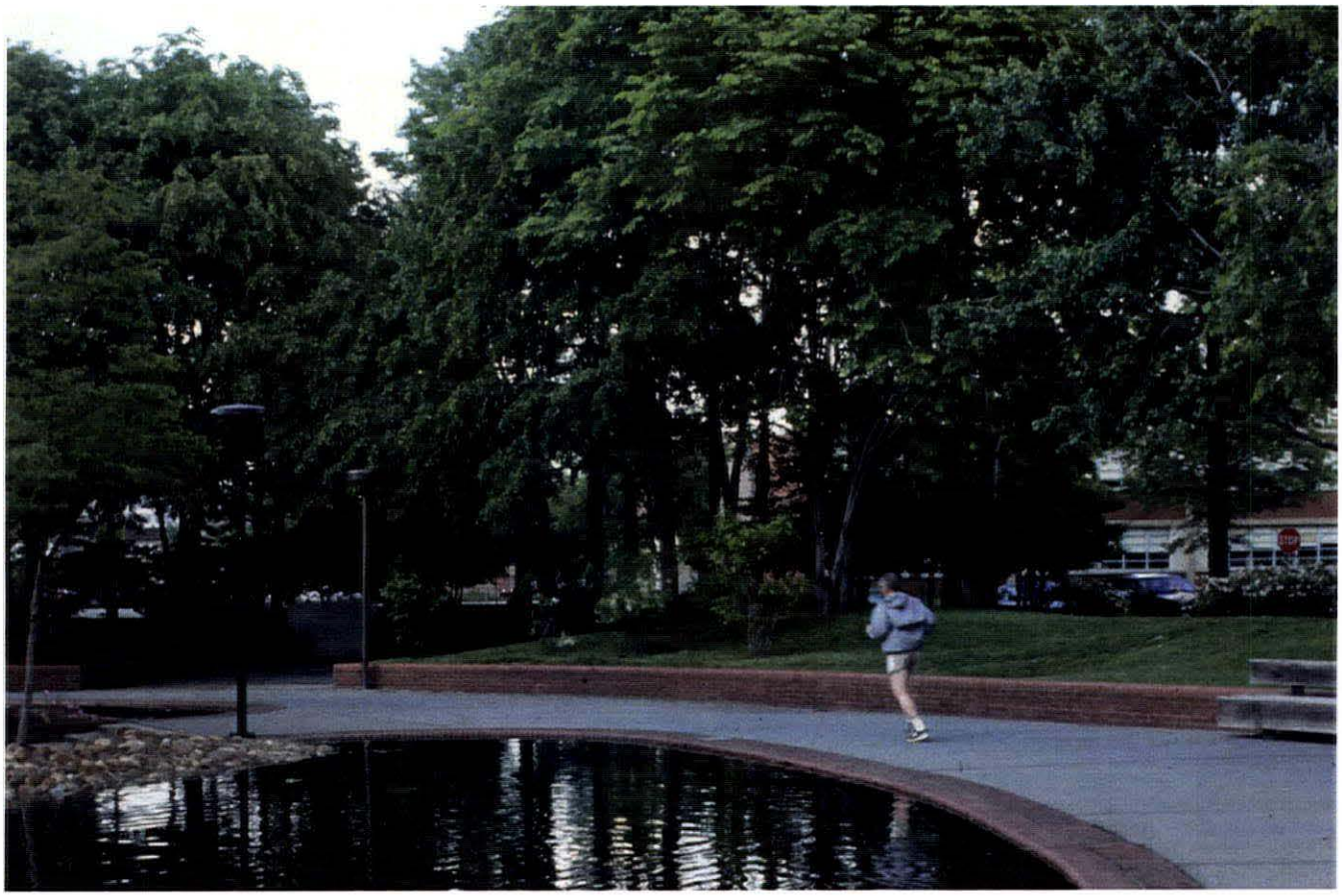
Marina View
Town Center Park – West Park
Repairs and Renovations
Preliminary Cost Estimate
June 2, 2008

