

Chapter 06

Land Park

SACRAMENTO PARK NEIGHBORHOODS



Land Park

HISTORIC TIMELINE OF EVENTS

The town of Sutterville, located in the southwest corner of present day Land Park, is founded.



William Land makes his fortune in the hotel business with the Western Hotel and, later, the Hotel Land. He eventually becomes Mayor of Sacramento and serves one term from 1898-1899.

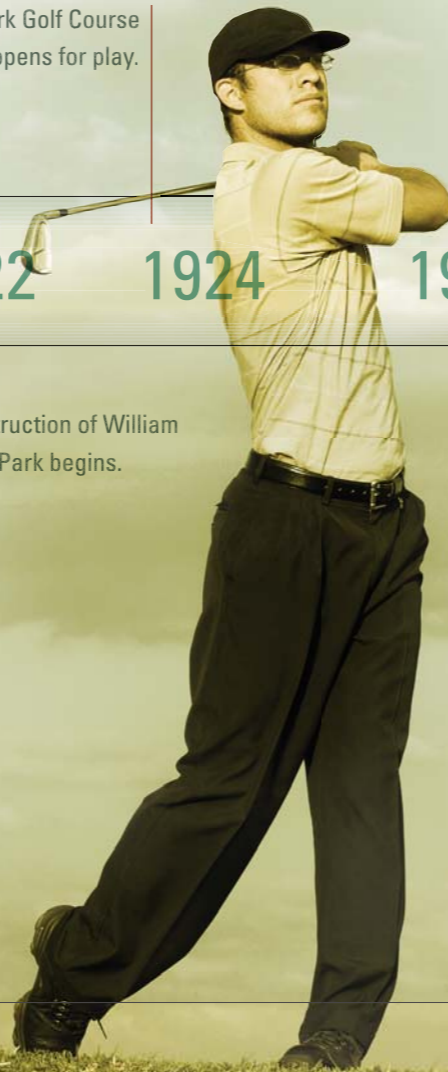
238 ACRES

for William Land Park are purchased for \$147,000.

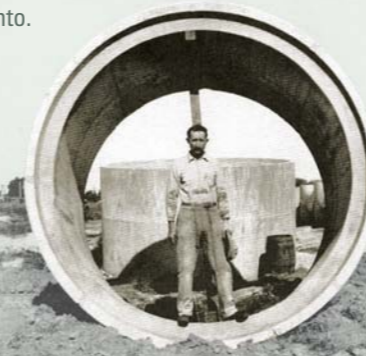


The City of Sacramento purchases 60 acres to build the Sacramento City College on Freeport Boulevard across from Land Park.

Land Park Golf Course opens for play.



The Bond Sewer Project modernizes the sewer and runoff systems south of Sacramento.



The majority of Land Park housing, Land Park Tracts 1-4, are platted.



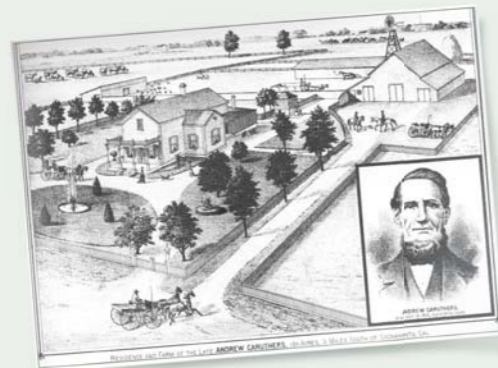
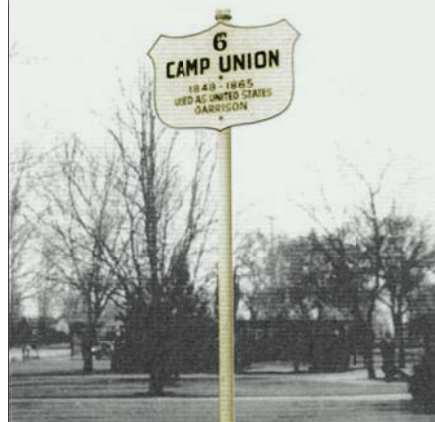
Development of College Tract Addition #1 begins. Construction halts during WWII and the Tract is not built out until 1947.



