



**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**  
**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

**1. Name of Property**

Historic name: Lansburgh Park

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**2. Location**

Street & number: Delaware Avenue between I and M Streets SW

City or town: Washington State: DC County: N/A

Not For Publication:

Vicinity:

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national \_\_\_ statewide \_\_\_ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

\_\_\_ A \_\_\_ B \_\_\_ C \_\_\_ D

<p>_____  <b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>Date</b></p>
<p>_____  <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>	

<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____  <b>Signature of commenting official:</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>Date</b></p>
<p>_____  <b>Title :</b> <span style="float: right;"><b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></span></p>	

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:)

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
<u>  1  </u>	_____	sites

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<u>1</u>	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>2</u>	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Park/City park

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Park/City park

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Modernism

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Earth, concrete, brick, metal (steel), asphalt

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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#### Summary Paragraph

Lansburgh Park is an outstanding and innovative example of modernist park design constructed as a component of the Southwest Washington Redevelopment project of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Unlike other municipal recreational facilities, it is specifically designed for “passive recreation” and to accommodate the needs of both young children and senior citizens. Its original features include grassy open areas, paved walkways that trace the rights-of-way of L’Enfant Plan streets that once traversed its site, and distinctive paraboloid groin vault pavilions which shelter picnic and play areas. Despite alterations, the park retains integrity in its original landscape and design features.

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### Narrative Description

Lansburgh Park is located on multiple lots in Squares 593 and 595. The park’s footprint is a landscaped central green area with pavilions and other recreational facilities and narrow corridors that connect with I Street SW to the north and M Street SW to the south. It is traversed by concrete walkways that trace the former rights-of-way of First, L. and K Streets SW.

The park’s most extensive street frontage is in the 1000 block of Delaware Avenue SW. This frontage extends south from the modernist Friendship Baptist Church on the corner of I Street to

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the Anthony Bowen School campus on the corner of M Street. The park also has limited frontage at First Walk SW's intersections with I and M Streets. Its I Street frontage is the mouth of the narrow walkway that separates the east side of the Friendship Baptist Church site at 900 Delaware Avenue SW and the west side of the Bethel Pentecostal Tabernacle Assembly Church site at 60 I Street SW. The park's east boundary is the brick wall that runs along the west boundary of the Bethel Tabernacle's lot and continues south along the rear of the warehouses and government buildings which line the west side of Half Street SW. Two large painted murals (one on the north brick wall and the other on the east brick wall) display the name "Lansburgh Park."

Another narrow passageway carries First Walk SW's right-of-way south to M Street. To its west, the Bowen School complex, a rear parking lot, and athletic area separate this narrow strip of land from the park's Delaware Avenue frontage. On its east, the narrow passageway is separated from the DC Motor Vehicle Service Center by a wrought iron bar fence with brick pillars and base. Its western boundary is the eastern wall of the Bowen School and a wrought iron bar fence. The I Street, M Street, and Delaware Avenue entrances to the park have District of Columbia Parks and Recreation "Lansburgh Park" signs.

Lansburgh Park's concrete walkways, now decorated with playground-themed artwork (letters and numbers, hopscotch, etc.) and lined with grass and deciduous trees (Live Oak, Hackberry), create the pedestrian paths that divide the park in a geometric pattern. The concrete pavement slabs are edged with granite blocks.

At the park's center is an area defined by grassy berms once shored with railroad ties. This area's sidewalks are lined with park benches with wooden slat seats and backs and iron frames, and metal trash receptacles. The sidewalks are separated from the slopes of the berm by posts linked with chains.

This central area includes the park's most distinctive feature, the picnic areas sheltered by metal-clad paraboloid groin vault pavilions. There are four distinct pavilion clusters, each featuring three groin vaults connected at the corners. The vaults are formed with bent metal framing that supports sheet metal panels shaped into paraboloid forms. Simple metal pipe columns support the pavilions at the corners – without center vault supports. At the center of each pavilion cluster's interior framing is a single flattened-globe light fixture, with the electrical conduit fed through a metal support column for each cluster. One pavilion cluster shelters a raised concrete platform enclosed with a short metal balustrade. The paraboloid groin vault pavilions (the groin vault produced by the intersection at right angles of barrel vaults) emphasize a futuristic aesthetic focused on the function of the structure and highlight the versatility of materials. Square sections of asphalt paving bounded with three rows of square granite blocks link the pavilion clusters and define the picnic areas as unique spaces. The pavilions are furnished with freestanding rectangular wooden picnic tables and benches, as well as metal benches. There are also smaller rectangular tables with benches attached to their center support columns with horizontal bars. The bench and tabletops are composed of metal strips.

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Lansburgh Park has undergone some modifications in recent years. Its pavilion area once included several small metal tables with brightly painted circular tops and square seats as well as three circular, poured-concrete picnic tables. Four formed-concrete circular seats, also supported by a metal table base, surrounded each table. Playground equipment was located within the sunken grassy area, though no records establish whether this was part of the original design or subsequent plans. Recent additions include a dog park and basketball courts in the park's southwest section, which are enclosed within a tall chain link fence. To its north is a newly added community garden section. However, the Park retains many original character defining elements. These include its original landscape plan with its delineation into lawn, planting, and paved pavilion areas, its arrangement of walkways and patterned pavements, as well as its pavilions picnic tables, and post and chain bollards. Its overall level of intactness is high.

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**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Community Planning and Development

Entertainment/Recreation

Landscape Architecture

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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**Period of Significance**

1964  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1964  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

LeRoy Skillman  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Lansburgh Park was Washington’s first park planned and built during the era of recreational desegregation and urban renewal. It is a vital component in the redevelopment of Southwest Washington, a project implemented by the federal government during the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Southwest redevelopment was of national as well as local importance. It served as the prototype for the urban renewal program that became the centerpiece of federal urban policy for decades. As architectural historian Richard Longstreth has written, “The Southwest redevelopment area ... was conceived as a model for revitalization in cities generally... Advocates in the public and private sectors alike considered transforming the Southwest to be a test case for validating the idea of urban renewal.”<sup>1</sup>

Urban renewal’s objectives included “revitalization” through the wholesale demolition of “blighted” areas and their replacement with new communities whose housing, civic buildings, commercial sectors, and greenspaces were designed and synchronously fitted together under modernist planning principles. Lansburgh Park was such a greenspace. It grew from a small feature in the renewal plan’s early iterations to a major commitment of land. The dozen years between its conception and construction spanned the gradual elimination of Washington’s segregated civic policies, and the park’s history is intertwined with early debates about equity in

<sup>1</sup> Richard Longstreth, “Brave New World,” in Richard Longstreth, ed., *Housing Washington* (Chicago: Columbia College, 2010), 257.

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both recreation and housing. Ultimately, the construction of the park addressed community needs in an area whose predominantly African American population was long underserved by recreational facilities. Lansburgh Park is thus significant under National Register Criterion A for its relationship to the development of Southwest Washington, as well as that of parks and recreation in the District of Columbia.

Designed through a unique collaboration between the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) and the National Park Service (NPS), Lansburgh Park is also a significant example of modernist park architecture. Its design provides for “passive recreation,” rather than the athletic activities commonly associated with playgrounds and recreation centers. Intended for multi-generational users ranging from toddlers and young children to senior citizens, it provides a variety of landscapes for different user groups. Its aesthetic flourishes are functional, including the visually intriguing, vaulted pavilions that shelter picnic spaces and the concrete walkways which trace the past by following the routes of long-expunged L’Enfant Plan streets. A key feature of its design is its “interiority.” This use of land within the interior of the square recalls the dwelling patterns within many Southwest squares prior to redevelopment. Lansburgh Park thus achieves significance under Criterion C for its contributions to park design in the District of Columbia, as well as modernist landscape architecture.

A determination of eligibility (DOE), which evaluated only the park’s pavilions, was commissioned by the District of Columbia State Historic Preservation Officer in April 2020. It cited Lansburgh Park’s significance as Washington’s first park planned and built during urban renewal. The DOE further stated that the L’Enfant street rights-of-way largely retain their character as open spatial corridors and circulation paths through the park, and are “potential contributing elements of the National Register-listed Plan of the City of Washington.”<sup>2</sup>

A recent refurbishment was respectful of the park’s original design, and Lansburgh Park retains a high level of intactness and integrity. Its period of significance begins and ends with its construction in 1964.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.) <sup>3</sup>

Lansburgh Park has been an important element of the Southwest Washington neighborhood since its construction during the redevelopment of that quadrant, one of the most momentous transformations of the District of Columbia’s cityscape. The park’s planning and development is deeply entwined with the issues of gentrification and equity in recreation and housing, which surrounded both Southwest redevelopment and the urban renewal program nationally.

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<sup>2</sup> Kathryn St. Clair, *DC State Historic Preservation Office Determination of Eligibility Form: Lansburgh Park* (DC Government Project/Permit Project Log Number: 20-0176) (2020), 16.

<sup>3</sup> Hayden M Wetzal, *Planning and Constructing Public Landscaping in Washington DC’s Southwest Urban Renewal Area*,” (self-pub., 2012). This entire section is derived from this study, a copy of which is deposited in the Historic Preservation Office.

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## Redevelopment and its Context

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Southwest was isolated by railroad lines that ran along its streets, as well as by the city canal. From the 1870s, much of the city's sewage drained into the canal, which was gradually covered over in the Northwest quadrant but had open sections in Southwest into the 1930s. Living conditions were unpleasant along its banks, and much of the quadrant filled with modest to rudimentary dwellings, a significant portion of which lined alleys.

African Americans composed about 18% of Southwest's residents shortly before the Civil War.<sup>4</sup> During the next decade, Southwest's population nearly doubled, with most of these new residents being African Americans.<sup>5</sup> By 1900, African Americans made up nearly half of Southwest's residents – compared to approximately one-third of the city's population.<sup>6</sup> Most lived east of Four-and-a-Half Street, Southwest's main commercial thoroughfare, a situation which persisted until urban renewal.<sup>7</sup>

At the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Southwest had become a focus for housing reformers, and Washington's two limited-dividend philanthropic housing companies were especially active in the quadrant. In the decade before World War I, these companies built more than 150 duplex "sanitary dwellings" for African American tenants, and constructed garden apartment complexes, one for white and one for African American residents, during the Great Depression. The federal Alley Dwelling Authority (later the National Capitol Housing Authority), established in 1934, constructed a small housing project for white residents and two larger projects for African American workers who were part of the war effort. These became the James Creek Dwellings and Syphax Homes when they opened in early 1942. However, these housing reform efforts were not nearly equal to what was needed and at the war's end much of Southwest's worst housing remained extremely crowded.

Postwar "suburban flight" and perceptions that downtowns were deteriorating economically focused increasing attention on the national problem of "urban blight" and the remedy of "urban renewal." The federal housing acts of 1945, 1949, and 1954 created a national framework for urban renewal and made the program accessible to the federally governed District of Columbia. Many federal agencies played roles in this program. Among the most influential were the National Capitol Planning Commission (NCPC), which was responsible for devising a redevelopment plan and selecting projects to accomplish it, and the Redevelopment Land Agency (RLA), which was responsible for acquiring and clearing land and re-aggregating it into parcels to be sold to developers. While the District did not yet have home rule, plans were subject to approval by the presidentially appointed District of Columbia Commissioners. The Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) reviewed each project's design and aesthetics.

