

## Platte to Park Hill Storm water Drainage Comments

Park Hill Meeting March 30, 2016

Prepared by:

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1. CPGC is on the National Register of Historic Places <http://focus.nps.gov/pdfhost/docs/NRHP/Text/64000072.pdf> and State Register of Historic Properties.

Its preservation has been called for in planning documents for the past 100 years.

Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation History Colorado Publication #13076

8 CCR 15045 The general assembly hereby declares that sites and structures possessing historical significance are cultural resources of this state; that the preservation of such resources is in the interest of the citizens of the state; and that the planning and activities of state agencies should include the preservation of such resources. It is the intent of the general assembly to provide that such resources be preserved to the extent possible for the education and enjoyment of the residents of this state, present and future generations

2. The 2001 City Park Master Plan prepared by Mundus Bishop called for its preservation and stabilization. The site assessment rated the course of high integrity and in good condition. [https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/747/documents/planning/master\\_plans/CityPark-MasterPlan-2001.pdf](https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/747/documents/planning/master_plans/CityPark-MasterPlan-2001.pdf)
3. CPGC was designed by the Olmsted firm in concert with noted golf course designer Tom Bendelow [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom\\_Bendelow](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Bendelow) in 1913. Bendelow designed over 800 golf courses many in the Olmstedian tradition. Frederick Law Olmsted and subsequently his sons designed Central Park, Boston's Emerald Necklace, Brooklyn's Prospect Park, the Biltmore for the Vanderbuilt's in Asheville, NC., the US Capitol, the White House, Yosemite, Niagara Falls, Canterbury Tuscany in Baltimore, and 1000's of other noteworthy places. [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick\\_Law\\_Olmsted](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frederick_Law_Olmsted) Frederick Law Olmsted was the god of landscape architecture. <http://www.olmsted.org/> The National Park Service has designated and maintains the Olmsted home in Brookline, Massachusetts a National Historic Site; 10's of 1000's of documents are archived there. Olmsted and his works are so significant that an advocacy group exists in Washington, D.C., the National Association of Olmsted Parks, which seeks to protect the legacy.
4. Olmsted's commitment was to a visually compelling and accessible green space that restores and nurtures the body and spirit of all people regardless of economic circumstance. He vigilantly guarded against distracting elements. He was convinced that the spacious, gracefully modulated terrain of his parks provided a specific medial antidote to the artificiality, noise and stress of life. He believed in the psychological power of scenery.
5. The Golf Course was designed in the naturalistic style with clumps of trees to give a pastoral feel, to create a sense of the peacefulness of nature and to soothe and restore the spirit. It is a part of the larger Park and Parkway System that he designed for Denver.

6. Its topography, its vistas, its tight fairways, and use of trees are significant historically

The P to P Stormwater plan is contrary to all principles of sustainability

It calls for:

- A. Removal of trees (in one scenario 280 trees)

Trees provide natural storm water protection, reduce heat island effect, absorb carbon, provide oxygen, and habitat for wildlife (bald eagles, hawks, owls, geese, coyotes, fox)

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/weather/2014/08/21/urban-heat-islands-study/14389371/>

<http://aceee.org/files/proceedings/2014/data/papers/10-356.pdf> and take up pollutants.

Removal of trees and compacting soil for detention will cause increased runoff that has not been properly accounted for. Several modeling programs which account for the value of trees exist created by the USFS and universities but not have been used by the P to P planners – I-Trees. On average a medium sized tree intercepts 2,300 gallons of stormwater runoff in a year. Landscapes with trees can have infiltration rates that are 10-15 times greater than similar treeless areas. In a typical rain event, trees can absorb about a third of the precipitation in their leaves and trunks alone.

- B. Modern construction methods often reduce the ability of soils to absorb rainfall. Soils are compacted and soil permeability is lost. Soils contain macropores that provide water to move through it. These macropores are formed by small organisms, weathering processes, roots, and the movement of water. Bulldozed land is near impervious, like concrete.
- C. Waste of Embodied Energy - Demolition of a clubhouse, First Tee, Maintenance, and irrigation systems then to recreate
- D. The construction project is expected to take two years with all its attendant resource consumption (oil), equipment expenditure, air, noise and water pollution, traffic impacts in an otherwise quiet neighborhood to provide an industrial sump of questionable benefit
- E. Preserving history preserves the fabric and soul of our community. To maintain a cultural landscape, the collection of features trees, water features, fairways, topography, organized in space, which define the spatial character of the landscape as they existed during the period of significance is critically important.
- F. Parks departments are supposed to be stewards of our parks for future generations and are entrusted with their care. Municipally owned parkland and open space are nonrenewable resources which should be carefully preserved in all communities. Once lost to another use, they are hard to recover. The courts have held that parkland held by a municipality is subject to a public trust for the benefit of the public at large and that the use of parkland by a municipality for a non-park purpose even though the use may be public in nature is a violation of the public trust doctrine. Historically, since Theodore Roosevelt first established Yellowstone, the purpose of parks has been to preserve and protect natural and cultural resources. Recreational use was later added to accommodate the public as long as it does not negatively impact the resource. A storm water detention structure is a non park purpose, is not a recreational use, is not a water feature, requires barriers and chemicals

that may pose health and safety issues and would constitute violation of the public trust doctrine. It is not an acceptable multiple use.

Happy Haynes and planners say the golf course will be playable again. The issue is not only about playability. City Park is to Denver what Central Park is to New York City. It is about all the above mentioned losses and the need to add more parks rather than modify or take them away. Denver is below average in fewer parks to person ratios. At no point has P to P provided the community with topographic, wildlife, historic information, health, safety and cost impacts of their proposals or compelling reasons for them. Without information citizens cannot make informed decisions.



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February 10, 2014

Ms. Lauri Dannemiller  
Manager, Denver Parks and Recreation  
201 West Colfax Ave, Dept. 601  
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Ms. Dannemiller,

On behalf of the National Association for Olmsted Parks (NAOP), I am writing to ask Denver Parks and Recreation to reconsider its plans for the City Loop development in City Park.