Park Estates, the last housing development in Land Park, is developed on the former Central Pacific rail yard.

1848-1865 1850 1850s-1910 1870s-1911 1918 1922 1924 1925 1926-1927 1927 1937 1938 1938-1939 1939 1959 1984 Today

Camp Union, a United States Garrison located at the present location of the Sacramento Zoo, houses Union Soldiers.



The future site of William Land Park is primarily occupied by the Cavanaugh, Caruthers, and Swanston family ranches and features a drainage slough for raw sewage and "flood spill" for the City of Sacramento.



Upon his death, William Land bequeaths \$250,000 to purchase a public park for the "common people of Sacramento."

Construction of William Land Park begins.

Sacramento Zoo opens in William Land Park.



Wright & Kimbrough's College Tract, the first and most prestigious housing development in Land Park, is developed.



The Tower Theater opens for business.

Fairytale Town opens in Land Park.



The Land Park neighborhood is one of Sacramento's most desirable addresses. The Park itself has matured graciously over time and continues to draw visitors of all types from across the region for a host of activities.



William Land (courtesy of CSH).



Regular flooding in Sacramento before the levee system was built (courtesy of CSH).



LAND PARK

LOCATION & PROXIMITY

The Land Park neighborhood is located south of Broadway, east of Riverside Boulevard, west of Freeport Boulevard, and north of Sutterville Road and is in close proximity to two major freeways, I-5 and Interstate 80. The neighborhood also affords close proximity to Downtown and Midtown Sacramento. Sacramento City College is directly east of William Land Park, on Freeport Boulevard. Light rail stops are located on the City College campus and at 4th Avenue at the Wayne Hultgren Station.

NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

Originally part of John Sutter's New Helvetia land grant, the development now known as Land Park was developed after William Land bequeathed \$250,000 in 1911 to "purchase a public park within a suitable distance" of Sacramento. The 238-acre tract eventually chosen, roughly north of Sutterville Road, was used by the City of Sacramento partially as an area to deposit raw sewage via drainage ditches and partially as a "flood spill" where levees were opened to save the city from periodic flooding.

The 238 acres for the park were purchased in 1918 for \$147,000. A protest ensued, and a referendum was passed to nullify the contract. In 1922, on appeal, the court overturned the public referendum and ratified the original contract. Development proceeded immediately.

Land Park followed the same general development process as East Sacramento and Curtis Park: larger parcels subdivided into smaller tracts, which in turn were sold to smaller contractors and builders for individual projects or small-scale developments. These tracts were not coordinated for design or developmental consistency. Though each has its individual character and design, as a whole they were built to a similar aesthetic and homeowner expectation. With no air conditioning available in autos or streetcars, tree-lined boulevards were vital and tree planting along Land Park's major entrance roads occurred soon after the grading and sidewalk construction were completed.

\$250,000

AMOUNT BEQUEATHED BY WILLIAM LAND TO PURCHASE PARK ACREAGE

LAND PARK



THE LAND PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

The Land Park neighborhood has the highest percentage of parkland when compared to other Park Neighborhoods in Sacramento.



One of the College Tract's numerous large homes.

LAND PARK



College Tracts

By 1927, residential development was underway in Wright & Kimbrough's College Tract development on the northern border of the park. The largest and most desirable lots were closest to the park, arranged in a series of concentric half circles. Less expensive lots to the south conformed to a more traditional linear grid, though the lot widths were more generous than typical East Sacramento lots – reflecting the growing influence of the automobile for commuting and shopping over the need for public transportation.

