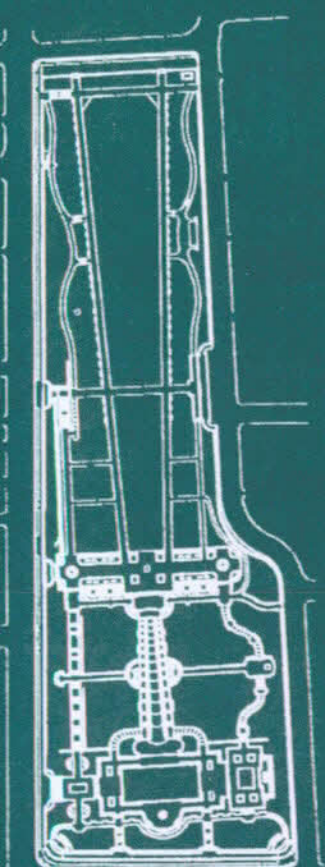
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Meridian Hill Park
Cultural Landscape Report
Volume 2: Treatment

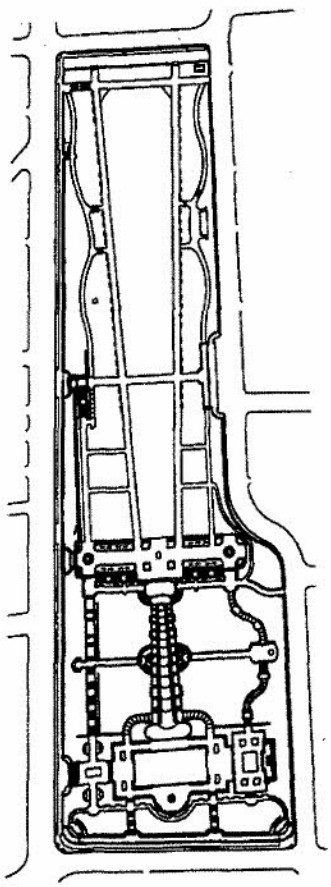


National Park Service - National Capital Region
Contract #: 1443X300094034
architrave, p.c. architects, Washington, D.C.

Color Scans

30 November 2001

Meridian Hill Park
Cultural Landscape Report
Volume 2: Treatment



National Park Service - National Capital Region
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architrave p.c. architects, Washington, D.C.

30 November 2001

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United States Department of the Interior Mission Statement: As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally-owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

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Foreword Overview of Park Cultural Landscape Program

"Over the past fifteen years cultural landscapes have become an integral component of historic preservation in the U.S. and abroad. In turn, the National Park Service (NPS) has come to recognize the significance of cultural landscapes to our national heritage, making the stewardship of these resources an important part of the Service's mission.

"Since at least the 1930's, the NPS has recognized the significance of the landscape in it's [sic] management of historical areas..."[1] and recently it has been recognized that "landscapes are cultural resources because they are a record of our history, our relationship with the natural world, and our ideals of beauty and the quality of life."[2]

---

[1] *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports, 1998.*.
[2] Marie Rust, Regional Director, North Atlantic Region, National Park Service, Boston Massachusetts in "Foreword" of *Cultural Landscape Report for Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, Vol. 2 Landscape Preservation Treatment Recommendations.* 1994.

"Until very recently, however, there were no policies, guidelines, or standards for the preservation and management of cultural landscapes in the system. In 1988, 'cultural landscapes' were formally identified in *NPS Management Policies* as a type of cultural resource..."[3] and in 1996, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* was published.

The recognition of the significance of landscapes as cultural resources has led to Cultural Landscape Reports, a detailed and careful examination process developed by NPS in its role as custodian of a diverse range of sites held in trust for the nation.

"The cultural landscape report (CLR) is the principal treatment document for cultural landscapes. It guides park management decisions regarding treatment and use, and focuses on treating and preserving the physical attributes, biotic systems, and use of a landscape when that use contributes to historical significance. The overriding purpose of the report is to establish a preservation philosophy based on research, inventory, documentation, analysis, and evaluation which provides the foundation for making sound management decisions. Additionally, the information on the historical development, significance, and existing character of a landscape is a valuable tool for enhancing interpretation and maintenance in a park. As such, a CLR is the primary tool for long-term management of a cultural landscape."

Volume 1 of a CLR becomes the broadly accepted reference document for those involved in the resource. Decisions then must be made about *approaches* to management and care of the landscape. These approaches are called "Treatment Alternatives" and are described in Volume 2 of the CLR.

This document is Volume 2 of the Cultural Landscape Report for Meridian Hill Park. It includes the treatment alternatives considered for this park, the preferred approach selected, with recommendations for implementation. An appendix at the end of this document includes definitions of specific terminology used throughout these documents.

Preparation of the Cultural Landscape Report for Meridian Hill Park was contracted in October 1995 with a final draft of Volumes 1 and 2 released to the public in late 1999 and presented in various public forums in late 1999 and early 2000 with comments solicited and received from the public, which have been addressed in this volume.

This volume generally reflects conditions at the park during the preparation of this report, 1995 to 1999.