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<sup>4</sup> Paul A. Groves. "The Development of a Black Residential Community in Southwest Washington: 1860-1897," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society, Washington, D.C. Vol. 49*, (1973/1974), (Washington, DC: Columbia Historical Society, 1974), 265.

<sup>5</sup> Groves, 264.

<sup>6</sup> Groves, 264.

<sup>7</sup> Groves, 270.

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In 1950, the NCPC proposed a comprehensive citywide renewal plan that made Southwest its highest priority.<sup>8</sup> Planners subsequently justified this choice by noting that the 1950 Census showed Southwest's population declining, even as the city's population reached its historic peak.<sup>9</sup> In addition, an NCPC field survey during early 1951 classified more than 95% of the housing in a large sample area as either "dilapidated" or "obsolescent."<sup>10</sup> Dixon Court, an alley lined with poorly maintained brick dwellings in the square bounded by H, I, Third, and Fourth streets SW, became a widely depicted symbol of urban decay in Washington that endured long after its demolition in 1954.

Southwest redevelopment's primary goals were later summarized as eliminating "blight" and building the type of housing that would retain the middle-class residents said to be fleeing the city for the suburbs. To accomplish them, the NCPC determined to entirely refashion Southwest by covering 550 acres with 6,000 residential units in ten major residential complexes. The original NCPC plan employed modernist planning concepts, such as closing cross-streets to form "superblocks" and orienting new housing toward newly created open space.<sup>11</sup> Several years were spent debating competing redevelopment plans, which proposed differing proportions of apartment units and individual dwellings, and varying spatial arrangements. Over time, the renewal area was split into Areas A, B, and C – each with its own redevelopment sub-plan, which reflected the influences of previous proposals.

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<sup>8</sup> "Southwest Slums May be First to be Cleared," *Washington Post*, December 11, 1950, B1.

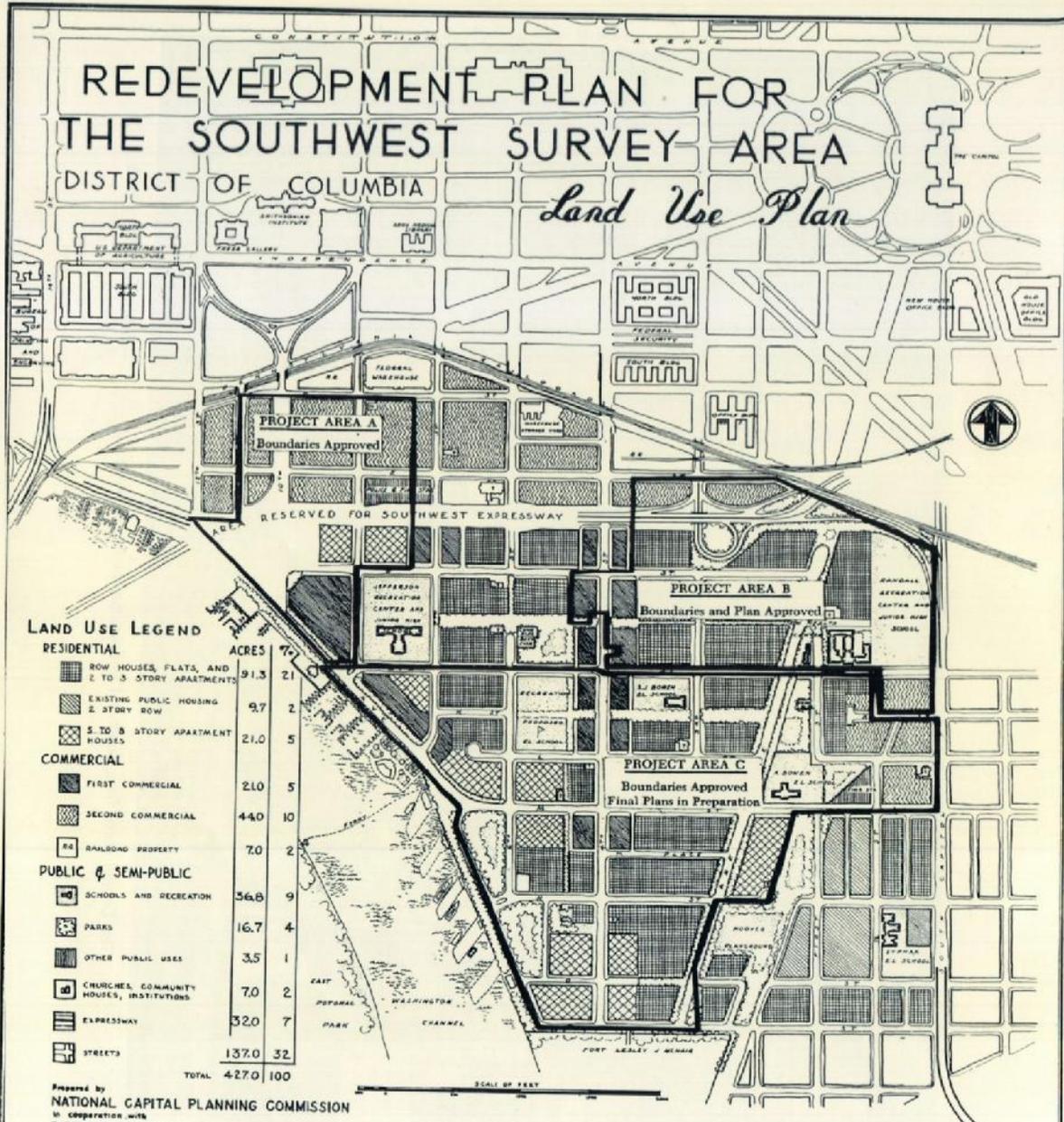
<sup>9</sup> Francesca Russello Ammon. *Southwest Washington, D.C., Urban Renewal Area* (HABS No. DC-856) (Unpublished report of the Historic American Buildings Survey, National Parks Service), 11.

<sup>10</sup> *District of Columbia Redevelopment Land Agency Annual Report for 1952*, (Washington, DC: Redevelopment Land Agency, 1953), 6. The survey took place in the spring of 1951.

<sup>11</sup> Ammon, 28.

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Southwest Redevelopment Plan of October 1952 showing preliminary division into Areas A, B, and C. The Lansburgh Park site is shown as intended for residential building as an element of Area C. (RLA Report, 1952)

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Area B, about 97.5% of whose 5,000 residents were African Americans, received priority attention. Bounded originally by the railroad tracks and E Street to the north, I Street to the south, Fourth Street to the west, and South Capitol Street and Delaware Avenue to the east, it had the worst housing conditions in the city.<sup>12</sup> Area B was assigned the highest redevelopment priority, and it was here that the demolition of Dixon Court in May 1954 marked the physical beginning of the redevelopment project.

It would be years before the first new housing opened in Southwest and two decades before the final projects were built. As delays dragged on, plans shifted and conflict emerged, especially regarding the levels of income to be accommodated in the redeveloped community. During the bruising bureaucratic battle described in the “Building Lansburgh Park” section, the NCHA announced plans to build the 500-unit Greenleaf Gardens public housing development on a tract adjacent to Area B. Shortly afterwards, the NCPC split off the section of Area C east of Delaware Avenue and the NCHA tract into Area C-1, allocated for commercial and industrial purposes.<sup>13</sup> The section of Area B to the north and west of the NCHA tract was redeveloped as the site of Capitol Park, an innovative mix of high-rise apartments, townhouses, and communal greenspace designed by Chloethiel Woodard Smith (in consultation with landscape architect Daniel U. Kiley) and constructed beginning in 1958. In 1957, the RLA announced that higher-than-expected land prices would make it impossible to sell parcels at a price that would allow developers to build low-income housing in the redevelopment zone.<sup>14</sup>

As redevelopment lagged, the NCPC hired Webb & Knapp, a New York real estate development firm, to formulate a plan for all of Southwest outside Area B. The Zeckendorf Plan, named for Webb & Knapp’s dynamic president William Zeckendorf, was devised under the direction of future architectural icons I.M. Pei, who headed Webb & Knapp’s in-house design team, and Harry Weese. It envisioned Southwest as an “Ideal City” of superblocks, integrated green space, and a residential scheme that integrated high-rise apartment buildings with townhouses. In 1956, the NCPC formally accepted the Zeckendorf Plan as its blueprint for an enlarged version of Area C.<sup>15</sup> The “Z-Plan”, as it was sometimes called, refined the area delineations contained in the NCPC plan. Area A, covering the blocks between the new freeway and D Street, as well as the commercial area west of 7<sup>th</sup> Street, was merged into Area C. Area A was filled with commercial

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<sup>12</sup> Boundaries of redevelopment areas were adjusted periodically. The northern boundary was particularly fluid as planning decisions were made regarding the route of the Southwest Freeway. Boundaries were also adjusted to spare the historic First Baptist Church at First and H Streets SW,

<sup>13</sup> Ammon, 51.

<sup>14</sup> Longstreth, *Housing Washington*, 277, Gutheim, 323. See also Ammon, 40-41.

<sup>15</sup> Webb & Knapp, “Redevelopment Proposal for Southwest Washington,” Sept. 8, 1955, and “Panorama of Redevelopment of Southwest Washington, D.C.,” undated (both at MLK). The NCPC minutes (NARA; NCPC, RG 328, Entry 1 “Minutes”) of September 1955 specifically credit “Mr. Weese, of Chicago” (Harry Weese, 1915-98) as the designer; I. M. Pei represented the company in discussions with the Commission (see NCPC minutes of March, June, August and September 1955, the second with an analysis of their plan and the 1952 NCPC plan cited above). For information on Weese, see *New York Times*, Nov. 3, 1998. See also “Concern to Make Its First Bid to Land Agency Here Monday.” *Washington Post*, March 15, 1953, M1; “Zeckendorf ‘Ideal City’ Is Described to Officials.” *Washington Post*, February 17, 1954, 19.; “Zeckendorf Acts on Capital Slums,” *New York Times*, March 15, 1954, 14.

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and government office buildings which were not designated for demolition. Redevelopment added the mall that became L'Enfant Plaza and Banneker Overlook.