The issue as noted in your own 2001 plan, *Revitalizing the Legacy of City Park*, is that "City Park is on the brink of losing its character to the assault of urban progress."

One hundred years ago, the renowned Olmsted Brothers landscape architectural firm developed site plans and landscape designs to enhance Henry Meryweather's layout of the park. The mix of wooded areas, meadows and sinuous pathways was designed to give city dwellers ease and relaxation.

The 2001 plan noted that some of these pathways had disappeared and some features of the park were no longer well-integrated or maintained. Restoration of City Park was recommended to "strengthen the sense of the park as a refuge from outside uses." Replacing the Dustin Redd playground with a 13-acre development hosting a myriad of planned attractions such as skate parks, an ice rink, a track and a performance space will seriously damage the bucolic nature of the park.

Although 13 acres may seem like a small percentage of the park, most of the land in City Park is occupied by institutions or active recreation. It is also highly likely that such a development would require increased space for parking cars. Further removal or reorganization of remaining land for additional development is counter to the character of the park and defeats the restoration goal of siting "new park elements integrally with historic features."

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NATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION for  
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PARKS

Vibrant cities are full of cultural, educational and recreational amenities. As their populations grow, the proportion of park space to population shrinks. The need for refuge from the fast pace of city life is as great now as it was when the Olmsted Brothers made their contribution to the design of City Park. Other great city parks with the Olmsted imprint have been seeking ways to reduce development and auto impacts – Prospect Park removed its skating rink, Rock Creek Park's Beach Drive has a weekly car-free day, and the City of Olympia, Washington, purchased acreage to preserve the view of the State Capitol, a vista designed by the Olmsted firm.

The National Association for Olmsted Parks urges the City of Denver to come up with progressive approaches that are more sensitive to City Park's nationally significant historic legacy. If the Dustin Redd playground needs to be replaced, the playground in Olmsted Linear Park in Atlanta, Georgia, could be a good model. The first playground in Olmsted Linear Park had been "stuck in" without regard to its environment. The new playground manages to serve the needs of children as well as being appropriately integrated with the overall design of the park.

Established in 1980, the National Association for Olmsted Parks advances Olmsted principles and the legacy of irreplaceable parks and landscapes that revitalize communities and enrich people's lives. It is the only national organization solely dedicated to preserving the Olmsted legacy by providing the advocacy, research and outreach needed to protect, restore and maintain these exemplary parks and landscapes, particularly in urban areas.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Kristen Palumbo Handy  
Acting Executive Director

cc: The Honorable Michael B. Hancock  
Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, City and County of Denver

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

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Continuation sheet Denver Park & Parkway System Item number

7

Page 70

LIST OF CONTRIBUTING AND NON-CONTRIBUTING ELEMENTS

Note: The contributing elements are those features over 50 years old that fall within the period of significance and make a contribution to the historic character of the park or parkway. The significant period for the system is 1880 to 1936, which ranges from the date of the earliest plan for a park or parkway to the 1930s, when the work outlined in the 1929 Denver Plan was completed. The non-contributing elements are those features not 50 years old and thus by definition cannot be considered contributing. However, many of the post-1936 features are not intrusive to the character of a park or parkway. Those post-1936 non-contributing elements that are intrusive are asterisked.

**ALAMO PLACITA PARK**

contributing:

cottonwood forest  
general historic layout/design  
Italian garden  
historic planting plan/plant material  
playground and basketball court  
tool house and toilet facility

**Cheesman Park, continued**

non-contributing:

memorial wall  
mountain view marker (1976)  
playground equipment  
toilets  
tree plantings (on crossover roadway)

**BERKELEY LAKE PARK**

contributing:

bath house  
Berkeley Lake  
circulation plan  
comfort stations  
general historic layout/design  
mountain vistas, internal vistas  
historic planting plan/plant material  
pump house  
William H. Smiley Branch Library

**CHEESMAN PARK ESPLANADE**

contributing:

general historic layout/design  
historic planting plan/plant material

**CITY PARK**

contributing:

activity area including ball fields, bleachers, toilets, tennis courts, handball courts, playground equipment (N section of park)

non-contributing:

\*Interstate Highway 70  
recreation center and pool (1974)  
recreation facilities (tennis courts, basketball courts, baseball backstops, soccer goal posts, playground)

Big Lake  
Big Lake Island  
boat house & concession stand  
Children's Fountain  
Colonial Dames Sundial  
concrete steps  
Duck Lake & breeding island  
Electric Fountain  
Elizabeth Ellen Sopris Memorial & Garden  
fire station  
G.A.R. cannons  
general historic layout/design  
goldfish pond & wetland course  
Grizzly's Land Stand  
iron fence  
juniper labyrinth  
lily pond  
maintenance shops (WPA era)  
McLellan Gateway

**CHEESMAN PARK**

contributing:

Cheesman Memorial Pavilion related gardens, terraces, basins and fountains  
circulation plans (roadways & walkways)  
general historic layout/design  
internal vistas  
Japanese Tea House  
lily pond excavation  
panoramic mountain view  
historic planting plan/plant material  
tool house and garage

United States Department of the Interior  
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Continuation sheet Denver Park & Parkway System Item number 7

Page 71

City Park, cont.

contributing:

Monti Gateway  
Museum of Natural History vista point,  
plaza, terrace, gardens, pool,  
fountains & esplanade  
Park nursery buildings (WPA era)  
Park shop barns  
pavilion  
pavilion plaza  
historic planting plan/plant material  
pumping plant  
Robert Burns statue & garden  
Sons of Colorado flagpole  
Sopris Gateway  
south meadow  
superintendent's residence & carriage  
house  
Thatcher Memorial Fountain  
vista to the Museum of Natural History  
water system & features  
west forests  
ZOO  
Bear Mountain  
Monkey House (1936)  
Palm House  
serpentine waterway

non-contributing:

bandstand (1984)  
barricade planting (to redirect traffic)  
\*chain link fence (Duck Lake)  
King/Till Bronze (1976)  
\*Museum of Natural History  
\*parking lots  
ZOO  
Monkey Island  
new construction  
train