[3] *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports.*

Executive Summary

Volume 1 of the Meridian Hill Park Cultural Landscape Report traces the design and construction history of the park and reports on the existing conditions of the park's plantings and structures.

Part A of this volume, Volume 2 of the Meridian Hill Park Cultural Landscape Report, describes the alternatives possible for treatment of Meridian Hill Park. Only *preservation* and *restoration*, as defined in *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* are appropriate for this site. *Preservation* would stabilize the site at its current high level of integrity, doing what is necessary to halt deterioration and repair or replace and maintain historic materials, features and plantings. *Restoration* would re-establish the historic appearance of the park as of 1936, the end of its period of significance. The other two possible treatment alternatives, *rehabilitation* and *reconstruction* are not applicable at this site. *Rehabilitation* is appropriate when contemporary uses of a site are very different from the historic ones and would allow the addition of new elements to accommodate those uses. Passive recreation, for which Meridian Hill Park was designed, is a contemporary use that has not changed since the construction of the park. *Reconstruction* is an approach appropriate if substantial portions of a resource are missing. Such is not the case at Meridian Hill Park. For further clarification of these treatment alternatives, refer to Appendix 5.

Part B of this volume presents in detail the recommended primary treatment, *preservation,* selected for the park on the basis of its status as a National Historic Landmark, "...the breadth of its ambition, its remarkable integrity, and the masterful sureness of its design and construction..."[4] Under the umbrella of this primary treatment, contributing features will be repaired or, if warranted, replaced in kind. Preservation as the primary treatment of the park will enhance the quality of visitor experience and ensure the continued use and enjoyment of the park by future generations. *Preservation* was selected because of the remarkable degree of integrity of the park, making extensive restoration unnecessary. Further, *Restoration* of all park planting is impractical because of safety, maintenance, and environmental concerns.

The recommended treatment of the site is organized by treatment units including spatial organization and land use; circulation and universal access; views and vistas; vegetation; structures, furnishings, and objects; mechanical, electrical, plumbing and drainage systems; and sculpture. Priorities for treatment in each unit are established as *critical, important,* and *desirable.*

The major recommendations are summarized below:

•*circulation and universal access:* maintain access to the upper park at 16th and Euclid, sign the accessible route, repair paving that impedes access, and install accessible drinking fountain.

[4]*National Historic Landmark Nomination, Meridian Hill Park* prepared by Ethan Carr. Washington, D.C. October 1993. p. 13-14.

•*vegetation:* develop a preservation planting plan to guide replacement of deteriorated and missing space- and view-defining trees, including understory flowering trees, and space-defining shrubs in the primary areas of the park. These areas include the mall, the great terrace, the cascades, the ascents and hillside gardens, the lower plaza, and the buffer area along W Street.

•*structures, furnishings, and objects:* once methods for concrete repairs and limited replacement in kind are developed, repair/replace all areas of concrete deterioration that are continuing and thus leading to accelerated deterioration or that pose a safety/tripping hazard. It is also critical to determine if the three major areas of settlement/movement in the park are stable or progressive. Remove existing stage; replace with a seasonal version that complies with code requirements and that can be disassembled for storage on the site.

The remarkable concrete in this park includes not only the highly ornamental work such as the urns, water features, and patterned paving, but also the typical paving and walls with their gradations. This quality requires a higher level of craft and expertise for repair and replacement in kind than is generally available. Therefore, any concrete work in this park should be done by specialists in work of this kind.

•*mechanical, electrical, plumbing and drainage systems:* repair and upgrade systems serving the fountains to allow all of them to operate as designed. The repair and/or replacement of all systems whose operation is essential to the preservation of the site and/or necessary to maintain safety is also critical.

•*other:* develop a Preservation Maintenance Plan for the site.

The complete preservation of the park, including all critical, important, and desirable recommendations is estimated in 1999 at approximately eight million dollars.

Part A
Landscape Treatment Alternatives

Introduction

Meridian Hill Park[5], located on Sixteenth Street just north of Florida Avenue, boundary to the L'Enfant monumental plan for Washington, D.C., was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1994 because of its significance as a formal historic designed landscape. As such, it is one of less than twenty historic designed landscapes out of nearly twenty-three hundred National Historic Landmarks.

The Landmark nomination called it "an outstanding accomplishment of neoclassical park design in the United States. Few other public parks of the period match its ambitious scale and intent and few have retained the high level of integrity apparent at Meridian Hill." The nomination continues, "...in addition to the borrowing of formal elements...from specific historic models, [its design] result[s] in a powerful original landscape that serves its unique geographic and social context and evokes the historical landscapes that served as its inspiration." About the concrete work at the site, the nomination says, "Unprecedented at the time, the technological achievement of the park's concrete construction, in addition to the park's design, distinguishes Meridian Hill as a nationally significant historical resource." Finally, the nomination states, "The scope and ambition of Meridian Hill Park sets it apart; the idea of creating a Renaissance villa landscape in the middle of an American city to serve as a public park and cultural institution has no true parallel. The park is perhaps the most ambitious and successful example of neoclassical park design in the United States, and it remains an outstanding physical reminder of the highest ideals of neoclassicism of the early 20th century... The breadth of its ambition, its remarkable integrity, and the masterful sureness of its design and construction single it out for recognition."[6]

Though Meridian Hill Park is an extraordinary historic resource for its craftsmanship and the integrity of its built elements, the planting design has less integrity. For instance, there are numerous design sketches clearly showing the definition of outdoor rooms by plant masses. That definition has been diminished by the loss of many hedges and planting masses.