Construction in the redevelopment area was not substantially completed until the mid-1970s. The results, while transformational, were also problematic. Redevelopment had created eight major residential projects, as well as parkland, six modernist churches, the office towers of L'Enfant Plaza, a new school, two hotels, a small light industrial area, and a major cultural center with the construction of the Arena Stage. These projects composed a modernist landscape of high-rise buildings, townhouses, and integrated green spaces with many components of high architectural distinction. However, redevelopment had also displaced an entire community. The NCPC calculated that – based on 1950 Census totals – 23,416 persons (or 5,974 families), 69% of them African American who were predominantly working-class, lived within the area defined by the 1956 boundaries of Areas B, C, and C-1.<sup>16</sup> By 1960, the RLA had provided relocation assistance to slightly over 4,600 families, just 13.2% of whom had remained in Southwest.<sup>17</sup>

The population of “New Southwest” was approximately one-third smaller, predominantly white, and middle class. Most of the quadrant’s African American residents lived in the Greenleaf Public Housing development or to the east and south of the redevelopment zone – an area which included the James Creek Dwellings, the reconstructed Syphax Homes, the sanitary housing duplexes, now the property of private owners, and blocks of row houses. This eastern side of the quadrant also included such community landmarks as the historically African American Anthony Bowen and Randall schools and the original First Baptist, Delaware Avenue Baptist, and Mt. Moriah Baptist churches.

### **Lansburgh Park and the New Southwest**

Lansburgh Park was planned and created at the confluence of forces that shaped Southwest redevelopment, overall. These included the increasing importance of greenspace as a functional element of urban design, the development of modernist principles of landscape architecture, and the elimination of segregated social structures in the 1950s and 1960s. While Lansburgh Park’s design incorporates unique modernist elements, its construction took place amid bitter struggles over affordable housing, gentrification, and equity in the provision of resources like recreation.

By the time Lansburgh Park was constructed, greenspace as parkland, playgrounds, or commons was an essential element of modernist urban planning. Modernism’s fusion of landscape design with architecture was not new; landscape architects had worked with architects and planners on the large-scale projects of the City Beautiful and Garden City movements in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. However, New Deal era attitudes toward the social responsibilities of government enhanced landscape design’s importance in establishing an environment that

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<sup>16</sup> Ammon, 11. Figures from conditions in Area B, Area C, and Area C-1 as of 1956 boundaries; United States National Capital Planning Commission, *Urban Renewal Plan; Southwest Urban Renewal Project Area C: A Report of Existing Conditions and a Plan for Urban Renewal; Adopted on April 5, 1956, by the National Capital Planning Commission*. ([Washington, D.C.]: n.p., 1956), Appendix A3.

<sup>17</sup> Ammon, 116

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fostered civic life. Landscape architects became urban planners, contributing to a community's core identity, rather than merely adding "superficial embellishments."<sup>18</sup> They seemed less the "fine artist" of yesteryear and more the social and environmental engineer.

Large-scale modernist communities were not linear rows of detached houses on tiny patches of private land, as was typical of mass-market housing developments like the 1940s Levittown development in New York. They mingled high rise apartments and townhouses amid scattered commons, incorporated commercial clusters that doubled as community gathering places, and featured public parks designed for a variety of recreational functions. The modernist design vocabulary emphasized freeform asymmetry, lack of surface decoration, use of industrial materials such as poured concrete, biomorphic forms (especially in the design of pools and ponds), and the use of native species—all adding up to an ambiance of uncluttered simplicity. This modernist fusion of buildings and space represented bold experimentalism. As I. M. Pei wrote of Southwest redevelopment, "Neither town houses nor common areas were new, historically speaking, but in 1954 they clashed with planning and real estate concepts of what was feasible."<sup>19</sup>

Southwest redevelopment incorporated multiple layers of greenspace, from streetscapes as greenways to semi-private spaces, like the courtyards and environs of housing complexes, and public areas, like parks and playgrounds. It fused buildings and space by simultaneously embracing and rejecting the design of the L'Enfant plan. Although its original configuration had been compromised by the expansion of the National Mall, the building of massive federal office complexes, and the construction of the Jefferson Junior High School campus, Southwest Washington had been laid out in the rectangular L'Enfant grid, with east-west and north-south streets crosscut by avenues radiating diagonally from circles and Capitol Hill. Redevelopment assembled the area for large, new complexes by closing sections of many streets and assembling the original squares into superblocks. The resultant reprogramming of rights-of-way and alleys freed land, which was then devoted to features like courtyards and walkways or public spaces like parks. One example of how reprogramming streets created greenspace was the NCPC's "Site Development Plan – Priority Area B" of 1954, which closed sections of G, H, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> streets SW.<sup>20</sup> Here, "turning circles" of 60-foot radius on G Street helped create courtyard spaces, walkways, and lateral parks.<sup>21</sup> Substituting cul-de-sacs for through streets also helped reclaim space. Chloethiel Woodard Smith's 1959 plan for the southern portion of the urban renewal area closed Maine Avenue below M Street and all sections of east-west streets between 6<sup>th</sup> Street and

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<sup>18</sup> Melanie Simo. *One Hundred Years of Landscape Architecture: Some Patterns of a Century*. (Washington DC: ASLA Press, 1999), 132

<sup>19</sup> I.M. Pei. "Urban Renewal in Southwest Washington." In *Washington in Transition: Special Issue, AIA Journal*. (January 1963), 66.

<sup>20</sup> NCPC; "Site Development Plan – Priority Area B" (Unpublished); This plan was approved in 1956.

<sup>21</sup> "Statement by Roger L. Stevens and James H. Scheuer [developer representatives] in Support of Proposed Amendments to the Redevelopment Plan for Southwest Redevelopment Area B, Washington, D.C.," April 2, [1959] (NARA; NCPC, RG 328, Entry 7:545-45-25-15, Box 84 folder 6). Approval was given at the April 2, 1959, NCPC Board meeting.

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the new Waterfront Park – substituting cul-de-sacs and walkways.”<sup>22</sup> In 1961-62, five cul-de-sacs were added to the superblocks “to allow access to residential developments,” and a cul-de-sac on O Street changed from an octagon to a circle “to correspond to street improvements already in place. By 1961, the RLA could confidently state that “the residential development south of M Street will be connected by a network of public greenways.”<sup>23</sup>

Transforming traditional streetscapes into greenways became important throughout the New Southwest. The green area between the street and the building line (unless the street has been widened) was an element of L’Enfant’s original design that planners chose to preserve and accentuate. The NCPC and CFA oversaw the preservation of mature street trees, noting that in Area C south of M Street “as many trees . . . as possible have been saved and hundreds of new trees will be planted.” Greening the streetscape was part of improving the pedestrian experience; The NCPC mandated the addition of streetlights and signage, while the RLA constructed the fine, wide sidewalks along 4<sup>th</sup>, G, and other streets.<sup>24</sup>

Even after streets and alley segments had been removed, the area they had occupied frequently remained unbuildable without relocating the utility lines that ran beneath them.<sup>25</sup> As RLA Executive Director John R. Searles, Jr., wrote in 1960, such areas would be treated as enhanced greenways protected by easements even after a tract was sold to a developer. He wrote:

The intention [for these former rights of way] is the creation of wide, carefully designated, tree-lined walks, requiring close collaboration for their successful execution. Part of the developer’s responsibility will be the provision of tree planting in the private easement parallel to that provided in the public area.”<sup>26</sup>

The NCPC and the RLA also mandated play areas and greenspaces in residential

<sup>22</sup> Shown on “Map of Area C, showing all street closings, easements, widened walkways, etc. as of Nov 1963,” in “Site Development Plans for Project Area ‘C’ – Southwest Urban Renewal Project” at NARA (NCPC; RG 328, Entry 13 “Records Relating to Urban Renewal, 1952-1986”; Box 18 folder “Washington Channel Park”. NCPC, “Summary of Amendments to Project Area C, Project DC R1,” (undated but after 1967) (NCPC). See also NCPC, “Summary of Proposed Area ‘C’ Plan Changes – Southwest Urban Renewal Area,” Mar. 1961 (NARA; NCPC, RG 328, Entry 7:545-45-25-15, Box 85 folder 7).

<sup>23</sup> NCPC, RG 328, Entry 7:545-45-25-15, Box 84 folder 6; *District of Columbia Redevelopment Land Agency Annual Report for 1961*, (Washington, DC: Redevelopment Land Agency, 1961), 26.

<sup>24</sup> Various papers at NARA; Note a rare glimpse of humor in a memo from Charles H. Conrad (agency unidentified) to Robert L. Plavnick of NCPC from June 2, 1959 regarding attempts to save trees along M Street when the street was widened: “Knowing your intense and undying interest in saving existing trees . . ., we know that you will be most happy to dig into this matter” (at NARA; box/folder above-cited). CFA Board minutes of Feb. 20 and Oct. 17, 1961 (lights), and June 19, 1969 (signage). Stanley Sherman, private communication.

<sup>25</sup> Stanley Sherman, private communication.

<sup>26</sup> Memo from Searles to William E. Finley, Director, NCPC, Dec. 14, 1960 (NARA; NCPC, RG 328, Entry 7:545-45-25-15, Box 89 folder “RLA #2”); see also a letter from Charles W. Hawkes, Deputy Assistant Director of Urban Renewal to Lt. Col. E. C. Adams, OUR, Oct. 8, 1964 (NARA; NCPC, RG 328, Entry 7:545-45-25-15, Box 89 folder “Area C”) for further discussion of easements.

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developments.<sup>27</sup> Virtually all of Southwest's modernist complexes reflect major contributions by a master landscape architect. At Capitol Park and Harbour Square, Chloethiel Woodard Smith's collaborator was Daniel Urban Kiley, perhaps the most noted 20<sup>th</sup> century American landscape architect. At Town Center, I. M. Pei worked with Robert Breen & Associates, the New York firm that created the concept of the vest pocket park. Keyes, Lethbridge, and Condon worked with Eric Paepke to create Tiber Island. Notable public space plans include Kiley's Banneker Overlook and Hideo Sasaki's work on parks.

### Recreational Space in Southwest

Public greenspace was also an important element of the Southwest redevelopment plan. Before redevelopment, recreational space in Southwest was in short supply, poorly developed, and segregated by race. Playgrounds associated with public schools followed the segregationist practices of the city Board of Education system. Municipal playgrounds were overseen by the DC Recreation Board, which also maintained racial segregation.<sup>28</sup>

A focal point of progressive era reforms, Southwest had been the site of Washington's first organized children's playground, established in 1901 by reformers Charles and Eugenia Weller in the backyard of the Southwest Neighborhood Settlement House at 456 N Street.<sup>cx</sup> Between 1902 and 1904, a Public Playground Committee opened playgrounds for African American children at N and 7th and 1st and L streets. In 1913, Willow Tree Court alley houses in the square bounded by Independence Avenue and C, Third, and Fourth streets were demolished to make way for a federally funded playground for African Americans' use. However, this early momentum was not sustained. After twenty years as Southwest's largest recreation area for African Americans, Willow Tree Playground was replaced by the Social Security Administration Headquarters in 1940. The following year, the *Washington Post* reported the desperate condition of the Randall Recreation Center at Half and I streets, the only non-schoolyard playground for African Americans in Southwest. Reporter and future *Post* publisher Katharine Graham described the recreation center as "a bare three-and-a-half-acre tract bounded by the dog pound on one side and the police car pound on another."<sup>29</sup> The recreation center incorporated the bed of the former James Creek Canal, which had gradually been filled with construction debris by the Architect of the Capital and repurposed by the DC Highway Department to stockpile materials. Even after the tract was re-designated as parkland in 1935, the Metropolitan Police Department continued to store abandoned and stolen cars on its north side. Requests to remove the cars and relocate the municipal dog pound were disregarded or denied for lack of resources. Although Half and I streets were interrupted by the recreation center, cars frequently drove across the play area as a short cut. Graham noted that the only playground equipment present was "two rickety goal posts and two baskets" without a paved basketball court.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> NCPC, "Specifications of the Urban Renewal Plan for Southwest Urban Renewal Project Area C," 1956 (NCPC).