Design Stage:			**Cost:**
1	Field Survey – Wiles Mench		$7,500 00
2	Landscape Architecture - Wallace Roberts & Todd		$40,000 00
3	Ex Utility location and evaluation – Insight		$5,000 00
4	Tree Evaluation – The Care of Trees		$4,500 00
5	Existing lighting evaluation – Richter		$2,500 00
6	Permit and bonding fees		$7,500 00
		Subtotal:	$67,000 00

Construction Stage:			**Cost:**
1	General demolition & clean up		$7,500 00
2	Tree removal and pruning		$10,000 00
3	Tree preservation and enhancement		$4,500 00
4	General planting bed enhancement		$5,000 00
5	Irrigation system installation		$10,000 00
6	Turf grass installation		$2,000 00
7	Native ground cover installation (100 @ $10)		$1,000 00
8	Shrub installation (25 @ $40)		$1,000 00
9	Ornamental tree installation (10 @ $150)		$1,500 00
10	Pond basin inspection and repairs		$5,000 00
11	Pond fountain inspection and repairs		$3,500 00
12	Storm drain system flush & repairs		$2,500 00
13	Site lighting inspection and repairs		$2,500 00
14	Bench replacement (24 @ $500)		$7,500 00
15	Water fountain replacement (1 @ $1,000)		$1,000 00
16	New play equipment		$7,500 00
17	New timber bench		$2,500 00
18	Accessibility handrails		$2,000 00
19	New entry at Northeast alcove		$10,000 00
20	Retaining wall repairs		$20,000 00
21	Concrete flatwork repairs		$5,000 00
		Subtotal.	$111,500 00
		Project total:	$178,500 00

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia
CASE NO.05-38A
EXHIBIT NO.1B



Town Center Park - West Park

Report of Current Conditions and Recommendations

Washington, District of Columbia

Submitted by

Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC

1700 Market Street

28th Floor

Philadelphia, PA 19103

December 21, 2007

Contents

Introduction

West Park location diagram

West Park Construction photograph
circa early 1970s

Introduction

History and Design

Designed in the late 1960s by Wallace McHarg Roberts & Todd (WMRT) and built in the early 1970s, Town Center Park's West Park, bounded by I, K and 6th Streets SW, was one of three parks designed by the firm in the SW Washington Redevelopment Area along I Street for the National Park Service (NPS) West Park was conceived as an urban retreat for local residents office workers and students of an adjacent school for exceptional children It was designed to reflect the regional landscapes of the Chesapeake Bay and Potomac River with native riparian plants and a central pond Extending into this pool are three promontories edged with river rocks that evoke a naturalistic shoreline, additional spaces contained nautically-themed play structures The interior of the park is lined by low brick retaining walls, which serve to give it a sense of enclosure and further emphasize its role as a refuge

Report Methodology

Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC (WRT) conducted a site assessment of the West Park at the request of Esocoff & Associates, who are in the process of designing Fairfield at Marina View, a residential project adjacent to the park that includes the renovation of two existing buildings and construction of two new buildings The area around Town Center Park is currently undergoing redevelopment, which offers the opportunity to implement some improvements to West Park, thus increasing its value as a site amenity in concert with proposed plans for development

Two site visits were made – in January, 2006 and July, 2007 – to evaluate the current conditions of the park These findings, which focused on paving and walls, planting, the pond, infrastructure, site furnishings, and circulation and accessibility, serve as the basis for generating recommendations for possible improvements William Roberts, the original WMRT project landscape architect, was consulted and his suggestions are incorporated into this report

Ownership of the West Park is currently in the process of being transferred from the NPS to the District of Columbia Department of Parks and Recreation This land transfer process is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2007 Both agencies have been contacted and asked to provide information about the park's history and future The District of Columbia does not currently have any design guidelines for its parks, however, the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative (AWI) is in the process of developing standards for the city's streetscapes, which WRT has taken into consideration in generating its recommendations

A synopsis of these findings and proposed improvements can be found in the report's Summary on page 25

Current Site Conditions and Recommendations

Current Site Conditions and Recommendations

Paving and Walls

General

Red brick and colored concrete are the park's primary hardscape materials. Low retaining walls made of brick define the space, helping to create a sense of the park as a refuge. Concrete steps provide access to various gathering areas in the park and contribute to its spatial variety.