The park is a site of citywide importance that functions as a neighborhood park as well. This duality, as well as the park's mix of structures and natural elements, creates unusual demands in its management as a cultural resource.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes is a comprehensive model for developing alternatives for action. The following treatment alternatives have been developed within the framework of *preservation, rehabilitation, restoration,* and *reconstruction* defined and elaborated in *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. They are general in nature, to illustrate approach and direction with the understanding that the preferred alternative is developed in detail.

[5]Meridian Hill Park is under the management jurisdiction of Rock Creek Park (ROCR) of the National Capital Region of the National Park Service (NPS).

[6]*National Historic Landmark Nomination, Meridian Hill Park* prepared by Ethan Carr. Washington, D.C. October 1993. p. 13-14.

Preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and *reconstruction* are defined as follows:[7]

Preservation

When the property's distinctive materials, features, and spaces are essentially intact and thus convey the historic significance without extensive repair or replacement; when depiction at a particular period of time is not appropriate; and when a continuing or new use does not require additions or extensive alterations, preservation may be considered as a treatment. Prior to undertaking work, a documentation plan for preservation should be developed.

> *Preservation* is defined as the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of a historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features, rather than extensive replacement and new construction. New exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment; however, the limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a preservation project.

Rehabilitation

When repair and replacement of deteriorated features are necessary; when alterations or additions to the property are planned for a new or continued use; and when its depiction at a particular period of time is not appropriate, rehabilitation may be considered as a treatment. Prior to undertaking work, a documentation plan for rehabilitation should be developed.

> *Rehabilitation* is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features that convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values. Rehabilitation can include the addition of new elements needed to enable contemporary uses, but only if it does not impact the integrity of the historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property.

Restoration

When the property's design, architectural, or historical significance during a particular period of time outweighs the potential loss of extant materials, features, spaces, and finishes that characterize other historical periods; when there is substantial physical and documentary evidence for the work; and when contemporary alterations and additions are not planned, restoration may be considered as a treatment. Prior to undertaking work, a particular period of time, i.e., the restoration period, should be selected and justified, and a documentation plan for Restoration developed.

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[7] *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes.* ed. by Charles A. Birnbaum. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships, Heritage Preservation Services, Historic Landscape Initiative. Washington, D.C. 1996.

Restoration is defined as the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular time by means of the removal of features from other periods of its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a restoration project.

Reconstruction

When a contemporary depiction is required to understand and interpret a property's historic value (including the re-creation of missing components in a historic district or site); when no other property with the same associative value has survived; and when sufficient historical documentation exists to ensure an accurate reproduction, Reconstruction may be considered as a treatment. Prior to undertaking work, a documentation plan for Reconstruction should be developed.

Reconstruction, is defined as the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.

Of these four approaches, only *preservation* or *restoration* are applicable as primary treatments to this park.