<sup>28</sup> Bernard Mergen. "Children's Playgrounds in the District of Columbia, 1902-1942." *Records of the Columbia Historical Society, Washington, D.C.*, 1980, 397.

<sup>29</sup> Katharine Graham. "Randall Playground in Southwest Section Badly in Need of Improvements," *Washington Post*; Jan 26, 1941; B4.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

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Although they were more numerous, recreational areas for Southwest's white residents were also small and under-developed. The quadrant's largest park was the 4.4-acre Hoover Playground, constructed in 1918 as a facility for whites. "Largely located along the old canal" between Delaware Avenue and Canal, N, and O streets, the playground, which comprised more than 10% of Southwest's recreational land, shared many of the Randall Recreation Center's deficits.<sup>31</sup> In the 1930s, a community leader called it "The most disgraceful recreational center in the city, both from the standpoint of appearance and equipment. . . [It is] a hideously disgraceful dump for junked and discarded automobiles."<sup>32</sup> Over the years, numerous community requests and city plans for expansion and improvements (for example, a proposed swimming pool) remained unfulfilled.<sup>33</sup>

In 1940, recreation opportunities for whites seemed on the cusp of improvement, as plans were announced to clear a tract adjoining the newly constructed Jefferson Junior High School for what was described as Southwest's "first park." Although the area bounded by G, H, Seventh, and Ninth streets remained a "barren brick strewn dump heap" at Pearl Harbor Day, the site was eventually graded and opened as a recreation center. A lesser amount of money was allocated for improvements at Randall Recreation Center.<sup>34</sup> However, for African Americans, the situation was likely worse than in 1935, when a white community leader had commented that: "Recreational facilities in Southwest have been so shamefully neglected that many residents have been discouraged in their hope that any . . . improvement will ever be obtained."<sup>35</sup>

The situation was more fluid with parks controlled by the Department of the Interior (DOI). By the mid-1930s, the DOI permitted interracial play in Lincoln Park and elsewhere.<sup>36</sup> In 1939, the formerly whites-only picnic grounds in Rock Creek Park were opened to all races and by 1940 African Americans could play the lighted tennis courts in West Potomac Park and on the Mall. In the summer of 1941, three black golfers attempted to play the whites-only East Potomac Golf Course, which was under the jurisdiction of the DOI. The resulting protests in June and July of 1941 prompted Harold L Ickes, Secretary of the DOI, to ban racial segregation at all federally

<sup>31</sup> "Hoover is Name of Newest Park," *Washington Post*, Mar 3, 1918, 13; Harland Bartholomew & Assoc., "Redevelopment Plans for the Southwest Survey Area in the District of Columbia," 1952 (MLK Library and Historical Society of Washington, DC).

<sup>32</sup> Harry S. Wender, "Recreational Facilities in Southwest Washington" (Speech, Station WMAL, October 3rd, 1935, 10 PM, privately printed 1935), 3.

<sup>33</sup> "Southwest Swimming Facilities Lacking First Time Since 1900," *Washington Post* Aug. 19, 1936, X15 (swimming pool); Lucia Giddens. "Southwest's Share Large in Play Plans," May 10, 1941, 13 (expansion plan); Eve Edstrom. "Wender Group Blasts Plan for Revamping," Nov. 4, 1951, B1 and "Playground Change Set for Hearing," *Washington Post*, Nov 14, 1951, B1 (Proposed integration and use statistics). NCPC's Aperture Card 24.30/#32.00 is a 1940 map of the playground and indicates that 2<sup>nd</sup> Street was only closed and incorporated in 1938. Revised plans for a proposed expansion, dated 1941, are at NARA.

<sup>34</sup> "Land to Be Taken for SW Park," *Washington Post*, May 26, 1939, 17; "Firm to Grade Playground in Pay for Dirt," *Washington Post*; Dec 11, 1941, 13.

<sup>35</sup> Wender, 1-2.

<sup>36</sup> Mergen, 397.

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owned golf courses.<sup>37</sup> However, in some cases, the National Capital Parks division of the NPS gave power over the daily operations of its parks to the DC Recreation Board (the Board), which operated them as segregated facilities despite being officially open to all races.<sup>38</sup> It was not until 1948 that the DOI officially announced that it would start to strongly enforce its nondiscrimination policy, and African Americans were able to golf at Rock Creek Park. The following year, DOI integrated several pools in DC over opposition from the Board.<sup>39</sup> When whites rioted over attempts to integrate the whites-only Anacostia Pool located in Fairlawn, the pool closed for the rest of the summer.<sup>40</sup>

In opposition to the DOI's integrationist initiatives, the Board insisted on a reluctant policy of "gradual desegregation." Tension grew when the Board tried to gain control of integrated sites owned by the DOI, and the NCPC attempted to take back 62 playgrounds that it had acquired for the city.<sup>41</sup> The Board finally agreed to integrate its 18 tennis courts, while it slowly integrated parks and playgrounds, beginning at locations where it foresaw that there would be little to no pushback.<sup>42</sup> It was later determined that the DOI would transfer ownership of some facilities to the city in exchange for the elimination of racial designations. Meanwhile, civil rights groups increased pressure on the Board to desegregate all of its parks. The Board finally announced the desegregation of all its sites in May 1954, just days before the Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*.<sup>43</sup>

### Planning New Southwest's Parks

When redevelopment began in the early 1950s, Southwest still lacked parks and recreation areas for whites and African Americans. In 1953, the NCPC calculated that only 30.1 of the quadrant's 427 acres were dedicated to "parks, schools and recreation."<sup>44</sup> A year earlier, the NCPC had tabulated 34.2 acres of recreational space, which included 8 acres of "other park land" (mostly school recreation fields) and 2.8 acres of "semi-public" space.<sup>45</sup> The NCPC reported that the elementary schools, in particular, had "inadequate play space, either for physical education or for

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<sup>37</sup> S Garrison and M Lester 2016, "East Potomac Golf Course: Cultural Landscape Inventory, National Mall and Memorial Parks," National Park Service, Cultural Landscapes Inventory reports, 600105, NPS National Capital Region, National Capital Region/ CLI Database

<sup>38</sup> Kevin Ehrman-Solberg, "DC's Segregated Recreation System," Mapping Segregation in DC, Prologue DC, <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=1033092aabe54293b5359f17e6f43fc0>. Much of this section is based on this story map, created as a part of a larger project which maps the history of racial segregation in Washington, D.C.

<sup>39</sup> Ehrman-Solburg,

<sup>40</sup> John Kelley, "Bathing Suits and Civil Rights," *Washington Post*, June 10, 2017

<sup>41</sup> Ehrman-Solburg,

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> NCPC, "Redevelopment Plans for the Southwest Survey Areas – Comparative Tabulation," Feb. 4, 1953 (NARA: NCPC, RG 328, Entry 7:545-45-25-15, Box 83 folder 3).

<sup>45</sup> NCPC, "Southwest Survey Area – A Redevelopment Plan for Project Area B (Draft)," 1952 (NCPC).

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community use.” There were no true neighborhood parks for casual enjoyment, although the NCPC believed that residents could “easily” take a ferry to East Potomac Park.<sup>46</sup>

Redevelopment planning took advantage of the modernist planning staple, the superblock. The value of its “discovered land” was apparent to all. “We wish to emphasize the extreme importance of the aesthetic elements in the plan of Washington,” wrote David E. Finley, chair of CFA, to John A. Reman, chair of NCPC, on 16 May 1952. “We suggest...that in most cases the sections closed to traffic be kept as park areas and used as sites for building.”<sup>47</sup>

Parks and public spaces were regarded as an essential complement to the open spaces that would surround Southwest’s modernist residential complexes. “Of great importance in developing an attractive neighborhood is the provision of properly located parks and recreation areas,” states an NCPC report of 1959.<sup>48</sup> Yet the net acreage to be added for new parkland was relatively modest, considering the vast size of the redevelopment area. The 1950 NCPC “Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital and Its Environs” proposed adding just 9.3 acres for “recreation facilities” and 13 acres of new neighborhood parks.<sup>49</sup> The 1952 NCPC plan anticipated 61 acres of “public and semi-public use” space. The Peets Plan of 1952 freed eight acres of street land “to be made into parks or playgrounds.”<sup>50</sup> In the end, most redevelopment plans proposed total park/school recreation area acreage in the 53-60-acre range.<sup>51</sup>

Proposed park locations also varied by plan, ranging from placing all new parks in a central shopping district to scattering smaller parks throughout the new residential developments.<sup>52</sup> The 1952 NCPC plan’s description of “new parks” almost entirely dealt with expanded areas around schools (Jefferson, Syphax, and Randall) and put one “new park” on 4<sup>th</sup> Street, just south of the proposed retail center.<sup>53</sup>

The RLA Annual Report for 1952 presents the first iteration of the redevelopment area’s portfolio of parks. The report shows the nuclei of what would become Waterfront, Lansburgh, and Amidon Sidewalk Parks, as well as Hoover Playground, which was later incorporated into

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<sup>46</sup> NCPC, “Redevelopment Plan – Southwest Redevelopment Project Area B – A Report of Existing Conditions and a Plan for Redevelopment,” 1952 (HSW). Regarding school facilities, see Wender and Jeffers.

<sup>47</sup> NARA; NCPC, RG 328, Entry 7:545-45-25-15, Box 83 folder 1.

<sup>48</sup> Satterlee & Smith, Architects, “Preliminary Study of the Southwest Redevelopment Area South of M Street,” 10 Sept 1959 (NARA: NCPC, RG 328, Entry 7:545-45-25-15, Box 87 folder 3).

<sup>49</sup> See the map accompanying the plan’s published summary of 1950 (NCPC), and an NCPC memo summarizing the plan, Nov. 1954 (NARA; NCPC, RG 328, Entry 7:575 “Reports,” Box 189 folder 3).

<sup>50</sup> Elbert Peets, “Proposed Redevelopment Plan for Southwest Survey Area – An Explanatory Statement by Elbert Peets,” May 26, 1952 (NARA; NCPC, RG 328, Entry 7:545-45-25-15, Box 83 folder 1).

<sup>51</sup> Specific acreage requirements in the major Southwest Redevelopment plans include Bartholomew: 56.0; Peets: 55.0; Justement-Smith: 55.31; NCPC: 53.5; Davis: 59.87. NCPC, “Redevelopment Plans . . . Comparative Tabulation”.

<sup>52</sup> Chalmers M. Roberts, “Progress or Decay? . . .”

