matters staff utilized archival holdings in the Washingtoniana Room located at the Martin Luther King, Jr. branch of the DC Public Library and the Peabody Room located at Georgetown branch of the DC Public Library. Records reviewed included: historic city maps; relevant subject vertical files; the *Annual Reports* of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia, 1912-1938; miscellaneous reports issued by DPR and its predecessors; and historic newspapers. Other primary and secondary materials consulted included historic aerial photography, National Register of Historic Places documentation, past DPR master plans and surveys, and HPO-generated, archaeological Project Data Request Forms.

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- Vertical Files, Volta Park (Georgetown Park).
- Vertical Files, Rose Park.

Appendix A



































Master List of Surveyed Recreation Centers

Master List of Surveyed Recreation Centers

Site Name	Address	Quadrant	Year Built
Arboretum	2412 Rand Place	NE	1967
Benning-Stoddert	100 Stoddert St	SE	1965
Chevy Chase Playground	5500 41st St	NW	1938
Congress Heights	Alabama Ave & Randle Pl	SE	1943
Edgewood	3rd & Evarts St	NE	1945
Emery	5701 Georgia Ave	NW	2003
Fort Greble	MLK Jr Ave & Elmira St	SE	1949
Fort Stevens	1327 Van Buren St	NW	1958
Friendship	4500 Van Ness St	NW	1958
Guy Mason	3600 Calvert St	NW	1902; 1954
Hamilton	13th & Hamilton St	NW	1958
Hardy	45th & Q St	NW	1961
Harrison	13th & V St	NW	1955
Hearst	37th & Tilden	NW	1870; 1935
Kalorama	1875 Columbia Rd	NW	1947
Lafayette	5900 33rd St	NW	1958
Lamond	20 Tuckerman St/Kansas Ave & Tuckerman St	NE	2006
Harry Thomas, Sr.	1743 Lincoln Rd	NE	1999
Macomb	3409 Macomb St	NW	1954
Mitchell Park	1801 23rd St	NW	1930
NY Ave Playground	1st & New York Ave	NE	1965
Palisades	5200 Sherier Place	NW	1936
Park View	693 Otis Place NW/700 Princeton Place	NW	1932
Petworth	801 Taylor Street	NW	1965
Randall	S Capitol & I St	SW	1912; 1966
Raymond	3725 10th St	NW	2013
Ridge Road	Ridge Rd & Burns St	SE	1949-50
Rose Park	26th & O St	NW	1945
Stead	1625 P St	NW	1888; 1953
Takoma	3rd & Van Buren St	NW	1958
Trinidad	1310 Childress St	NE	2007
Upshur	4300 Arkansas Ave	NW	1958
Volta Park	1555 34th St	NW	2004

Appendix B
Photographs:
Surveyed District of Columbia Park Properties
By Category and Sub-Type

Surveyed District of Columbia Park Properties by Category

1870-1929	1930s	1940s		1950s		1960s	Post-1999
Not Purpose-Built	Colonial Revival	Shelter House (T-Shaped)	Shelter House (Hipped-Roof)	Type I	Type II	Park Service Modern	New Facilities
 <p>Hearst (1870 cottage; 1935 rec center)</p>  <p>Stead (1888 stables; 1953 rec center)</p>  <p>Guy Mason (1902 school; 1954 rec center)</p>  <p>Randall (1912 stables; 1966 rec center)</p> <p>Constructed for other purposes, Not Purpose-Built buildings were later converted to recreational uses.</p>	 <p>Mitchell (1930)</p>  <p>Park View (1932)</p>  <p>Palisades (1936)</p>  <p>Chevy Chase (1938)</p>  <p>Takoma Community Center (1933 design; 1958 construction)</p> <p>Designed in the Colonial Revival style , these buildings were the first to include an office for the park manager, rest rooms, and enclosed spaces for indoor recreation and classes. In addition, the full-width porch provided covered recreation space.</p>	 <p>Congress Heights (1943)</p>  <p>Edgewood (1945)</p> <p>Labelled Shelter House by NPS architects, the T-shaped design includes an office, storage and rest rooms in the main building with a multi-purpose space attached as a "T."</p>	 <p>Rose Park (1945)</p>  <p>Kalorama (1947)</p>  <p>Fort Greble (1949)</p>  <p>Ridge Road (1949-1950)</p> <p>Labelled Shelter House by NPS architects,the hipped-roof design includes a corner porch (now sometimes enclosed) and triple windows in flat, projecting bays.</p>	 <p>Macomb (1954)</p>  <p>Harrison (1955)</p>  <p>Hamilton (1958)</p>  <p>Lafayette (1958)</p> <p>Labelled Type I in DPR Archives plans, this two-part design includes a side gable section and a shed-roofed section that extends to cover a porch.</p>	 <p>Friendship (1958)</p>  <p>Takoma (1958)</p>  <p>Fort Stevens (1958)</p>  <p>Upshur (1958)</p> <p>Labelled Type II in DPR Archives plans, the design is distinctive for its cross-gable roofs and corner porch.</p>	 <p>Hardy (1961)</p>  <p>Petworth (1965)</p>  <p>Benning-Stoddert (1965)</p>  <p>New York Ave (1965)</p>  <p>Arboretum (1967)</p> <p>Park Service Modern designs represent the first break from NPS prototype designs for recreation centers. They utilized steel framing, concrete , glass, and new construction technology such as prefabricated materials.</p>	 <p>Langley (1999)</p>  <p>Emery (2003)</p>  <p>Volta (2004)</p>  <p>Lamond (2006)</p>  <p>Trinidad (2007)</p>  <p>Raymond (2013)</p> <p>These new facilities replaced historic shelter house type recreation centers.</p>

Appendix C

Glossary of Terms for Recreational Facilities

Glossary of Terms for Recreational Facilities

This glossary provides definitions for terms used in the individual D.C. park surveys. Although recreational facilities such as ball fields may have varied in size and layout from park to park, it was not the place of this survey to detail such differences.

Ball field:

Playing field with a fenced backstop, four bases, and a pitcher's mound; can be used for softball or hardball or the outfield can be used to play soccer. Football fields with goal posts are specifically listed as such.

Commemorative brick terrace:

An area paved with bricks that are incised with names and are individually donated for the purpose of commemorating the donor, an individual who is important to the donor, or a group.

Community Garden:

A fenced-in area where the land is divided into plots for individual community members to grow flowers, vegetables, and fruit.

Dog Park:

A fenced-in area where dogs can play off leash.

Exercise Area:

A defined area of the park that has ground-mounted exercise equipment such as chin-up and pull-up bars and slanted benches for sit-ups.

Multi-purpose court:

An asphalt or concrete paved area that is used for a variety of games such as four-square and hop scotch or ball games that don't require a net or post.

Playground:

An area with ground mounted equipment such as slides and swings for children generally above the age of five; the area can be fenced or not.

Shelter:

Wood or metal covering on posts, usually with a concrete paved floor, that provides some protection from the weather; can contain a picnic table.

Splash Pad:

A zero-depth, paved area with water features such as sprinklers; designed for use by young children.

Tot Lot:

An area with play equipment geared to children up to five years old; tot lots are fenced with low fences and gates to prevent the toddlers from wandering.