Current Conditions

Overall, the hardscape has weathered well. Some design details, such as the runnels along the sides of the steps, continue to function as intended (Fig. 1) – the colored concrete has since faded but is otherwise in good condition. However, a few of the brick retaining walls have suffered extensive damage as a result of tree root growth (Fig. 2). While efforts have been made to repair these walls, the source of the problem, trees planted too close to the walls, persists.

Recommendations

Recommended improvements to the park's hardscape are mainly limited to the compromised brick retaining walls. Removing trees affecting the walls and replacing the damaged walls would greatly improve the park's appearance. Careful consideration should be made about the quality of the materials and workmanship devoted to correcting the walls. If materials that closely match those existing are not available, then alternative approaches will be required.

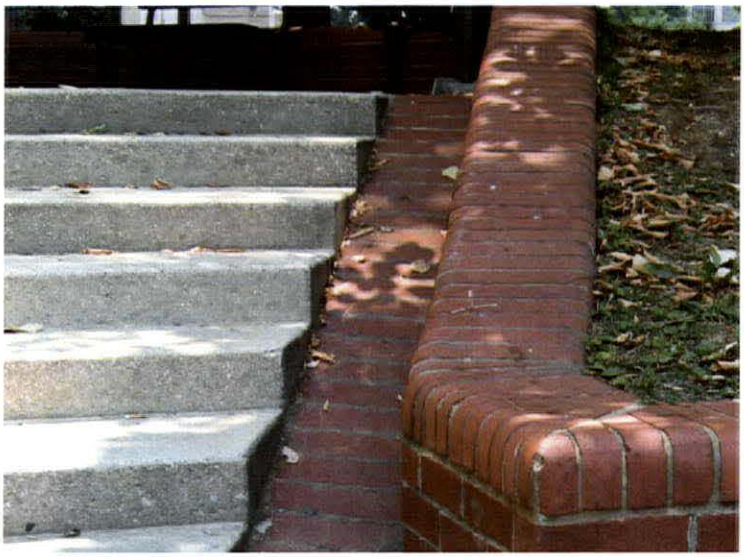


Figure 1
Brick runnel and concrete steps

Figure 2
Damaged brick retaining wall

Planting

General

When the park was first constructed, a very limited budget dictated that trees of two to four inch caliper to be installed; these were spaced closely together in order to create maximum effect in the near future. Lawn areas were not irrigated, another consequence of the constrained budget. In accordance with the regional theme, the original planting design was intended to include a variety of native groundcovers, shrubs, ornamental trees and canopy trees (Fig. 5).

Figure 3
Current conditions of planting

Current Conditions

As a result of the tight spacing during installation and lack of subsequent thinning, the park's trees are not fairing well. Though they have grown substantially, many suffer from root binding (Figs. 3 and 4) and all would benefit from professional pruning. Trees closest to the brick retaining walls are compromising the structural integrity and appearance of those walls, as discussed in the previous section. Aside from a few azaleas and other small shrubs, the park features few plants smaller than the large canopy trees – no sign of the multiple layers indicated in the original plans exists today.

Figure 4
Current conditions of planting

Recommendations

Retaining an arborist to perform an extensive study of the current conditions of the plant material would help determine the health of the existing plants. Removal of some large trees would promote healthier growth in the remaining trees, and strategic pruning would thin the canopy (we suggest removing up to 30% of the existing canopy), thus allowing other plants and lawn areas to grow in the

Marginal Wood Fern
(Dryopteris marginalis)
Recommended herbaceous perennial

Tufted Hair Grass
(Dechampsia cespitosa)
Recommended ornamental grass

Lowbush Blueberry
(Vaccinium angustifolium)
Recommended small shrub

Flowering Dogwood
(Cornus florida)
Recommended ornamental tree

understory. The addition of a mixture of native ornamental trees and small shrubs (2-3' tall) into the park's plant palette would provide seasonal interest and help to further the concept of the space as an urban retreat. In areas without shrubs, a low-maintenance turf grass could be planted as long as irrigation was provided. In the promontories, the trees should be pruned up to permit better visibility; ornamental grasses along the edges of these spaces would add visual interest and help to further define the spaces.