CITY PARK GOLF

contributing:

general historic layout/design/use  
golf house  
mountain vista  
historic planting plan/plant material  
snack bar  
starting house  
storage yard  
toilets

\*indicates intrusions

CITY PARK ESPLANADE

contributing:

Dolphin Fountain  
general historic layout/design  
historic planting plan/plant material  
Sullivan Memorial Gateway

non-contributing:

barricade  
bike rack  
intrusive plant material (recent  
plantings not compatible with design)  
paving (original grassed areas paved)

CLERMONT STREET PARKWAY

contributing:

general historic layout/design  
historic planting plan/plant material

non-contributing:

random plantings (honey locusts)

CRANMER PARK

contributing:

general historic layout/design  
historic planting plan/plant material  
panoramic view

non-contributing:

sundial (1941)  
Touff Memorial drinking fountain (1970s)  
viewing platform & terrazzo mosaic (1940s)

DOWNING STREET PARKWAY

contributing:

general historic layout/design  
historic planting plan/plant material

EAST 4TH AVENUE

contributing:

general historic layout/design  
historic planting plan/plant material

EAST 6TH AVENUE PARKWAY

contributing:

east terminus mountain view



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Monkey Island  
new construction  
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CITY PARK GOLF

contributing:

general historic layout/design/use  
golf house  
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storage yard  
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paving (original grassed areas paved)

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contributing:

general historic layout/design  
historic planting plan/plant material

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random plantings (honey locusts)

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contributing:

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panoramic view

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Touff Memorial drinking fountain (1970s)  
viewing platform & terrazzo mosaic (1940s)

DOWNING STREET PARKWAY

contributing:

general historic layout/design  
historic planting plan/plant material

EAST 4TH AVENUE

contributing:

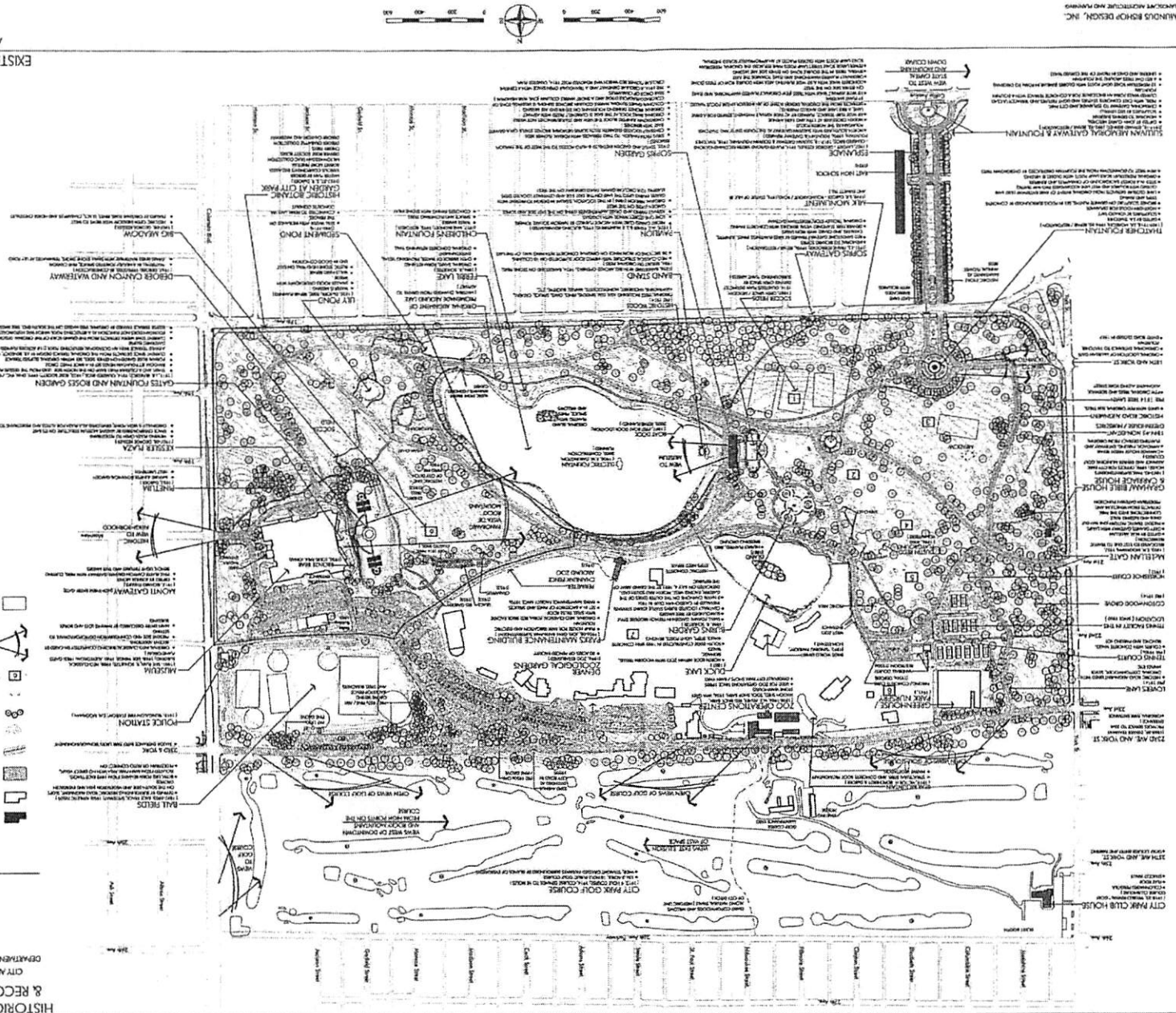
general historic layout/design  
historic planting plan/plant material

EAST 6TH AVENUE PARKWAY

contributing:

east terminus mountain view







PRESERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS  
DENVER ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS / CITY PARK GOLF COURSE

**DENVER ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS**

Significant Denver Zoo components include Bear Mountain, the original City Park Palm House, and the buildings at the Zoo Operations center.