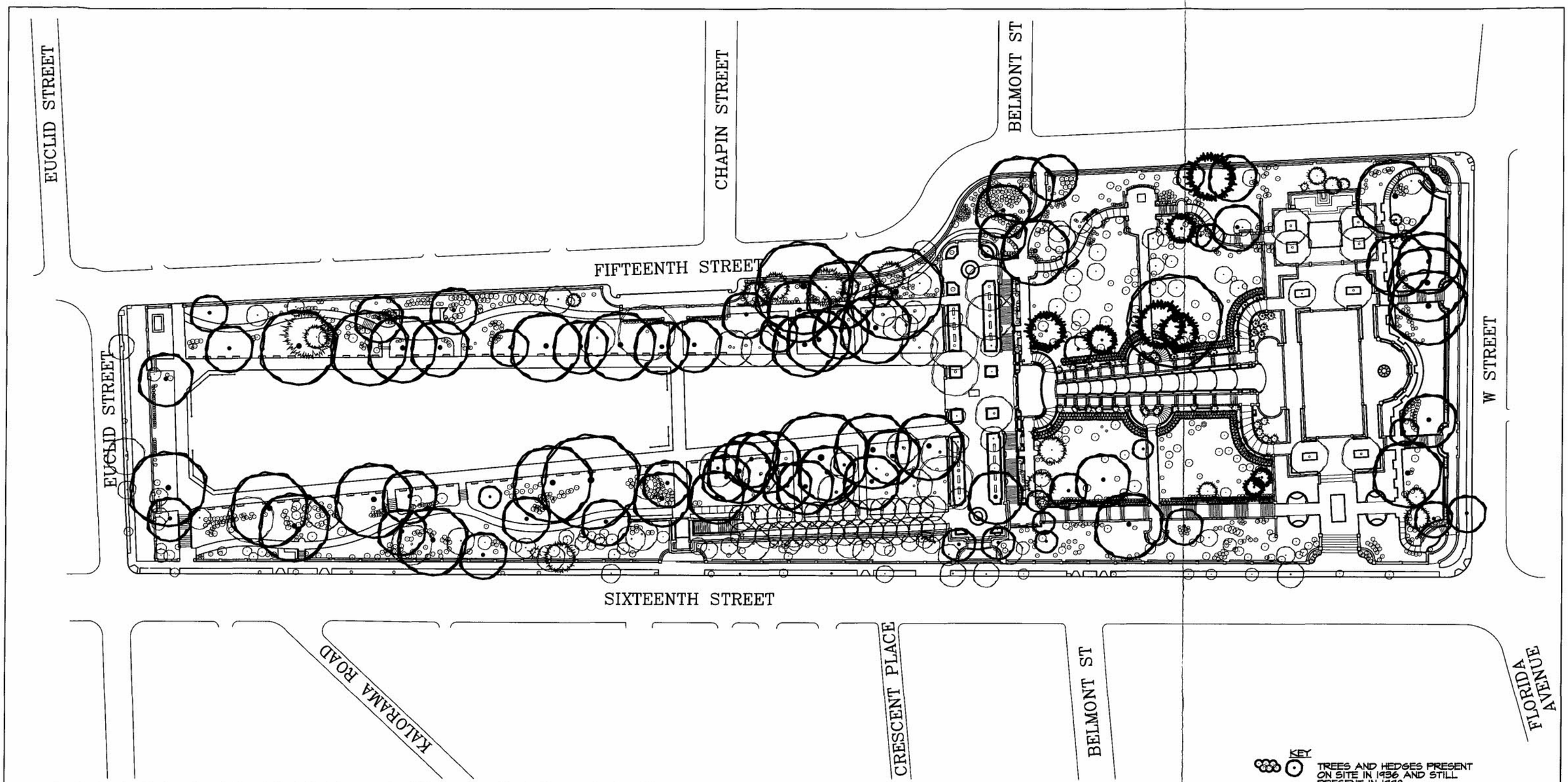
Rehabilitation is not an appropriate strategy, as it is applicable where the need to add materials or structures greatly outweighs the need to protect the historic resource, where there are no viable alternatives for providing the program or use in another manner or at another site, or where the use has substantially changed. None of these conditions apply to this site.

Furthermore, only changes responding to contemporary needs and demands on the park, such as for accessibility or safety, are appropriately considered. Thus, the many modifications to the park as completed in 1936 for which Horace Peaslee lobbied from 1939 through the 1950's, are inappropriate. Over the construction and post-construction years many alternatives for bandstands, different locations for park sculpture including the Joan of Arc statue and Serenity were suggested. Additional sculptures were proposed. There were lighting proposals. Additions, deletions, and changes to planting were suggested. However, as none of these proposals was executed, none should be implemented today since it is the as-constructed park of 1936 that is the basis for the designation of Meridian Hill Park as a National Historic Landmark.

Reconstruction is a strategy appropriate for sites that have lost originally designed and constructed features or substantial parts of those features. The Meridian Hill Park site is largely intact with a high level of integrity, as originally designed and constructed, so comprehensive reconstruction is neither appropriate nor necessary. Reconstruction may be applied to individual elements under another primary treatment alternative and may include replacing missing features or structures with exact replicas of those originally constructed such as drinking fountains and benches, or returning the lodge to its 1924-36 exterior appearance.

Treatment Alternative 1 - *Preservation*

This drawing illustrates existing conditions at Meridian Hill Park, 1998. Under the *Preservation* Treatment Alternative the site would be stabilized, preserved, and maintained as illustrated in this drawing with repairs and replacements made as necessary.



TREATMENT ALTERNATIVE 1: PRESERVATION

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

National Park Service – National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.

Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE: 7/1/99

DRAWN BY: MACS

EXISTING CONDITIONS 1998
MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO. 872 87141

SHEET 1 OF 2

Treatment Alternative 1 - *Preservation*

The *Standards for Preservation* in Appendix 1 govern this approach.

General Concept

The site would be preserved at its current high level of integrity. Preservation of the site requires effort beyond regular maintenance on vegetation and structures. This approach maintains the basic design relationships of vegetative and structural elements, i.e., formal and informal, open and closed, foreground and background. Because of the age of the site, most obvious in some of the mechanical and electrical systems, preservation would require some significant repair or replacement work to these elements to prevent further deterioration and to maintain the water features in operating condition. Preservation would also include interim measures such as localized treatment of concrete to halt deterioration until comprehensive repairs and limited replacement in kind can be done.

The *Preservation* Treatment Alternative does not suggest extensive restoration, repair, or other intervention, but rather emphasizes measures to halt further deterioration. This treatment approach implies that character-defining features of the landscape are intact and may be preserved (as is the case at Meridian Hill Park). The park has few additions since 1936 but suffers from loss of plantings and relatively localized deterioration of structures. As such, it is a good candidate for a preservation approach to prevent further losses.

The park's original land use for passive recreation is intact as designed and constructed and has great integrity.