<sup>53</sup> NCPC, “Southwest Survey Area – A Redevelopment Plan for Project Area B (Draft),” (NCPC, 1952).

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the Greenleaf-King Recreation Center<sup>54</sup> Subsequent annual reports show the evolution of these plans. In 1954, the city adopted the Zeckendorf Plan for the western-lying Area A, which included the elevated esplanade that became L'Enfant Plaza to replace 10<sup>th</sup> Street. The terminating overlook parkland was considered as the site for a planetarium and restaurant. Lansburgh Park is better defined in the 1955 report. The Town Center Parks first appear (although not in their current configuration in 1957, while smaller Waterfront Parks still compete with a Maine Avenue that extends to P Street. The large southern Waterfront Park appears in the 1960 report and the Town Center parks are in their current places by 1962.

However extensive these plans may have been, park construction was a trailing indicator of residential building, which was proceeding slowly as land acquisition and clearing lagged. The first module of Capitol Plaza did not open until 1959, Town Center was not occupied until 1961, and Tiber Island, Carrollsburg Square, and Harbour Square were not completed until the mid-1960s. Park construction also encountered significant delays in its own right. RLA annual reports show that the "Amidon-Greenleaf" Playground (the first-planned name for Amidon School) was not under construction until 1962. Lansburgh Park was "under construction" and Waterfront and Town Center Parks were "pending" in 1964. The 10<sup>th</sup> Street Mall was not underway until 1966. With no previous mention, the "Amidon sidewalk park" appears complete in the 1967 report, and Hoover Playground re-opened that year. The first Waterfront parks, Banneker Overlook, and the improved Randall Recreation Area were dedicated in 1968. Town Center ("three parks with walkways") began construction in 1970. All the Waterfront and Town Center parks were finished in 1972, completing the New Southwest's collection of parks and other public spaces.

### **Lansburgh Park and Equity in Southwest Housing and Recreation**

The building of Lansburgh Park must be seen in the context of a struggle over equity in public resources, such as housing and recreational facilities, that gained momentum as the city's policies of civic segregation were gradually repealed in the 1950s. Park plans were conceived while Southwest's recreational facilities were only partially desegregated. In December 1951, the DC Recreation Board held a hearing to reclassify Hoover Playground from "a white to an interracial unit" because "attendance had fallen away to practically nothing" after two years of white withdrawal from the area.<sup>55</sup> During the early 1950s, a similar process was unfolding within the city's public housing system. Plans for Lansburgh Park evolved during a racialized debate between the RLA and the NCHA about the role of affordable and subsidized housing in Southwest, much of which centered on the construction of the adjacent Greenleaf Gardens housing development.

While it was generally agreed that at least a portion of Southwest's former residents should be rehoused in the redevelopment area, early redevelopment plans did not specify the location and number of units reserved for them. The NCHA pushed for a larger number of subsidized and affordable units, while the RLA resisted. This dispute was generally phrased in terms of economic equity by the NCHA and its supporters and economic efficiency by the RLA and its

<sup>54</sup> At DCA; DHCD/RLA, Organizational Records Part 2: Annual Reports, Box 2.

<sup>55</sup> "Playground Change Set for Hearing," *Washington Post*, Nov 14, 1951,

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supporters, but it cannot be disentangled from issues of race and racism. A 1952 *Washington Post* editorial argued that “upgrading is necessary” to keep “high income families in the city... both as consumers and taxpayers” and argued against making Southwest what it called “a rehabilitated poor house.”<sup>56</sup> In 1953, a coalition that included such civil rights organizations as the Washington Urban League and the NAACP as well as the Federation of Civic Associations, the American Veterans Committee, and the Southwest Civic Association demanded that the federal Housing and Home Finance Administration force the RLA to include public housing and incorporate anti-discrimination policies in its plans.<sup>57</sup>

While redevelopment plans were being debated, the NCHA was taking early steps toward desegregation. On March 26, 1953, the NCHA commissioners voted to open public housing units constructed after September 1951 to persons of any race.<sup>58</sup> However, as with recreational areas, such policies only gradually became practices. Although its open housing policy was soon expanded, the NCHA held it “in abeyance” in areas which lacked such facilities as racially separate schools and playgrounds.<sup>59</sup> In 1955, roughly 30% of NCHA units were in developments still segregated as a matter of policy.<sup>60</sup>

During these years, the NCHA’s public position was that integration of public housing was proceeding without significant controversy. However, newspapers noted protests that included “For Sale” signs sprouting around white housing projects, letter writing campaigns and telephoned threats to the NCHA’s executive director, and attacks on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives by segregationist representatives.<sup>61</sup> At the same time, the NCHA was defending itself from allegations that it was recruiting whites to counter a demographic shift in its tenants. Although about 20% of NCHA units had white tenants, in October 1953, Stanton Homes in Anacostia, the only development to which the NCHA’s original declaration applied, had only 6% white occupancy.<sup>62</sup> Current applications from African Americans exceeded those from whites by a factor of more than 10 to 1.<sup>63</sup> Given that a purpose of constructing public housing in Southwest was to house the population displaced by redevelopment, which was heavily African American, the question of how much public housing would be built had a highly racialized character.

In January 1953, several months before it announced its open housing policy, the NCHA, frustrated by the slow pace of negotiations, announced plans to acquire land and build a 500-unit

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<sup>56</sup> “Upgrading the Southwest,” *Washington Post*, Sep 30, 1952; 14.

<sup>57</sup> “Agency Scans SW Protests,” *Washington Post*, Mar 6, 1953; 31, and Richard L. Lyons. “Development Plan Rapped by SW Group,” *Washington Post*, Dec 7, 1952; M21.

<sup>58</sup> Sam Zagoria. “Housing Unit Opens Newer Projects to Both Races,” *Washington Post*, Mar 27, 1953; 29.

<sup>59</sup> Sam Zagoria. “NCHA Plans End to Segregation In 2000 Units,” *Washington Post*; Sep 11, 1953; 29.

<sup>60</sup> “NCHA Gets Protest on Segregation. *Washington Post* “Sep 13, 1955; 25

<sup>61</sup> Zagoria; Sep 11, 1953;” NCHA Gives Procedure in New Integration Policy,” *Washington Post* Jun 5, 1953, 29.

<sup>62</sup> Zagoria, March 27, 1953; Zagoria, Sep 11, 1953.

<sup>63</sup> Sam Zagoria, “Housing Quiz Discussed By NCHA,” *Washington Post*; Oct 9, 1953; 27.

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complex in the vicinity of Delaware Avenue and I Street SW.<sup>64</sup> These plans were opposed vehemently by the RLA, which argued that public housing would eliminate “a good tax recovery area,” and private groups like the National Association of Homebuilders, which worried that proximity to public housing would make market rate development unattractive.<sup>65</sup> By 1954, the NCHA was publicly displaying plans for a public housing complex between Third, I, and M streets and Delaware Avenue.<sup>66</sup> By July 1955, the NCHA had overcome intense opposition, won the necessary approvals for the project, and obtained the power to acquire properties on the site through eminent domain, if necessary.<sup>67</sup> The planned NCHA development removed a large swath of land from Area C, just south of Area B. Approximately two weeks after it was approved, the RLA announced that the section of Area C to the east of the NCHA site would become Area C-1, designated for commercial and industrial development.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> “New Dispute Flares Over S.W. Project,” *Washington Post*, Jan 15, 1953; 16. “RLA Fights Housing Site Near Area B,” *Washington Post*; May 15, 1953; 31

<sup>65</sup> “New Dispute Flares Over S.W. Project,” *Washington Post*, Jan 15, 1953, 16

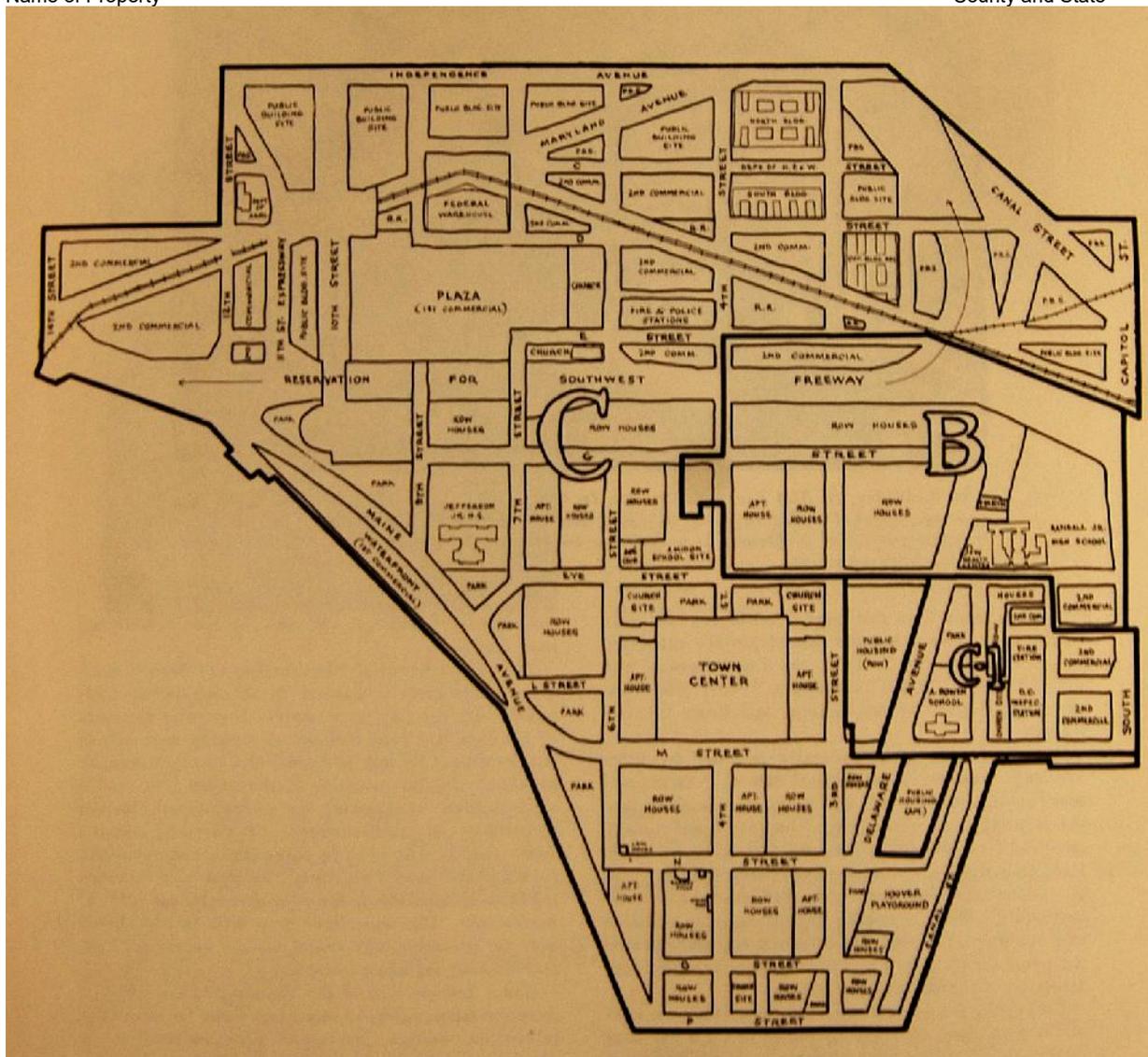
<sup>66</sup> Robert C. Albrook. “NCHA Unveils Drawings for Elevator Apartments,” *Washington Post*, Oct 8, 1954,

<sup>67</sup> “NCHA Acts to Acquire Five Slum Blocks in SW,” *Washington Post*, Jul 1, 1955, 21.