Preserve Bear Mountain as a rock promontory and restore plantings with native vegetation. Continue use as a zoo exhibit.

Rehabilitate the Palm House and continue use as the Denver zoo's raptor exhibit.

Conduct additional study on the Zoo Operations Center, including the red brick barn, red brick stable, wagon shed, and the gray-stone warehouse. Conduct additional research on the City Park Dairy Barn.

Preserve the large Plains Cottonwoods located in the natural swale in the center of the course. They appear to be the earliest trees on the course and may be part of the area referred to in the 1914 Olmsted notes (87) as "the most impressively beautiful natural landscape in City Park".

Consider native vegetation for the rough, as the original grassed rough was prairie grasses.

Rehabilitate the City Park Clubhouse, a historically and architecturally significant building that contributes to the significance and integrity of City Park.

**CITY PARK GOLF COURSE**

Preserve the basic form and configuration of the Golf Course, as it has changed little since its creation in 1913.

Preserve the views and vistas into and from the Golf Course are significant and remain similar to the historic views with one major exception. Continue to provide unobstructed views into all sides of the course from its perimeter roads - 23rd Avenue, York Street, 26th Avenue and Colorado Boulevard. Preserve the significant views within the golf course, especially the views west from various high points on the course, and the view from the center of the course towards downtown Denver and beyond to the Rocky Mountains.

Preserve the Golf Course layout, with wide and straight fairways, and which closely resembles the original 1914 Olmsted plan.

Preserve the mature vegetation, especially the scattered massings of evergreens along the exterior boundaries and between the fairways.



## PRESERVATION PLAN

**SITE NEW PARK ELEMENTS INTEGRALLY WITH HISTORIC FEATURES**

The existing historic integrity of City Park relies on its maintaining its spatial organization and preserving extant historic resources. The integrity of these features, spaces and their relationships to each other should be considered if or when new facilities are desired. The following site design approaches should be considered when new uses are proposed.

Locate new facilities in respect to the established relationships of the historic features.

New facilities or elements should not interfere with views into or from the site, and they should not destroy original features.

Special attention should be paid to the view ordinance adopted by the City of Denver, which protects the views from the terrace on the west side of the Museum of Nature and Science.

New structures or large-scale landscape elements should be carefully evaluated prior to installation. The impact on the site's spatial organization as well as compatibility with the existing style should be considered.

**CONDUCT FURTHER INVESTIGATIONS**

Create a research / evaluation standard for future improvements that strives to gain a greater understanding of the historic landscape. Ensure that this strategy is followed prior to the construction of any new improvements, or to removal of historic material.

Consider implementing additional historical archeological investigations for those areas where little existing information is available, e.g. the City Ditch area and the site south of the Graham / Bible House (original location of the City Greenhouse).

Create a standard for baseline of information to be completed prior to construction.

**PURSUE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDING**

Even though City Park is a public park, public funds will not adequately cover all the costs associated with improving the park and restoring it to its former grandeur. It is recommended that a funding approach be developed that solicits funding from a variety of sources to augment the maintenance and capital improvement funds that the Denver Parks and Recreation department provides.

Colorado Historical Society's (CHS) State Historical Fund CHS administers a grant program to support efforts to preserve and protect Colorado's significant pre-historic and historic resources.

The program, which requires a cash match, provides grants for planning, resource inventory and survey, and restoration and rehabilitation construction projects.

**Great Outdoors Colorado Funding**

Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) provides grant funds to municipalities, counties and special districts to enhance open space, trails, parks and outdoor recreation, and wildlife needs.

**City Park Alliance**

The City Park Alliance is a non-profit organization that provides oversight for changes to City Park. The Alliance is lead by a board of interested citizens, who review proposed projects by the Museum of Nature & Science and the Denver Zoological Foundation, and generate grant funding for park related projects.

City Park Alliance and Denver Parks should work closely to develop funding strategies to pursue private and public funding sources.

## CONDITION ASSESSMENT

### PARK CHARACTER

City Park has an overall park characteristic of a soothing, bucolic and restful ground. It was originally set aside as parkland during an important period of park development. Between the late 1800's and early 1900's developing cities all across the United States were beginning to attribute certain ideals of nature to providing important respite qualities. With the work of Frederick Law Olmsted and the City Beautiful movement, city fathers, businessmen, and other civic leaders were interested in providing natural settings for the use of all residents. It was with these ideals that City Park first came to be set aside as public land for the enjoyment of all, and how its character was first established.

Although City Park's design is derived from a variety of design styles and periods of development, all of its significant features contribute to the original bucolic intent and creates its distinctive character. The overall park design is indicative of the English Landscape School, and the later American Park design tradition embodied by Frederick Law Olmsted. The park's circulation system of looping roads, with numerous choices for movement through the park, its tradition of connecting significant parks spaces together by orchestrated views, its vistas towards the west, the identification of entries with grand monuments, and its vegetation create the features that characterize the park.

While it is important to understand City Park as an entire composition, it is equally important to understand the various park spaces that comprise the whole. For the existing condition assessment, the individual park features and areas are organized into significant park spaces by a series of criteria: their location within or adjacent to the Park; design period or influence; and park use or activity. Each Park Space is further described by its character-defining features.



*City Parks bucolic character is a result of its looping roads, lined with trees.*  
Photo courtesy of Denver Public Library



## CHARACTER DEFINING FEATURES

City Park is composed of significant features that individually and collectively give the Park its character. Significant features include the culturally derived, or more appropriately, the designed features for City Park and those that are naturally occurring. The Park's landscape characteristics influence City Park's appearance and contribute to its functional aspects.