Spatial Organization, Topography, Circulation, Vistas and Views

Although some definition of spaces as originally completed in 1936 has been diminished due to loss of vegetation, the park's fundamental spatial organization as it exists today would be preserved. Likewise, its existing topography, circulation, vistas and views, unchanged from the original design, would be maintained.

Minor interventions at some walks and entrances to enhance accessibility should be considered.

Views and vistas, both within the site and out of the site have changed considerably from the period of significance. Framing of axial views and termination of views within the site may be re-established with incremental plant replacement.

Vegetation

Existing vegetation would be maintained according to the Landscape Preservation Maintenance Plan, which must be developed. All historic vegetation would be identified and retained. All non-historic vegetation would be reviewed for its consistency with the original design

intent. As plants deteriorate through age, disease, or other forces, they would be replaced with historically appropriate types and forms. Groupings or specimen trees, shrubs and ground covers would be replaced in-kind if identified on the 1936 as-planted plan. If, however, it is determined that original vegetation cannot survive contemporary environmental conditions, whether air quality, lack of sun or shade, or difficulty to maintain, the genus, species, and variety closest to the historic in appearance, i.e., in form, texture, and foliage type, would be substituted and installed in the 1936 planting locations.

Structures, Furnishings, and Objects

The structural elements of the landscape would be preserved in their current essentially intact condition. Prevention of further deterioration of the constructed elements of the park would require some extensive treatment where settlement, efflorescence, and deterioration of elements threaten the site's integrity.

Lodge:
The rehabilitated lodge/pavilion would be retained in its current configuration.

Concrete Structures:
Particular attention would be paid to the relatively few instances of substantial deterioration that will accelerate damage to the structures such as cases where concrete is actually crumbling, all instances of exposed reinforcing steel, and the lip of the basin on the western of the two great terrace fountains. In these cases, immediate stabilization action should be taken: coating of exposed steel with a rust converter and turning off the water at the damaged fountain. This should be done while a comprehensive plan for concrete repair at this site is prepared.

Spaces under the great terrace stairs and adjacent to the lowest fountain basin would be stabilized: water leakage and ventilation issues must be addressed. These spaces may be used as determined by the park.

Play Areas
The historic elements and configurations of the existing play areas would be retained.

Site Furnishings:
Benches: Many benches are missing slats: these and inappropriate replacements would be replaced to match the original materials, sizes, shapes, and finishes. A new attachment system developed to facilitate maintenance could be implemented in this treatment alternative. If it is, the contoured profile of bench slats would be restored on those benches where it has been flattened.

Trash Receptacles: Missing and damaged trash receptacles would be replaced with a single style of receptacle.

Drinking Fountains: All drinking fountains would be maintained in operating condition. An accessible fountain could be added in the location near the lodge where there once was a fountain.

Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing, and Drainage Systems:

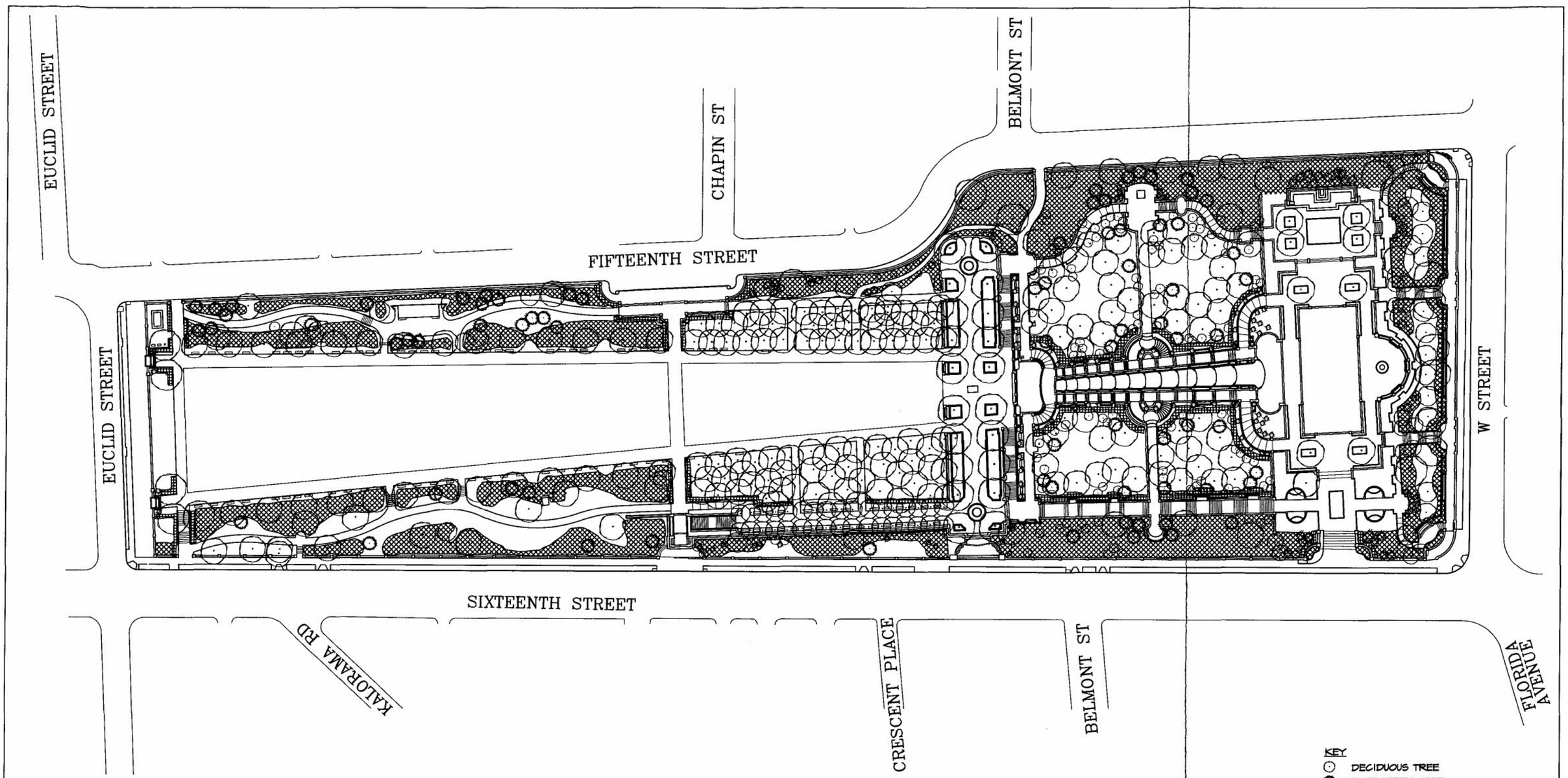
Maintenance and repair of the mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and drainage systems would continue, while the comprehensive repair/replacement plan is prepared for the fountains, lighting, and drainage systems. In addition, all the drainage systems should be cleaned, inlet covers secured with tamper-proof fastenings, and missing inlet covers replaced.