The College Tract served to promote the larger area for development as a desirable neighborhood – much as Wright and Kimbrough used the Tract 24 development in East Sacramento as a promotional tool. There was a strong emphasis on its aesthetic qualities, its “curved boulevards, artistic homes and sunlit gardens” that create “an enchanting home atmosphere” and as a “home place of matchless charm.” The College Tract was described as a “home place most beautiful” that “beckons you and yours to a life of true home happiness, health and contentment.” The development's virtues knew no bounds, promoting its “fertile soil” and “perfect drainage” on this newly-drained swampland.

College Tract Addition Number 1

The College Tract Addition Number 1 followed the same pattern for developing middle-class housing as in East Sacramento. The first house in this 62-house tract was built in 1939. The tract was largely built out by 1947. The houses were modest in scale, style, and ornament and presented an attractive street scene. Houses were promoted because of their proximity to the more expensive houses of the College Tract and its potential for house values that “will remain higher over a longer period of time than any other subdivision” and as the “ideal location for the modest home as well as the larger home.” The upper class bought homes in the College Tract based on an aesthetic vision; the middle class bought in the College Tract Addition Number One based primarily on economics.



LAND PARK'S DISTINCTIVE ARCHITECTURE

Land Park's distinctive architecture, tree-lined streets, and proximity to Downtown Sacramento and various recreational outlets has made it one of Sacramento's most desirable addresses.



C.K. McClatchy High School.

LAND PARK

CHARACTER AND SCALE

Land Park's distinctive architecture, tree-lined streets, and proximity to Downtown Sacramento and various recreational outlets has made it one of Sacramento's most desirable addresses. The neighborhood is dominated by smaller two-or three-bedroom homes; however, it is known for its estate-like homes, fronting William Land Park along 13th Street. The character and scale of the Land Park neighborhood varies based upon location and development pattern. College Tract's aspect is more relaxed yet elegant than Tract 24 (the "Fab Forties") in East Sacramento, given its larger lots and more intensely focused romantic architecture. In many ways, neighborhoods like this are quintessential Sacramento neighborhoods—unpretentious, modestly detailed and highly adaptable over time. Production housing, though smaller and more limited in architectural style and detail, nevertheless produced designs compatible with their more expensive neighbors.

COMMERCIAL

Nearly all of the commercial uses within Land Park are located along Freeport Boulevard, Broadway, and Riverside Boulevard. They provide a wide range of commercial uses such as the historic Tower Theater and Café, Target, and various small businesses such as the Freeport Bakery, Taylor's Market, Vic's Ice Cream, and Charles Market.

PARKS AND PUBLIC AMENITIES

The Land Park neighborhood has the highest percentage of parkland when compared to other Park Neighborhoods in Sacramento. William Land Park is one of Sacramento's most notable park and recreational assets. The park was well underway by 1924 with 75 acres devoted to a nine hole golf course and community clubhouse, two duck ponds, a model boat pond, five baseball fields, and bridle trails that encircled the park. A zoo was opened in 1927, consolidating the smaller zoos previously located in McKinley Park, Southside Park, and McClatchy Park. The total size of Land Park today boasts 166 acres of park space and is also home to Fairytale Town and Funderland.

LAND PARK

**STREETScape**

Land Park was the most recent of the Park Neighborhoods to develop and, as a result, the street layouts are more consistently part of a cohesive development plan. The primary streets that form the boundary of the Land Park neighborhood typically have 80' right-of-ways. Land Park Drive traverses through the central portion of the neighborhood, serving as a collector street, and has an 80' to 90' wide right-of-way with attached sidewalk.

The internal neighborhood streets form different patterns on either side of Land Park Drive. The northeastern quadrant of the neighborhood is mostly fragmented parallel while the remainder is warped parallel. These internal streets have varying right-of-way widths that range from 40'-60' with attached sidewalks.