<sup>68</sup> “RLA Reveals Its Plans to Redevelop Area C-1,” *Washington Post*, Jul 14, 1955, 25. During the same period, the historic Friendship Baptist Church at 734 First Street SW successfully lobbied to be removed from the redevelopment zone because it had just built a large educational annex. The northeastern section of Area B was occupied by public buildings which were not candidates for demolition.

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Land Use Plan showing newly delineated Area C-1. The original footprint of Lansburgh Park is shown in the triangle between Delaware Avenue and First Street SW, a site now substantially occupied by the new Friendship Baptist Church. (RLA Annual Report for 1955)

While Capitol Park's first building was under construction, the requirement that one-third of the housing erected in Area B be reserved for low-income households was repealed.<sup>69</sup> The complex's residents would be middle-class. By 1963, 10% of the first Capitol Park apartment building units and 20-25% of the townhouses were rented to non-white tenants.<sup>70</sup> The NCHA tract became the 500-unit Greenleaf Gardens housing project, the largest in the city, which opened in 1958 with African American tenants as a majority.<sup>71</sup> In 1960, the District

<sup>69</sup> Ammon, 40-41.

<sup>70</sup> "Southwest Integration Hailed as a Big Success," *Washington Post*. October 18, 1963, B1.

<sup>71</sup> Longstreth, 277.

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Commissioners voted to bar residential construction in Area C-1, designating it as a functional area “to primarily serve public housing located in the area,” and reserving sites for two churches, parks and playgrounds, schools, and municipal service facilities.<sup>72</sup>

### Developing Lansburgh Park

Plans for Lansburgh Park evolved within the larger struggles, which also shaped the development of Area C-1. At the time of its delineation, Area C-1 was home to just over 600 residents, 98% of whom were African American, and much of its 30 acres was occupied by warehouses and municipal service buildings.<sup>73</sup> Its sparse settlement was in large part a legacy of the “notorious, malodorous, deadly James Creek Canal,” which had become an open sewer, and the noisome uses it had attracted, including slaughterhouses. Inexpensive land made the neighborhood around Area C-1 a hub for lower-income housing. In the early twentieth century, the Washington Sanitary “philanthropic housing” Companies built hundreds of duplexes for working class African American renters south of M Street on Carrollsburg Place, as well as at Half and South Capitol streets SW. On the eve of World War II, the federal government built the James Creek Dwellings and Syphax Homes along the east bank of the former canal bed as housing for African American defense workers.

The neighborhood around Area C-1 also included such public buildings as the South Capitol Street dog pound, a Standard Oil Company warehouse that became the United States Capitol Police garage, the municipal Southwest Health Center, the Randall Recreation Center, and Randall Junior High School, constructed for African American students.<sup>74</sup> Other important community institutions nearby included the historic Delaware Avenue and Friendship Baptist churches.

Redevelopment demolished all the existing housing within Area C-1, but left most of the public facilities, schools, and churches in place. The NCPC’s early plans for Area C-1 included such additional municipal facilities as a motor vehicle inspection station, some housing and small commercial developments, and a parochial school and park in its northwest corner near the intersection of Delaware Avenue and I Street. Although early plans called for a small number of houses on what became the site of Bethel Pentecostal Temple, no new housing was built within Area C-1. As sections of internal streets were eliminated to assemble a superblock with Half Street SW as its eastern boundary, this planned park grew correspondingly.<sup>75</sup>

Lansburgh Park, which covers roughly half the land in Area C-1, occupies the interior of this superblock created by the closure of K, L, and First streets SW. Its site was assembled from parts of five L’Enfant plan squares, which had development that manifested the area’s historical mix

<sup>72</sup> “Corner of SW Redevelopment Reserved for Parks, Churches,” *Washington Post*, Aug 4, 1960; B2

<sup>73</sup> Ammon, 51.

<sup>74</sup> Ammon, 40.

<sup>75</sup> NCPC, “Land Use Plan – Southwest Urban Renewal Project Area C-1,” Dec 1955 (NPS, file for Reservation 712; and NARA; NCPC, RG 328, Entry 7:545-45-25-15, Box 88 folder “Area C-1”). See also NCPC Aperture Card 24.30/#73.00.

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of industrial, institutional, residential, and undeveloped uses. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, squares West of 645 and 645, on the south side of I Street, mingled small brick houses with a smaller number of frame houses. In Square 593 on the south side of K Street, the proportions of wood to brick construction were reversed, and a large tract lay vacant in its northwest corner. East of First Street, two enormous gas holders covered most of Square 647. The land south of L Street remained largely vacant until the construction of the Anthony Bowen School in 1930. Just north of M Street, the original route of First Street jogged sharply west to avoid the former James Creek Canal.



Lansburgh Park Area, 1960 (Baist, with annotations). The Lansburgh Park site is shown as its original squares. The Capitol Park Site was not fully developed until 1963. The former Hoover Playground is at the lower center and the Randall Recreation Center is at the upper right corner.

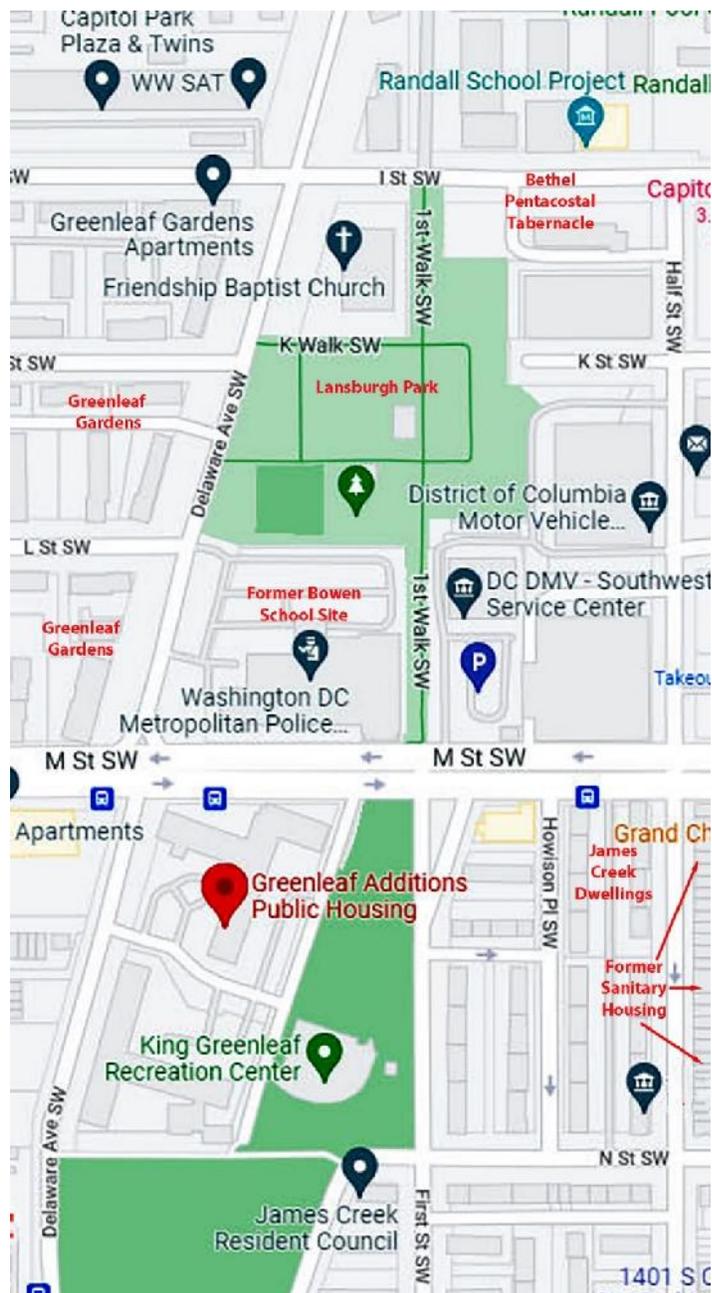
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Lansburgh Park's current configuration, with its full street closures, first appeared in a plan from 1960.<sup>76</sup> Today, the park adjoins the Greenleaf Gardens Public Housing complex to the west and south, the James Creek Homes and former sanitary housing duplexes to the southeast, and the Randall Junior High School campus to the north.



Lansburgh Park and surrounding area in 2021. White rectangle denotes central pavilion area. Green rectangle shows dog park and basketball courts. (Google Maps)

<sup>76</sup> NCPC, "Urban Renewal Plan for Southwest Urban Renewal Project Area C-1," (undated but after 1965) (NCPC); "Corner of SW Reserved for Schools, Churches," *Washington Post*, Aug. 4, 1960, B2.

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## Planning a Community Park

Lansburgh Park is a community park for an area traditionally underserved by recreational facilities. Although RLA documents sometimes referred to its location as “Southwest Neighborhood Park,” the park had “Lansburgh” in its name nearly from its conception. This was intended as a tribute to Mark Lansburgh, department store owner and first chair of the RLA, who died in 1953. In recommending the name to NPS, RLA director John Searles noted: “Mr. Lansburgh had a great interest in this park and was instrumental in keeping urban renewal going when no public funds were available for the agency.”<sup>77</sup> Lansburgh’s widow offered to fund a drinking fountain for the park in his memory.<sup>78</sup>

In 1956, the planned park was described as “adjacent to the Anthony Bowen Elementary School for use by the school and Project Area C-1, but also larger adjoining neighborhoods.”<sup>79</sup> Although it was also across I Street from the Randall Junior High School and Recreation Center, Lansburgh Park was to serve a wider purpose than playground and athletic space. Its function was to be “passive recreation”: a “large, open green space suitable for unorganized recreation, with paved walkways, fountains and pools, comfort station, and large tree plantings.”<sup>80</sup> The estimated cost was \$684,000.<sup>81</sup>

Although land for Lansburgh Park was acquired by the NCPC, the NPS took responsibility for design and construction. The intervening sections of 1<sup>st</sup>, K, and L streets were closed in March 1961.<sup>82</sup> In June 1962, RLA transferred (“donated”) control of the proposed park to NPS “only [for] the uses specified in the...Urban Renewal Plan” and with the requirement that “improvements” would begin within 60 days.<sup>83</sup> The NCPC purchased the private land necessary for the park between 1962 and 1966 for a total assessed value of \$223,542.<sup>84</sup> The park’s design

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<sup>77</sup> The recommendation was apparently made soon after his death (see Letter, John R. Searles, Jr., Executive Director, RLA to T. Sutton Jett, Superintendent, NCP, May 8, 1961; DCA; DHCD/RLA Central Files, Box 10 folder “Parks”), and approved by NCPC at its December 1953 meeting; “Mark Lansburgh Dies,” *Washington Post*, Oct 30, 1953, 1.