These features are identified through an analysis and evaluation of existing conditions as compared to the site's history. The features are recognized and evaluated according to City Park's identifiable spaces.

The features are categorized as spatial organization, circulation, topography, vegetation, constructed water features, buildings, and structures.

Spatial composition is defined as the three-dimensional organization of physical forms and visual association of the Park and its setting includes planes (vertical, horizontal & overhead) that define space, and specific features that create spaces. Important aspects include views, vistas, and landscape spaces.

Circulation is the park's system of movement, including roads, walks, and paths.

Topography is the shape, slope, elevation, and contouring of the land.

Vegetation describes all of the park's plant material in relation to the park planting design. This includes trees and tree groves, and lawn and shrubs.

Constructed water features are water components that are not naturally occurring.

Buildings include all larger facilities, while structures include smaller park features such as the boat docks.

Natural Systems are the features within City Park that either influenced the development and physical form of City Park or have become naturally occurring as a result of the Park's evolution. Features that contribute to the ecological health of the park are included.

## EXISTING CONDITION ASSESSMENT

The existing condition assessment is accomplished by identifying and describing the landscape characteristics that define City Parks appearance and character, and by identifying the landscape characteristics that retain integrity and that contribute to its significance. This section is organized by significant park spaces, including City Park Proper, Ballfields Area, Esplanade, Denver Zoological Gardens, and City Park Golf Course.

The assessment of each park space begins with a brief description of its landscape characteristics, followed by an analysis and evaluation of the integrity and significance of its characteristics.

The Existing Condition Plan illustrates the park spaces and condition assessment.



## EXISTING CONDITION ASSESSMENT CITY PARK GOLF COURSE

### CITY PARK GOLF COURSE



*City Park Golf Course, as noted by the Olmsted plan of 1914 and showing natural topography. Notes in the center of the analysis (notes 87) state that this spot might be the "most impressively beautiful natural landscape in City Park".*

#### Description

City Park Golf Course is the 136.5 acre parcel located directly north and adjacent to City Park Proper across 23rd Avenue. Prior to the 1920s, the Golf Course acreage was a continuation of City Park. When 23rd Avenue was extended as a through road after 1920s, the distinction between the two uses became more evident and today they are considered two distinctly different places.

The relationship between the Golf Course and City park has changed with both spaces perceived as independent of each other.

#### Spatial Organization

The basic form and configuration of the Golf Course itself has changed little since its creation in 1913. It is a long and linear open space defined on four sides by through streets lined with scattered tree massings. Views and vistas into and from the Golf Course are significant and remain similar to the historic views with one major exception. Unobstructed views occur into the Golf Course its perimeter roads - 23rd Avenue, York Street, 26th Avenue and Colorado Boulevard. Significant views also exist towards the west from various high points on the course, affording views to downtown Denver and beyond to the Rocky Mountains. The view towards the east, once notable for its unending vista of the high plains prairie has disappeared as eastern Denver has matured.

The relationship of the Golf Course to the vast prairie on its eastern and northern boundaries has changed dramatically since its inception. The 1914 Olmsted plan identified the high point in the center of the course as having a particularly important view towards the east, which provided an illusion of vast space as the horizon loomed up.

#### Circulation

The golf course follows a relatively conventional layout with wide and straight fairways. The original layout of nine holes is indicated on the 1914 Olmsted plan. The course was expanded in 1914 to 18 holes and the current course is very similar in layout. Minor circulation changes have occurred, including a newer route into the course from the south for maintenance vehicles to access the maintenance facility.

#### Topography

The Golf course was originally designed to follow and accentuate the natural terrain. The terrain drops towards the west from a high point near Colorado Boulevard and has another rise in elevation near the center of the course just east of the maintenance facility.

Located along the topography is a natural swale which also follows the original alignment of the City Ditch as it flows north south across the Golf Course.

EXISTING CONDITION ASSESSMENT  
CITY PARK GOLF COURSEVegetation

The existing vegetation consists of grassed fairways, greens and rough surrounded by scattered massings of evergreens along the exterior boundaries and between the fairways. The massings are an expert mixture of form, color and texture providing contrast and scale. The grassed rough was originally prairie vegetation and since been converted to mown bluegrass. The tree massings are evergreens (ponderosa, white pine, spruce, fir, cedar and junipers) that were primarily planted subsequent to 1935.

Along the natural swale in the center of the course are large Plains Cottonwoods that may be the earliest trees on the course and may be the part of the area referred to in the 1914 Olmsted notes (87) as the "most impressively beautiful natural landscape in City Park".

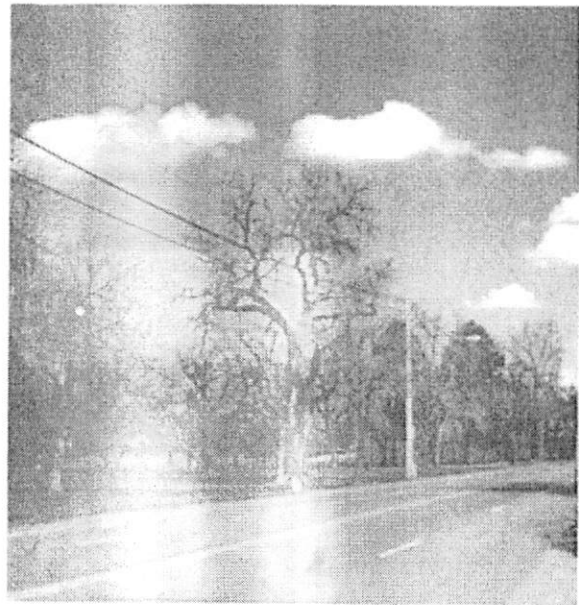
The vegetation is in good condition.