Sculpture

The park's sculpture would be maintained in current, historic locations with continuing maintenance emphasis on removal of graffiti and routine maintenance. Conservation of damaged statues such as *Serenity* and Joan of Arc, or the reproduction of an Armillary Sphere would not occur under this alternative. Removal of *Serenity* to a secure off-site location to prevent further deterioration and damage until she could be restored, or strategies for protection developed, might be considered. However, given the fragility of her current condition, it may be determined that removal of the statue would destroy it.

Treatment Alternative 2 - *Restoration*

This drawing illustrates Meridian Hill Park as constructed in 1936. Under the *Restoration* Treatment Alternative, the site would be preserved in its current condition to halt deterioration until the restoration plan is implemented.



TREATMENT ALTERNATIVE 2: RESTORATION

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

National Park Service – National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.

Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE: 7/1/99

DRAWN BY: MACS

1936
AS BUILT
MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO. 872 87141

SHEET 2 OF 2

Treatment Alternative 2 - *Restoration*

The *Standards for Restoration* in Appendix 3 govern this approach.

General Concept

The site would be restored as closely as possible to its appearance in 1936, established by the National Historic Landmark nomination as the end of its period of significance. Constructed elements would likewise be restored to their 1936 appearance. Vegetation on the site would be restored in accordance with the 1936 planting plan, while considering today's maintenance, security constraints, and environmental conditions.

Stabilization, preservation, and maintenance would be continued during phased implementation, or as funding is sought.

The park's original use for passive recreation is intact as designed and constructed, has great integrity, and will be retained.

Spatial Organization, Topography, Circulation, Vistas and Views

The park's fundamental spatial organization as defined by its constructed elements would be preserved unchanged. Likewise, its existing topography, circulation, vistas and views, unchanged from the original design, would be maintained. The spatial organization, vistas, and views created or reinforced by vegetation would be restored where they have been lost.

Circulation

The added triangular paving section and posts and chains at the mall's sidewalks negatively impact the integrity of the site and would be removed. The problem of service vehicles driving across these corners and damaging quick couplers will have to be addressed in other, non-intrusive ways.

To mitigate the impact of pedestrian traffic on the mall, installing stabilized turf along short-cut paths, more maintenance, more frequent sod replacement, or other approaches to the impact of pedestrian traffic on the mall that would not negatively impact the visual integrity of the grassed mall should be considered.

Access

The entire park would be brought up to the level of readily achievable access as determined in a detailed accessibility study.

Vegetation

All healthy historic vegetation would be identified and retained. Existing vegetation would be maintained according to the Landscape Preservation Maintenance Plan while phased selective vegetation restoration is implemented. To address operational limitations high maintenance plantings, like the extensive original ground cover on the cascade slopes, might not be restored. However, as individual plants in groupings deteriorate through age, disease, or other forces, such need for replacement should be seen as opportunities to replace the entire grouping according to the 1936 planting plan to achieve the uniformity of single age plant materials. Freestanding, specimen, or individual plants would be replaced in kind if in conformance with the as-planted 1936 plan.

Deteriorated, intrusive, non-originally located, or non-original kinds of plants would be replaced per the as-planted 1936 plan using original plant materials or compatible substitutes.

If, however, it is determined that original vegetation cannot survive contemporary environmental conditions, because of air quality, lack of sun or shade, or difficulty to maintain, the genus, species, and variety closest to the historic in appearance, i.e., in form, texture, and foliage type, would be substituted and installed in the 1936 planting locations.