Block lengths vary on either side of Land Park Drive. In the northeastern portion of the neighborhood block lengths consistently average 400'. West of Land Park Drive the average block lengths increase to approximately 800' and reach a maximum of 1,900' on 8th Avenue. The area south of McClatchy High School, east of Land Park Drive, is designed around a radial street; and block lengths average approximately 750'.

1918 | YEAR THAT PARK ACREAGE WAS PURCHASED

62 | NUMBER OF HOUSES BUILT IN THE FIRST TRACT

LAND PARK

STREET TREES

Land Park Boulevard bisects the community and is lined with the original Oriental and American planetrees, as are other primary boulevards surrounding and bisecting the park. Planetrees and elms were the early dominant species, with redwood and cedar species providing accents along some blocks. These conifers served as excellent windbreaks in the flat, open, former wetland.

Development in the 1930s and later brought similar additions to the planting palette as elsewhere in the city. Platanus and ash predominated, but zelkova, sweetgum, and Chinese elm were present in growing numbers. There were 30 species present along the five street segments sampled. Compared to the original species planted, there were significantly more medium and small species, including crape myrtles, planted where planetrees once grew.

Trees in planting strips have a higher mortality rate than the lawn trees in Land Park since only 56% of the trees dated back to original planting compared to 66% of the lawn trees. Over 94% of lawn trees are in fair or better condition compared to 79% of the planting strip trees. The average DBH and crown diameters were again smaller for trees in planting strips compared to lawn trees.

The tree crowns of Land Park's mature trees typically extend over house rooftops as well as the roadways. There were no conflicts observed between crowns and structures, but it is obvious that careful and systematic crown raising occurred as the trees matured.



The tower theater marks the beginning of Land Park Drive (courtesy of William Tuthill).



LAND PARK IS THE NEWEST OF THE PARK NEIGHBORHOODS,

with the majority of the area's houses built in the 1930s, during the heart of the Great Depression, and the years leading into World War II.

750'

AVERAGE BLOCK LENGTH IN LAND PARK

LAND PARK

RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

Land Park is the newest of the Park Neighborhoods, with the majority of the area's houses built in the 1930s during the heart of the Great Depression and the years leading into World War II. Despite these events, the architecture of the area is surprisingly alive and fresh. Like other neighborhoods, Land Park houses were typically Period Revival designs. However, Land Park, given its later development, houses the greatest number of examples of Modernist styles, notably large duplexes along Riverside Boulevard and single-family houses in the College Tract. Land Park houses developed a distinct character which is both whimsical in applied detail, yet at the same time reveals a surprising sophistication in interpretation of historic designs.

The College Tract development lies closest to the park and was the first and most architecturally significant development. Houses in this tract are more uniform in their size, style, and aesthetic consistency of its streetscape. Houses generally are Spanish Colonial or Tudor in origin, but the design of these seemingly disparate styles has a strong family resemblance in their articulation of materials and scale.

The majority of houses in this tract are custom-designed properties built for owner-occupants. As in other neighborhoods, Dean and Dean, Frank Williams and, to a lesser extent, Arthur Widdowson, were designers of the area's signature properties. Dean and Dean excelled in Colonial, Normandy French, and rural Tudor designs. Widdowson specialized in Tudor designs of the same type as Dean and Dean. Frank Williams, perhaps, left the largest architectural mark on the area, known for his "storybook" Tudor cottages. The designs of these houses also mirrored more relaxed horizontal suburban designs found on the east coast, compared to the more vertical urban designs found in the Central City and East Sacramento.

College Tract I displays some of the same modernist streamline themes as other Wright and Kimbrough tracts in East Sacramento; however, in Land Park they are often imbued with a modernist twist, such as Deco-inspired, corner-butted, metal frame windows with a faux thatched effect on gable ends. The quality of these houses is surprisingly consistent. Today, the area suffers little from inappropriate remodeling and expansion over the years that have scarred other neighborhoods.