Buildings and Structures

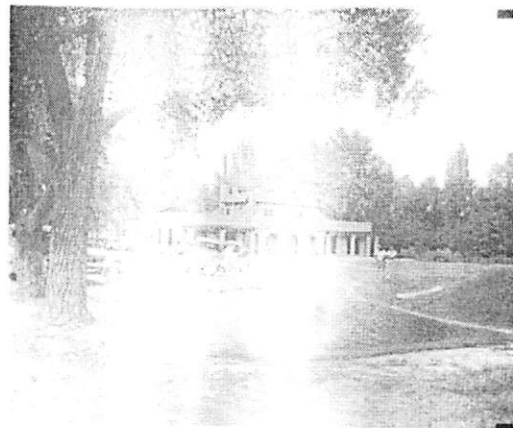
The structures on the Golf Course consist of the maintenance facility located on the course just north of 23rd Avenue and a starting house and a shelter/restroom building located midcourse. Until recently, the Clubhouse located on 26th and York Street was the courses most significant structure. The Pueblo Revival Clubhouse built in 1918 (and enlarged in 1923) was recently demolished to make way for a new and expanded clubhouse building. The original clubhouse was a flat roofed stucco building with red tiles and a colonnaded pergola on either side of a central portico. The building was primarily one-story with two stories occurring behind the portico. Other significant structures included the stucco and red tiled roof starting house and the shelter /restroom facility.

The City Park Clubhouse was historically and architecturally significant and contributed to the significance and integrity of the City Park Golf Course. The building was in good condition. However the City Golf Department determined that the facility was inadequate for their needs.

The starting house and shelter are in good condition.



*City Park Golf Course, circa 2001, retains a high degree of historical integrity. The course has original topography and vegetation, and its course layout closely resembles the 1914 course.*  
*Inappropriate changes - road closures, asphalt paving expansion, traffic light wires, and*



*City Park Clubhouse, circa 1920s. The building was demolished in 2001 to make way for a new clubhouse building. The new building resembles the 1914 course.*  
*Photo courtesy of the City of Denver Parks and Recreation Department*





EXISTING CONDITION ASSESSMENT  
CITY PARK PROPER

### Natural Systems

City Park is an intensively managed landscape dominated by mown turf, non-native trees and plant species, and several open bodies of water (all constructed). Due to the lack of native plant communities, the natural system is primarily evident in the Park's wildlife habitat. Although native plant communities are missing, City Park provides an important ecological refuge within the urban city environment. Wildlife currently using the Park is primarily associated with the Park's urban forest and open water. Common wildlife includes Canada geese, mallard duck, cormorants, ravens, magpies, starlings, flickers, and red squirrels.

City Park supports a rather diverse urban forest. The current mix of deciduous and evergreen tree species, sizes, and planting density increase the diversity and vertical structure of the urban forest helping to support a diversity of birds.

The substantial amount of open water within City Park provides habitat to waterfowl, fish and aquatic insects. Associated with open bodies of water are the two most unusual ecological features of the park - a black-capped night heron rookery on Duck Lake and on the Ferril Lake island, and a cormorant heronry on Duck Lake. These rookeries depend on their proximity to open water and the isolating effect of the island and trees in which bird's nest.

Although City Park supports substantial aquatic habitat, the majority of it is open water and lacks development of wetlands or a vegetative fringe other than mown turf. The turf in proximity to the open water makes the site very attractive to Canada geese but not to most other waterfowl. A large body of water should attract great blue herons and kingfishers, although none have been observed.

The natural system is in good condition, but improvements to the urban forest and the aquatic habitat will greatly enhance the system.

PRESERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS  
CITY PARK PROPER

Topography

A review of historic design plans indicates that City Park's topography today is very similar to the topography of the early 1900s.

Preserve City Park's subtle topography changes and its various prospect points to afford significant views.

Preserve Meryweather's vista point, located today on west side of the museum, allowing for unsurpassed panoramic views towards the west and the Rocky Mountains.

Vegetation

**General**

City Park is characterized by deciduous trees lining park roads, grassy meadows, and dense evergreen tree plantings along park edges. While the earliest plantings were primarily cottonwood trees and bluegrass, over the years the Park has accumulated an extensive number of tree species, including American Elm, Green Ash, Sycamore, Linden, and various pines. The following recommendations are illustrated on the Conceptual Planting Plan.

**Forest**

Remnant trees from many of the original tree groves still exist throughout City Park, and have matured and been combined with newer plantings. Historically significant forest plantings include the Cottonwood grove in the northwest corner, the trees along park drives, and the plantings at the park edges referred to as the historic woods.

Preserve the historically significant Cottonwood tree grove, located in the northwest corner of the Park. This area includes a few Silver Maples interspersed with the Cottonwoods, but many of the original trees planted between 1886 and 1890 still exist. The trees should be preserved as significant species, managed to preserve their longevity and interplant with similar species to perpetuate the Cottonwood grove.

Preserve open meadows by preserving the trees and shrubs that frame their edges, particularly those with panoramic views to the west and Rocky Mountains.

Preserve the informal plantings of Cottonwood, American Elm, Kentucky Coffeetree, Blue Spruce, upright Junipers, and Hackberry that exist along the Park's west edge paralleling York Street. Preserve the trees as significant species by managing them to preserve their longevity, and by interspersing with similar tree species. For example, intersperse evergreen trees with other evergreen plant groups, and interplant historic shade trees with deciduous shade trees of the same or similar species, and with a similar form and habit of growth.

The distinct linear street tree planting of deciduous trees that lines the pedestrian path along York Street is composed of a mixture of historically significant trees and newer, randomly selected species. Consider removing incompatible tree species and replacing them with deciduous shade trees of a similar form and habit of growth.

Preserve the significant trees and managed to preserve their longevity.

Preserve the remaining the historic woods planting along 17th Avenue. It remains a strong character-defining feature, and provides a diverse urban forest, including groves of mixed species, of Bur Oak, Cottonwood, Blue Spruce, Douglas Fir, Silver Maple, Honeylocust, Catalpa, American Elm, Green Ash. Preserve the original, significant trees, including Blue Spruce, Oak, Birch, Alder, Silver Maple, Green Ash, Catalpa, and Kentucky Coffeetree and managed to preserve their longevity.