<sup>78</sup> Not present today.

<sup>79</sup> Paraphrased from Letter, John R. Searles, Jr., Executive Director, RLA, to George Miner, Chairman of Housing Committee, Southwest House, Nov. 7, 1956 (DCA; DHCD/RLA Central Files, Box 10 folder “Parks”).

<sup>80</sup> John R. Searles, Jr., Executive Director, RLA, to George Miner, Chairman of Housing Committee, Southwest House, Nov. 7, 1956

<sup>81</sup> Syd E. T. Scoyer, Acting Director, NCP, to Neville Miller, Chairman, RLA, Aug. 31, 1961 (NPS, file for Reservation 712).

<sup>82</sup> According to all reports, except one source (at NPS, file for Reservation 717) which states that these street closings were approved by the District Government in Sept. 1966 and their transferal to NPS recorded on Aug 21, 1967.

<sup>83</sup> NPS file for Reservation 712.

<sup>84</sup> See papers in the NPS file for Reservation 712 (at NPS), which list all parcels and dates of acquisition. See also minutes of a joint RLA/NCPC/NPS meeting, “Meeting with Planning Commission and National Park Service on Southwest Parks,” Feb. 20, 1962 (DCA; DHCD/RLA Central Files, Box 7 folder “Parks,”) for some of the internal discussion.

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was discussed and approved at CFA meetings in January, February, and April 1964.<sup>85</sup>

CFA papers at the National Archives and Records Administration include a design analysis for the park.<sup>86</sup> The required land had already been acquired by NCPC (“under authority of the Capper-Cramton Act”) and cleared. The NPS had administrative jurisdiction. The CFA papers cite the low income of the neighboring community and the proximity of two recreation centers (Randall and Greenleaf-Hoover) as determining factors in the design of “a large open green space suitable for passive, as opposed to organized recreation.” Primary users would be young children “who need a place to romp and run off steam,” and seniors “who need a place to congregate, meet people, talk, play chess or cards, toss horseshoes, etc.”

The CFA documents state that the existing streets “are all to be closed off and obliterated” and the flat parkland would be shaped by “a combination of shade and flowering trees, walks, bollards w/chain, and sculptured earth forms.” A plaza and greensward “are infamed [sic] on three sides by the grove of trees which is raised approximately three feet and on the other by large shade trees, walk and bollards. Nestled behind the sculptured earth forms is the pre-school play area, away from the hub-bub of the plaza and off the major flow of pedestrian travel.” A list of activities for the proposed plaza ranges from conversation groups and card games to art shows, bazaars, and band concerts. “The visual impact of the Park from the streets is mainly decorative. Many flowering trees floating beneath a canopy of large shade trees give the area a feeling of casualness and calm Behind a sculpted berm near Delaware Avenue was a Mother-Supervised Play Area with benches (cleared in a renovation that took place in 1979).<sup>87</sup>

NPS’s “Design Criteria – Modular Plaza Structure” described a variety of modernist structures that enhanced the park. The centerpiece of its plaza would be a:

structure...composed of a gently arching roof standing on four steel pipe columns...The roof will be fabricated from structural steel shapes and bolted to the columns for easy demountability. The roof framing will be covered with a wood covering to reduce the harshness of cold steel. This structure will then be covered with flat sheets of colored fiberglass bent to the dimensions of the roof<sup>88</sup>...The columns are larger in size than are structurally necessary because of aesthetics rather than strength.”

This pavilion was to be “be light in appearance and...removable for access to utility lines [under

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<sup>85</sup> Skillman’s beautiful drawings of the landscaping, and the design of the structures, as well as photos and a site plan of the existing conditions, will be found in the CFA files at NARA (see note 57). An extensive set of plans for both the original design and its 1979 renovation are at DDOT (Cabinet 17/drawer 8). These also give the names of other NCP staff who worked on the project.

Unless otherwise noted, all information here supplied by Phyllis (Mrs. LeRoy) Skillman.

<sup>86</sup> CFA, “Design Analysis – Southwest Neighborhood Park (Lansburgh),” undated but probably 1964 (NARA; CFA, RG 66, Entry 7A Central Files 1920-86, Box 8 “City Development – Parks – Eastland Gardens to Parkways & Highways”).

<sup>87</sup> See the plans at DDOT (Cabinet 17/drawer 8).

<sup>88</sup> No such coverings are apparent today. The structures were fabricated by Tubular Products, Inc. of Souderton, Pennsylvania, according to their design plans at DDOT (Cabinet 17/drawer 8).

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the former streets],” as well as “rugged enough to withstand the vandalism that occurs in parks throughout the district [sic].” Lighting (at the top of the columns), park furniture, and trash receptacles were all to be of standard elements.

Lansburgh Park’s configuration thus blends Southwest’s traditional and modernist personae. The vanished blocks of First and K streets are recalled by named walkways that trace their axes. Furthermore, neighborhood life in Old Southwest was not restricted to its streets; vital and distinct communities formed along the alleys at the core of many blocks. Although Lansburgh Park fronts on the 1000 block of Delaware Avenue and reaches I and M streets along the narrow First Street Walk, it is otherwise surrounded by buildings. By occupying the block’s core, the park evokes the interiority of Southwest’s vanished L’Enfant squares and their communal life. Pavilions similar to those in Lansburgh Park were proposed for several other public spaces in Southwest, including the Waterfront Parks and the 10<sup>th</sup> Street Overlook. However, after the recent elimination of the Waterfront Parks’ structures, only the Lansburgh Park pavilions remain. The elegant Daniel Kiley-designed pavilions at Capitol Park No. 1 (on 4<sup>th</sup> Street between G and H) were demolished in 2003.<sup>89</sup> Southwest’s private spaces with pavilions include the Capitol Park building at I Street and Delaware Avenue, and the rear garden of the Town Square building on 7<sup>th</sup> Street. Largely because of these pavilions, the Cultural Landscape Foundation added Lansburgh Park to its “What’s Out There” list of significant American-designed landscapes in 2012.<sup>90</sup>

### **Landscape Architect LeRoy Skillman**

Lansburgh Park’s designer was LeRoy D. “Lee” Skillman (1934-2006), a landscape architect with the NPS design office. Skillman had transferred from NPS in Philadelphia in 1962 and left for the General Services Administration four years later. His subsequent career saw him with the state government of Pennsylvania, in private practice, and, most notably, employed with the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.<sup>91</sup>

Skillman’s overriding interests were community-built playgrounds (using natural materials) and historic restoration. His assignments included working on a master plan for the national parks, collaborating with Lady Bird Johnson’s Beautification Task Force, and assisting with the restoration of the historic area of Philadelphia, Arlington House grounds, Washington Circle, and the White House (he once had a dead tree removed, reshaped, and then moved to a local recreation center as play equipment). Skillman’s time with the DC planning office was particularly frustrating to him because of the constant negotiations required with various local players.

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<sup>89</sup> Annys Shinn, “Brave Old World to Its Critics,” *Washington City Paper*, May 2, 2003.

<sup>90</sup> See: <https://tclf.org/landscapes/lansburgh-park>

<sup>91</sup> *Washington Post*, Oct. 3, 2006, B7.

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## Later History

Construction of Lansburgh Park according to these accepted plans commenced in 1964. By the following year its “fanciful new play furniture [was] already popular with neighborhood children.”<sup>92</sup>

Over the decades, park features have been added and subtracted. In 1967, “Wishbone House”, a cast concrete structure by local artist Colin Greenly, was mounted on a raised platform at the Mother-Supervised Play Area.<sup>93</sup> The next year, the Committee for a More Beautiful Washington proposed adding an ice-skating rink to the park, but this project was not accomplished.<sup>94</sup> Lansburgh Park saw regular community use,<sup>95</sup> but by 1968 deferred maintenance was taking its toll and the park was described as “rundown”.<sup>96</sup> NPS transferred the park to the DC Government on December 14, 1972.<sup>97</sup>

In 1979, renovations designed by Herman C. Vann of the city’s Department of General Services eliminated the screened Mother-Supervised Play Area, including the Wishbone House structure and added play equipment.<sup>98</sup> In 1986, a small strip of the southern end was converted to parking space.<sup>99</sup> In the 2000s, planners noted that “the community finds that what makes Lansburgh unique is the simplicity of its design, which affords the most flexibility for family- and community-gathering events.”<sup>100</sup> In 2013-14, a number of features including community gardens and a dog exercise area were added to the park. In 2020-21, Lansburgh Park underwent another renovation, which updated some features for the local community’s use – such as the addition of new light fixtures and tables and benches in the pavilions – but respected the park’s original design and integrity.

## Conclusion

The building of Lansburgh Park represents the confluence of the social forces that transformed Washington in the 1950s and 1960s. The park is an important component of the redevelopment program which transformed the Southwest cityscape and served as a model for other urban renewal projects across the country. It was also a product of the era of desegregation. Lansburgh Park served surrounding areas that included racially integrated middle-class developments, like

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<sup>92</sup> RLA Annual Report 1965, 3. This play furniture is gone.

<sup>93</sup> William Shumman. “Art Funds a Happy Playground Home,” *Washington Post*, Nov. 30, 1967, B3. A duplicate structure, installed at the same time, can be seen in Georgetown’s Rose Park. (See the plans at DDOT; Cabinet 17/drawer 8).

<sup>94</sup> Meryle Secrist. The ‘Jet Set’: Three New Fountains Dedicated,” *Washington Post*, Dec. 18, 1968, D6.

<sup>96</sup> Cordelia Ruffin. “Southwest Self Help: ‘It’s Beautiful to See It Happen,’” *Washington Post*, May 26, 1968, G4; “Art Fair to Open Summer in Parks,” *Washington Post*, May 30, 1970, 63; Secrist, *Washington Post*, Dec 18, 1968.

<sup>97</sup> NPS, File for Reservation 712; another paper says Dec 18, 1973 (and cites Land Record #704).

<sup>98</sup> See the plans at DDOT (Cabinet 17/drawer 8).