Missing vegetation features, such as character-defining hedges, would be restored according to the 1936 as-planted plan, using historically appropriate plants or compatible substitutes that can withstand current environmental and operational conditions.

Landscape Structures

The landscape structures of the park would be restored where present, replaced in kind where seriously deteriorated, and replicated where missing. Prevention of further deterioration of constructed and restored elements of the park would require extensive work where settlement, efflorescence, and deterioration are threatening the integrity of the site's elements.

Missing elements would be replicated from original construction documents where possible.

Lodge

The lodge/pavilion would be restored to its 1936 exterior appearance with enclosed ends and open center. Although use of the structure would be a management decision, accessible restrooms could be installed in one end, if restrooms are to be included in the park. The other end could be used as an office for park police, volunteers, or other groups as considered appropriate by the park.

Concrete Structures

Complete restoration of all the concrete landscape structures would be undertaken. Stabilization, preservation, and maintenance would continue until comprehensive restoration of the concrete structures actually proceeds. Particular attention would be paid to the relatively few instances of substantial deterioration such as cases where concrete is actually crumbling, all instances of exposed reinforcing steel, and the lip of the basin on the western of the two fountains on the great terrace. In these cases, immediate stabilization action should be taken: coating of exposed steel with epoxy and turning off the water at the damaged fountain.

Interior spaces under the great terrace stairs and adjacent to the lowest fountain basin would be stabilized: water leakage needs to be halted and ventilation issues addressed. These spaces may be used as determined by the park. If management determines that restrooms under the great terrace would be retained for employee use, these facilities should be restored to a useable condition.

Patches and previous repairs that do not match the surrounding concrete would be removed and replaced more accurately.

Play Areas

Restoration of the play areas for sand play is problematic and would require careful study.

It would be inappropriate to remove elements at the Euclid Street play area to convert it to a modern tot-lot because the construction present is original, historic fabric; its historic

use is unchanged, thus eliminating a potential justification for change; and as a contributing part of a National Historic Landmark there is no compelling reason to remove this construction. Finally, the justification for a substantial change to historic fabric, that of a need to respond to contemporary needs that are very different from historic ones, does not exist. Thus, choices for use of the Euclid Street play area for anything but its original use are limited. However, the area's concrete, paving, fence, benches, and hedges could be restored to their original appearance.

The lower plaza sand play areas would be retained in structure, but would not be filled with sand for maintenance and hygiene reasons.

As hedges throughout the park are restored, they would be restored at the Euclid Street play area and at the mid-mall play areas.

Site Furnishings

Many of the secondary structures or site furnishings suffer from lack of integrity.

Benches: Any site the age of this one shows accumulated repair strategies. The original benches had an ingenious system for attaching wood slats to the complexly curved bases. Unfortunately, over time, parts of that original system have been replaced with substitute bolts, nuts, and washers. Also, the original system required removal of the entire wood slat structure to replace a single slat. Either the original system should be fully restored on all the benches and park maintenance personnel trained in its operation and provided with parts, or a new system designed that is consistent with today's maintenance demands.

Likewise, replacement slats or configurations that do not match the material, size, shape, or finish of the historic ones would be replaced.

Many benches are missing slats: these should be replaced with original material and to conform to the curves originally constructed.

Trash Receptacles: There is a variety of trash receptacles at the site. They would all be replaced with a single style. One known historic photograph shows a single trash receptacle of a design not used today by the NPS, but no drawings of that receptacle have been found. Nor is it known if the receptacle shown is a temporary or a permanent one. Unless drawings or more documentary evidence of the receptacles on the site at completion can be located, a single standard receptacle, designed to meet contemporary NPS operational requirements and to be similar to that shown in the historic photo would be used throughout the site.

Drinking Fountains: The original design of the drinking fountains would be replicated. Because the original drinking fountains were not accessible, consideration should be given to providing a new accessible drinking fountain within the lodge, if reconstructed with accessible toilets. Since historically there was no fountain inside the lodge, it would be appropriate to provide one of a contemporary and accessible design there. Having only one accessible drinking fountain at the site is not as minimal as it first appears - there is currently only one drinking fountain on the upper, accessible mall. The fountain missing from in front of the lodge should also be replaced. Should the major interventions necessary for physical accessibility to the lower plaza be undertaken, the question of accessible drinking fountains there could be studied. All the drinking fountains should be maintained in operating condition.

Water Features

Maintenance and repair of the fountain systems should continue, even as a comprehensive plan is prepared for major systems repair and restoration of all original water features.

All extant water features would be returned to operation. In some cases, this would entail significant repair of broken elements or replacement of missing pieces of fountains, such as the lip of the fountain on the great terrace or the fountain in the Sixteenth Street entrance.

Other water features that are operating but leaking because of settlement problems, breaks in basins, or other causes would be repaired.

Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing, and Drainage Systems

Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing Systems

The complete mechanical and electrical systems for the park would be repaired or replaced to return all the water features and lighting to complete operation. Care would be taken with all visible elements to assure they replicate the historic components. Re-wiring and re-piping would be strategized according to a study to analyze how this extensive work can be accomplished without damaging the historic concrete.