Preserve significant trees that line the historic roads throughout City Park, including Silver Maples, Cottonwood, Green Ash, and American Elm. Manage the original deciduous canopy trees to preserve their longevity, and interplant with similar tree species. For example, intersperse new Green Ash tree plantings with original Green Ash trees, following similar spacing and alignment.

## PRESERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The Preservation Recommendations outlines a strategy for the preservation, restoration and rehabilitation of each of the City Park spaces that were analyzed under the Existing Condition Assessment. The preservation recommendations are organized by significant park spaces, including City Park Proper, Ballfields Area, Esplanade, Denver Zoological Gardens, and City Park Golf Course.

The Preservation Plan drawing illustrates the park spaces and the proposed recommendations for their preservation.

### CITY PARK PROPER

#### Spatial Organization

Although, the original park composition seemed to have little emphasis on spatial organization and focusing more on sinuous roads lined by trees, several significant spatial relationships were created and reinforced by later modifications to the park.

These include the unending variety of views and vistas attained by the placement of multiple sinuous and curving roads, a characteristic that still provides the overall bucolic character of City Park.

Preserve and enhance the park's overall spatial organization by preserving road patterns (sinuous roads lined by trees), and the variety of views and vistas created by these patterns.

Preserve the most important park spaces such as the Big Meadow, Ferril Lake and the smaller meadows by defining distinct open spaces by preserving of historic road and path alignments, by preserving and adding plantings along road edges, and by managing existing tree planting to enhance the historic spatial patterns.

Strengthen the sense of the park as a refuge from outside uses by defining the park edge with additional plantings, similar to the Olmsted 1914 recommendations to create a "border plantation".

Link important park spaces together by opening up view sheds between these spaces.

Preserve Meryweather's vista point on the west-side of the Museum of Nature and Science as the most important view from the park. Preserving this as a scenic overlook will preserve the scenic relationship between the park and the mountains, and between the vista point and the pavilion across Ferril Lake.

Preserve the openness between City Park proper and the City Park Golf Course to the north. The immense sense of scale that is a distinctive City Park characteristic is created by the visual linkage between these two open spaces. For example, do not create a berm edge on the south-side of City Park Golf Course.



## REVITALIZING THE LEGACY OF CITY PARK

### PRESERVATION PLAN

#### PRESERVE AND ENHANCE HISTORIC VEGETATION

The trees and shrubs within City Park comprise the most easily recognized features of the original park design, and as such require a level of care that respects their historical significance. To preserve City Parks' significant individual species and masses of vegetation, it is recommended that changes to plantings be accomplished according to the Vegetation Management Plan that includes the following.

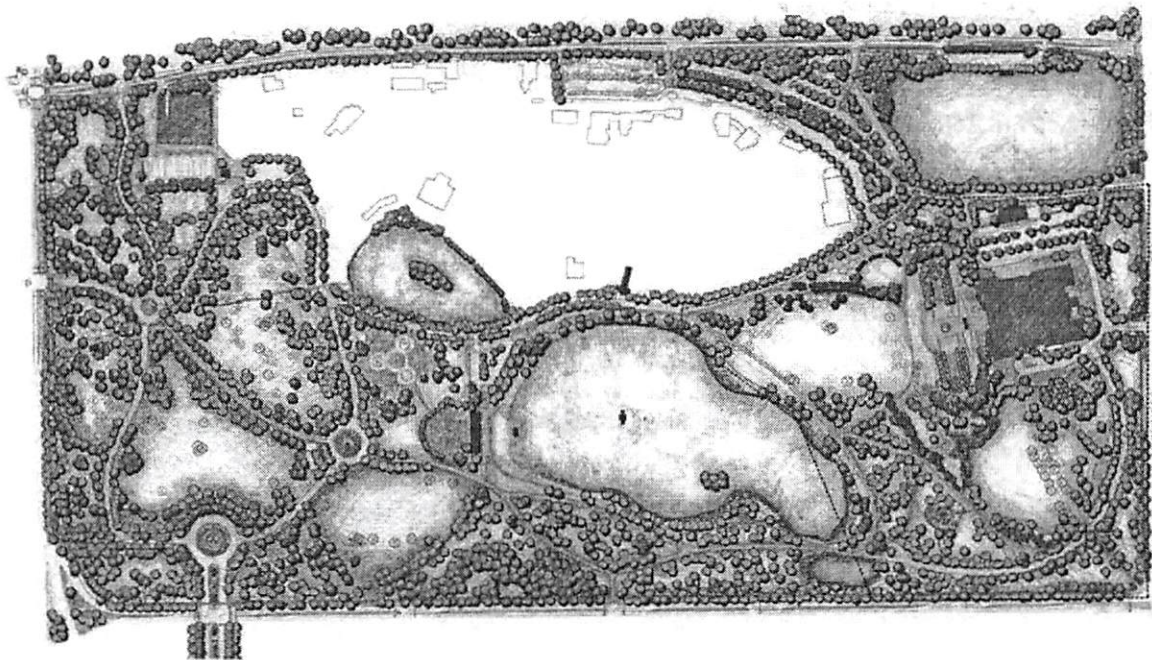
Enhance the accepted horticultural practices that are currently in place to respect the historic nature of the vegetation. This will assist in preserving original features, locating new plantings in appropriate places, and insuring that replacement plantings respect the Park's historic integrity.

Follow the Conceptual Planting Plan to insure that tree planting is compatible with the rehabilitation plan for the entire park.

Provide training opportunities for Park's maintenance staff and others on using accepted horticultural practices that also respect the historic integrity of the vegetation. The Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, located in Brookline, Massachusetts offers hands-on training for foresters, arborists and others responsible for the management of historic vegetation. ✓

Update the existing vegetation inventory map to include an evaluation of the historical significance of existing vegetation, including individual trees, tree groupings, and shrub groupings.