Figure 5
Original planting concept (circa late 1960s)

Pond

General

Of the three Town Center Parks designed by WMRT, West Park is the only one that features a pond. Though the Potomac River is nearby, there is little sense of a riverfront environment in the neighborhood adjacent to the park. This unique quality gives West Park the feeling of being an oasis in an otherwise dense urban setting.

Current Conditions

The pond basin appears to be in good condition and the stones embedded in the promontories remain intact (Fig. 6). The four fountain jets (Fig. 7) work but behave erratically, which may be symptomatic of a malfunction in the pump equipment.

Recommendations

Assessment of the age and condition of the fountain equipment and basin would determine the extent of repairs, if any, the pond might need to serve for the long term. At the very least, the fountain jets should be better coordinated and the basin inspected for any possible defects.

Figure 6
Pond basin - January 2006

Figure 7
Pond with fountains - June 2007

Infrastructure

General

Site lighting and drainage systems appeared to have been designed appropriately for the park. Light fixtures conformed to the Modernist style that was popular at the time of the park's conception (Fig. 8).

Current Conditions

Due to the lack of available utility information, WRT could only evaluate the visible appearance of the park's infrastructure. An obvious concern for the park is its drainage. Many area drains were surrounded by dirt and debris, which is both aesthetically unappealing and indicative of drainage problems (Fig. 9). NPS standard pole-mounted lights have taken the place of the original fixtures (Fig. 10). A nighttime inspection of the park lighting was not performed for this report, so current lighting may not adequately illuminate all areas of the park.

Recommendations

Both the lighting and drainage systems need to be properly inspected to make sure they are functioning correctly. The drainage system should be cleaned out and renovated where required. At a minimum, any existing light fixtures that do not work should be replaced. A full lighting study should be performed to make sure that all areas of the park are adequately illuminated. New light poles and fixtures that relate to site furnishing requirements of the proposed AWI Transportation Architecture Design Standards should also be considered.

Figure 8
Original pole-mounted lights - circa 1970

Figure 9
Area drain surrounded by dirt and debris

Figure 10
Current pole-mounted lights

Site Furnishings

General

Originally, West Park's site furnishings consisted of custom-made timber benches (Fig. 11), concrete trash receptacles, a concrete water fountain and a variety of marine-related items, such as an anchor and ship's wheel, made available by both the Navy and NPS. These elements were incorporated into the park to provide play structures for children and to connect, via the nautical theme, to the nearby Potomac River.

Figure 11
Original park benches - circa 1980

Current Conditions

Almost all of the original site furnishings in the park have been removed or replaced. The custom timber benches have been substituted with standard NPS site furnishings (Fig. 12), and all of the original play structures have been removed. A nondescript plastic and aluminum slide (Fig. 13) has taken the place of the slide once located at the southeast corner of the park while nothing was put in place of the ship's wheel that used to occupy the northeast alcove. Though the water fountain remains, it is no longer functional. Only the concrete trash receptacles continue to be used as designed.

Figure 12
Current bench

Figure 13
Current play structure

Recommendations

Though the standard NPS site furnishings make the park less distinctive, they do not detract from the character of the space. The lone play structure, however, has an ad hoc quality that is not appropriate for the park. Any improvements to the park should include new play equipment because neither of the other two parks features any. Also, children were observed playing on the slide during WRT's second site visit, so there appears to be

Figure 14
Rittenhouse Square goat sculpture - Philadelphia, PA

Figure 15
"Make Way for Ducklings" - Boston, MA

Figure 16
Trapecio bench by Santa & Cole

Figure 17
Hudson bench by Forms + Surfaces

a demand for such equipment. Since space is limited in the West Park, traditional play structures with their required safety zones and paving requirements may not be feasible. Instead, play sculptures, like those found in Philadelphia's Rittenhouse Square (Fig. 14) or in Boston Common (Fig. 15), are a viable alternative that would complement the park aesthetically and add to its recreational opportunities.

The addition of a long timber bench on the west side of the pond, similar to the one that was originally constructed and other new, contemporary benches and pole-mounted light fixtures would contribute to the unique character of the park (Figs. 16 and 17). These site furnishings should be coordinated with the AWI Transportation Architecture Design Standards once they are established to make sure that they can be properly maintained and fit with the character of other projects in the area. The water fountain should either be repaired or removed and replaced if repairs are not possible.