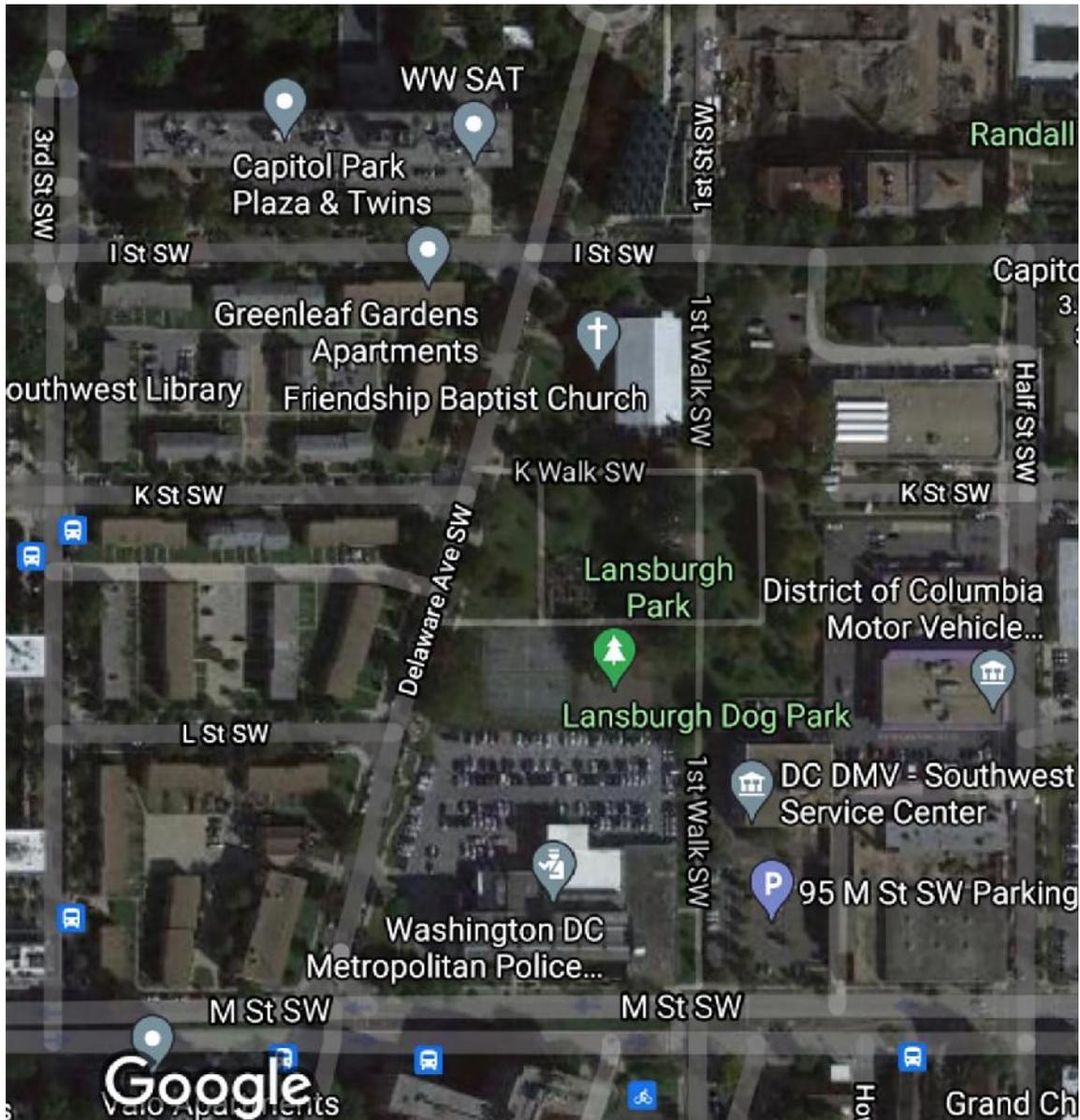
<sup>99</sup> NPS, File for Reservation 712.

<sup>100</sup> Capital Space Partners, 5. New benches and tables have been installed in the plaza.

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Capitol Park. Yet it was also an effort to address the historic undersupply of recreational facilities accessible to the predominantly African American surrounding neighborhood. While Southwest redevelopment produced inequitable results, the building of Lansburgh Park was one step in the direction of equity.



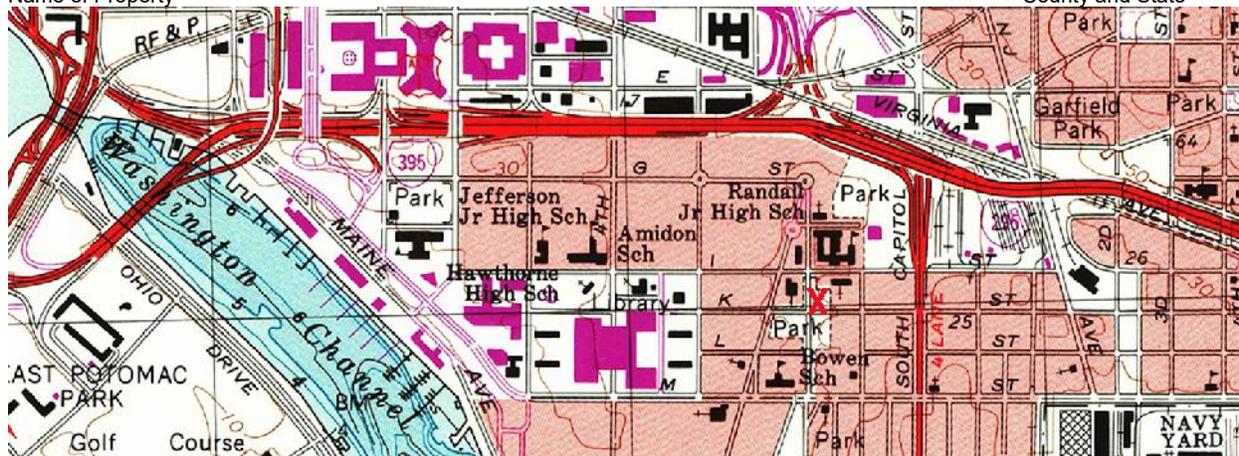
Lansburgh Park and Environs, 2021. (Google Maps)

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USGS Map, Southwest Washington excerpt showing Lansburgh Park. (USGS Map)

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Office of Urban Renewal (OUR)

Other agencies' materials referenced singly in the notes.

### Repositories

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Commission of Fine Arts files (CFA)  
National Capital Planning Commission files (NCPC)\*  
D. C. Archives (DCA)  
D. C. Dept. of Transportation/Dept. of General Services plans archives (DDOT)\*\*

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D. C. Dept. of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, Office of the Surveyor (DCRA)  
National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)  
Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division (LOC)  
Martin Luther King Library, Washingtoniana Division (MLK)  
Historical Society of Washington, Kiplinger Library (HSW)  
Wallace Roberts & Todd (WRT)

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<https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/bathing-suits-and-civil-rights-integrating-the-districts>

National Park Service, Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS DC-858, Southwest Washington Urban Renewal Area), written by Francesca Russello Ammon:  
[http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/habs\\_haer](http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/habs_haer)

### Interviews/Private Communications

All with Hayden Wetzel unless noted otherwise.

Darwina Neal, (Chief, Cultural Resource Preservation Services, NCR/NPS, (retired), interview with HMW, January 2012.

Don Olson, (Principal, Sasaki Associates), interviews with HMW, September-October 2011.

Philip Minervino, (Senior Associate at, Sasaki Associates, (retired), interview with HMW, October 2011.

Phyllis W. Skillman, (widow of LeRoy D. Skillman, former landscape architect, NCP/NPS), interviews with HMW, July-August 2011, April 2020.

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Stanley M. Sherman, (Chief of Project Design, RLA, (retired), interviews with HMW, July-August 2011.

Ron McBee (Southwest resident and ANC commissioner), interview with HMW, November 2011.

William H. Roberts, (Partner, WRT, (retired), with Neighbors of Southwest Duck Pond, September 2010, and with HMW, August 2011.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 4.705

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Latitude: 38.878121 | Longitude: -77.012338 |
| 2. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |
| 3. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |
| 4. Latitude:           | Longitude:            |

**Or**  
**UTM References**

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Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |          |          |           |
|----------|----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Park faces Delaware Avenue SW from K to L streets; an “interior” space (hidden behind buildings on Delaware Avenue north of K Street) stretches from I Street to L Street displacing the former line of First Street SW and extending about one-half block eastward. A walkway continues southward along the former First Street to M Street. Some of this area, particularly that facing Delaware Ave, has been redesigned and contains non-contributing elements to this nomination.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundary described above defines the entire park (omitting a strip on the eastern side of the southern walkway now taken by a parking lot).

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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telephone: (202) 783-5144

date: December 17, 2021

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5- or 15-minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

**Photographs**

Image	Subject	Camera Facing	Photographer	Date
1	Park entrance from M Street SW	N	Zachary Burt	7/13/21
2	Walkway from M Street SW showing concrete paving with granite block strips	N	Zachary Burt	7/13/21
3	Fenced dog park in SW section of the park	W	Zachary Burt	7/13/21
4	Lawn section	NW	Zachary Burt	7/13/21
5	Pavilion area showing metal tables, picnic tables, and benches	N	Zachary Burt	7/13/21
6	Walkway along former L Street SW right-of-way showing Greenleaf Gardens townhouses	W	Zachary Burt	7/13/21
7	Central raised "bandstand" pavilion	NW	Zachary Burt	7/13/21
8	Pavilion framing detail with berm in background	NW	Zachary Burt	7/13/21
9	Pavilion area with Friendship Baptist Church and I Street SW in background	N	Zachary Burt	7/13/21
10	Berm and pavilions	SE	Zachary Burt	7/13/21
11	Pavilions from berm	SE	Zachary Burt	7/13/21
12	Pavilion area from berm	E	Zachary Burt	7/13/21
13	Lawn with community gardens	SW	Zachary Burt	7/13/21
14	Entrance from I Street SW	S	Zachary Burt	7/13/21

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<b>15</b>	Lawn and pavement walkway with picnic benches	E	Zachary Burt	7/13/21
<b>16</b>	Delaware Avenue entrance	SE	Zachary Burt	7/13/21
<b>17</b>	Pavilions with metal tables, October 2020	N	Jessica Unger	10/27/20
<b>18</b>	Pavilions under rehabilitation, October 2020	NE	Jessica Unger	10/27/20

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering, and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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Image 1: Park entrance from M Street SW (Zach Burt).

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Image 2: Walkway from M Street SW showing concrete paving with granite block strips (Zach Burt).

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Image 3: Fenced dog park in SW section of the park (Zach Burt).



Image 4: Lawn section (Zach Burt).

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Image 5: Pavilion area showing metal tables, picnic tables, and benches (Zach Burt).



Image 6: Walkway along former L Street SW right-of-way showing Greenleaf Gardens townhouses (Zach Burt).

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Image 7: Central raised "bandstand" pavilion (Zach Burt).



Image 8: Pavilion framing detail with berm in background (Zach Burt).

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Image 9: Pavilion area with Friendship Baptist Church and I Street SW in background (Zach Burt).



Image 10: Berm and pavilions (Zach Burt).

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Image 11: Pavilions from berm (Zach Burt).



Image 12: Pavilion area from berm (Zach Burt).

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Image 13: Lawn with community gardens (Zach Burt).



Image 14: Entrance from I Street SW (Zach Burt).

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Image 15: Lawn and pavement walkway with picnic benches (Zach Burt).



Image 16: Delaware Avenue entrance (Zach Burt).

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places**  
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Image 17: Pavilions with metal tables, October 2020 (Jessica Unger).



Image 18: Pavilions under rehabilitation, October 2020 (Jessica Unger).