*Conceptual Planting Plan illustrates tree massings and meadows.*



## REVITALIZING THE LEGACY OF CITY PARK

### EXISTING CONDITION ASSESSMENT CITY PARK PROPER

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## REVITALIZING THE LEGACY OF CITY PARK

### EXISTING CONDITION ASSESSMENT CITY PARK PROPER

#### Forest

Many of the original tree groves planted during the earliest park eras still exist throughout City Park. As the plantings have matured and newer trees have been added, City Park has evolved and now exhibits the characteristics of a diverse urban forest. Historically significant forest plantings include the Cottonwood grove in the northwest corner, the trees along park drives, and the plantings at the park edges referred to as the historic woods.

The Cottonwood tree grove, which includes a few Silver Maples interspersed with the Cottonwoods, in the northwest corner has many of the original trees planted between 1886 and 1890. The trees are generally in good condition.

A distinct linear street tree planting of deciduous trees lines the pedestrian path along York Street. Historically, the path was flanked by street trees on both sides. The existing trees are primarily newer trees, interspersed with a few original trees. The planting arrangement is characteristic of the historic planting, but newer species have been randomly selected to diversify the urban forest canopy and not to reinforce the original historic canopy.

Along 17th Avenue the historic woods planting remains a strong character-defining feature. The forest is very diverse and consists of groves of mixed species, including Bur Oak, Cottonwood, Blue Spruce, Douglas Fir, Silver Maple, Honeylocust, Catalpa, American Elm, Green Ash. Many original trees exist within the Park edge, and in particular in the tree lawn along 17th Avenue. Near the sediment pond, to the southeast and southwest, are many original trees, including Blue Spruce, Oak, Birch, Alder, Silver Maple, Green Ash, Catalpa, and Kentucky Coffeetree.

The historic woods along the west edge of the park, paralleling York Street differ from 17th Avenue. They are informal plantings of Cottonwood, American Elm, Kentucky Coffeetree, Blue Spruce, Upright Junipers, and Hackberry meander. Many of the original trees are mixed with newer plantings.

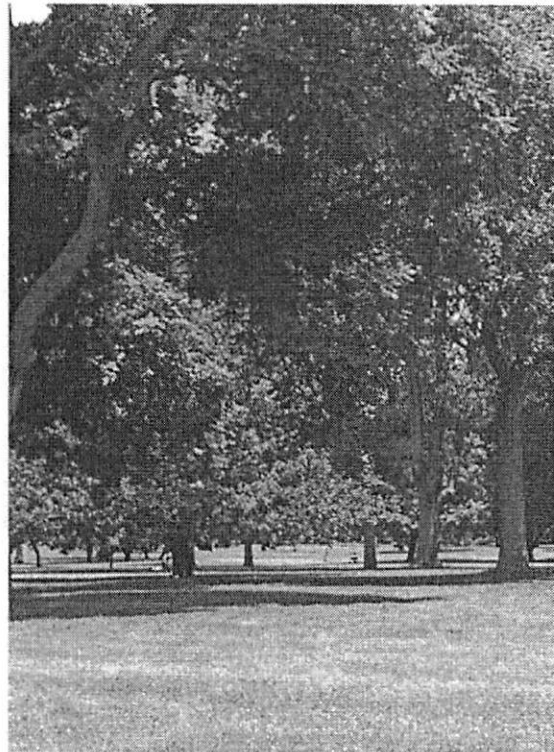
The southwest corner of City Park is screened by border plantings of evergreens and lilacs, dogwoods and viburnums south of Bible House. Throughout City Park, many original deciduous canopy

The southwest corner of City Park is screened by border plantings of evergreens and lilacs, dogwoods and viburnums south of Bible House.

Throughout City Park, many original deciduous canopy trees line the historic roads, including Silver Maples, Cottonwood, and American Elms.

The Big Meadow, west of the museum, with panoramic views out to the west and the Rocky Mountains has been historically framed by elms, pines, masses of lilacs and crabapples and specimen horse chestnut trees. Many trees are a part of the original planting done in 1907-1909, pursuant to George Kessler's plans.

*The forest includes the historic woods that grace City Park's edges.*





## HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

### PARK HISTORY

#### Introduction

The creation of City Park as a public park is primarily due to the social and cultural atmosphere of the city of Denver during the late 19th century. As the city itself emerged as a bustling town, Denver's residents, businessmen, garden clubs, and political appointees rallied for the improvement of the Queen City of the Plains through the setting aside of land for future park development. Some parcels were deeded to the city through the state or federal government, while many more were to be acquired from private owners.

This early call for parks not only offered relief and respite for Denver citizens; it also provided an aesthetic improvement of the vast, seemingly flat prairie, following a national trend in city beautification. As early as 1878 (future insert of Sopris Lee 1878 parks & parkway plan), City Park was envisioned as the "east city park", with Sloan Lake as its complement as the "west city park", each to be located equidistant from the state capital. The two parks were to be linked along a tree-lined parkway, most likely one that would follow today's Colfax Avenue. The 'east' city parcel, City Park, was acquired through a gift from the state, and city fathers poured their energies into its development. Funding to purchase land for the western parcel, Sloan Lake, did not come through, and without it the 'west city park' would remain a dream for almost thirty years. Although Sloan Lake continued to be envisioned as a part of the growing system of Denver parks and parkways, it wasn't until 1906 that a portion of the southern parkland was acquired by Denver.

#### Park Development

During its first decade, the foundation was laid in its roads and paths for City Park. Following in the tradition of the English Landscape School, best expressed by A.J. Downing's work, Henry Meryweather laid out a sinuous system of roads that endure today. The romantic design of circular, looped paths and carriage roads wove through small meadows, edged by woods of evergreens and a deciduous understory, and accented with smooth bodies of water. This system created the Park's views and vistas, and significant landscape spaces.

After 1900, City Park flourished as one

*The Meryweather Plan of 1882*