Circulation and Accessibility

General

While simple in design, West Park's circulation offers visitors a range of ways to experience the space. Accessibility guidelines during the project's development were not as extensive as they are today, so the park does not comply with current standards.

Current Conditions

West Park's three access points connect to the primary circular promenade that surrounds the pond. Although most of the park is accessible, there are several instances to the contrary – steps up to the southeast space and the west promontory (Fig. 18), the stepped ramp at the northwest corner and steps down to the east promontory.

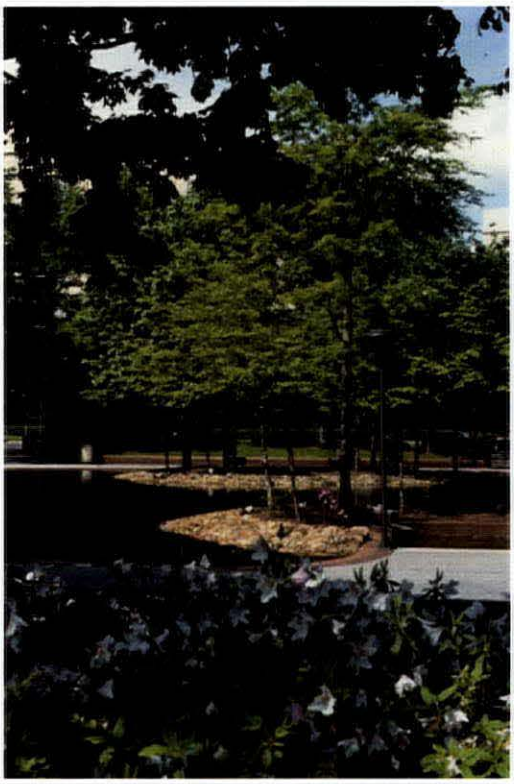
Recommendations

It would be to the detriment of the park if the identified areas were retrofitted so as to make them universally accessible. Still, the addition of handrails to the steps could be useful for visitors. The three existing entrances function well, but an additional entry through the northeast alcove should be considered. Currently, this area, with its high retaining walls, large trees and lack of site furniture, is inhospitable and neglected (Fig. 19). Opening up the space and installing a play sculpture would make it more welcoming and attractive. Given West Park's small scale, every area should present visitors with an opportunity to enjoy the park.

Figure 18
Steps up to west promontory

Figure 19
Northeast alcove

Summary



Right and below
Park conditions - circa 1980s

Summary

As one of the firm's first projects, West Park represents WRT's commitment to building site-specific projects that address the needs of the users. The firm believes that West Park has served its community well for more than thirty years and will continue to do so for many years to come. Improvements recommended in this report primarily target aesthetic aspects of the park since, overall, the space still functions as intended. Of the recommendations, three should be considered to be of greatest priority – restoration of brick retaining walls, removal and/or pruning of trees and assessment of drainage and lighting systems.

Additions to the plant palette, new play structures, pond renovations and different light fixtures and benches would greatly improve the appearance of the park and could possibly attract more visitors. Plans for the adjacent Fairfield at Marina View development by Esocoff & Associates include the restoration of a central garden designed by Zion Breen and Richardson Associates. West Park is not included in the project site, but its close proximity suggests that Fairfield residents will use it in addition to the central garden. It seems a logical next step to update the park in conjunction with this new development.

Archived drawings and other information in the possession of the National Park Service could contribute to a greater understanding of West Park's history. Efforts should be made to acquire these documents before any alterations to the park are carried out. In addition, design standards set by the District of Columbia and other organizations, such as the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative, should be reviewed and coordinated with any new design so that the park fits with the overall character of the surrounding area.

If the decision is made to implement any or all of these recommended improvements to West Park, WRT would be pleased to be retained as the principal design consultant. The firm will provide other examples of urban parks across the country and abroad that demonstrate the care and quality of our award-winning work. The opportunity to enhance one of the firm's projects rarely presents itself, so we hope that we may be engaged in giving this park a new life.

Wallace Roberts & Todd, LLC (WRT)
is an internationally recognized firm practicing with a
holistic approach to designing with nature
and with culture.

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