Routine maintenance and repair would continue until comprehensive restoration of the mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and drainage systems actually proceeds.

Drainage Systems

Many of the park's original brass drain inlet covers are gone, replaced with punched steel ones. While brass may be impractical because of cost and susceptibility to theft, the punched steel covers should be replaced with new ones of the same configuration as the original, but possibly in cast iron. If vandalism and theft of these elements continues to be a problem, they should be secured with tamper-proof fastenings to allow easy removal by authorized personnel for routine cleaning of trench drains, inlets, and piping.

There has been extensive ad hoc modifying around the drain inlets, reasons unclear. The original construction documents and park maintenance staff should be consulted as to consistent and functional solutions to the drain inlets.

The entire drainage system for the park would be repaired and/or replaced as determined by detailed analysis. Drainage failures caused by earth movement or settlement would be remedied. Sub-surface elements would be replaced only as needed.

Sculpture

The park's sculpture would be maintained in current historic locations and conserved and repaired as necessary. Replication of the Armillary Sphere would be considered.

Part B
Recommended Landscape Treatment

Selecting a Treatment for the Meridian Hill Park Cultural Landscape

Based on the nearly-complete Volume 1 of the Cultural Landscape Report on Meridian Hill Park, which includes the history of the site, the design process, construction, and existing conditions of the park, Treatment Alternatives for the park were developed. The Treatment Alternatives discussed applicability and appropriateness of the four possible approaches of *preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. Rehabilitation* and *reconstruction* were eliminated because of inapplicability. On 25 September 1998 the treatment alternatives, collateral issues of management decisions that impact the built and vegetative elements of the site, additional study needed, and general recommendations were presented to the Superintended of Rock Creek Park and the Regional Director, National Capital Region, National Park Service.

After discussion of the various alternatives, it was agreed that *Restoration* should be the recommended treatment for the park. In fact, it was generally agreed, since Meridian Hill Park had such great integrity, we should make every effort to restore it. Consequently, the July 1, 1999 Final Draft of Volume 2 of the CLR was written based on this assumption.

On January 27, 2000, this recommended treatment was presented at a public meeting to which various neighborhood, citywide and national citizen, historic preservation, and other professional design constituency groups were invited. This meeting was followed by a 60-day public comment period.

After full consideration both of concerns expressed at that meeting and subsequent written comments, it was felt that the most important consideration was to preserve the park and its current uses. Thus, it was decided that the primary treatment of the park should be *Preservation*. Under the umbrella of this primary treatment, individual contributing elements would be stabilized, repaired, replaced in kind, and maintained to enhance the historic integrity of the park. *Preservation* was selected because of the remarkable degree of integrity of the park, making extensive restoration unnecessary. In addition, complete restoration of all park planting is impractical because of safety, maintenance, and environmental concerns.

Basis in Integrity, Significance, Period of Significance, and Existing Conditions

Significance and Integrity

Meridian Hill Park, located on Sixteenth Street just north of Florida Avenue, boundary to the L'Enfant monumental plan for Washington, D.C., was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1994 because of its significance as a formal historic designed landscape. As such, it is one of less than twenty historic designed landscapes out of nearly twenty-three hundred National Historic Landmarks.

The Landmark nomination called it "an outstanding accomplishment of neoclassical park design in the United States. Few other public parks of the period match its ambitious scale and intent and few have retained the high level of integrity apparent at Meridian Hill." The nomination continues, "...in addition to the borrowing of formal elements...from specific historic models, [its design] result[s] in a powerful original landscape that serves its unique geographic and social context and evokes the historical landscapes that served as its inspiration." About the concrete work at the site, the nomination says, "Unprecedented at the time, the technological achievement of the park's concrete construction, in addition to the park's design, distinguishes Meridian Hill as a nationally significant historical resource." Finally, the nomination states, "The scope and ambition of Meridian Hill Park sets it apart; the idea of creating a Renaissance villa landscape in the middle of an American city to serve as a public park and cultural institution has no true parallel. The park is perhaps the most ambitious and successful example of neoclassical park design in the United States, and it remains an outstanding physical reminder of the highest ideals of neoclassicism of the early 20th century... The breadth of its ambition, its remarkable integrity, and the masterful sureness of its design and construction single it out for recognition."[1]

Period of Significance

The acquisition and construction period of Meridian Hill Park, from 1910 to 1936, is the park's period of significance in accordance with the definition of *period of significance* as the time period in which the property achieved the qualities that make it eligible for the National Register or other recognized designation.

Existing Conditions

While the integrity of the site is very high with almost all of the original structures, furnishings, and objects intact and in place, and with its original spatial organization intact, the planting design has less integrity. For instance, numerous design sketches, prepared for the park over

[1] *National Historic Landmark Nomination, Meridian Hill Park* prepared by Ethan Carr. Washington, D.C. October 1993. p. 13-14.

a twenty-year period clearly show how the plant massing gave definition to individual spaces or outdoor rooms. That definition has been diminished by the loss of many hedges and planting masses.

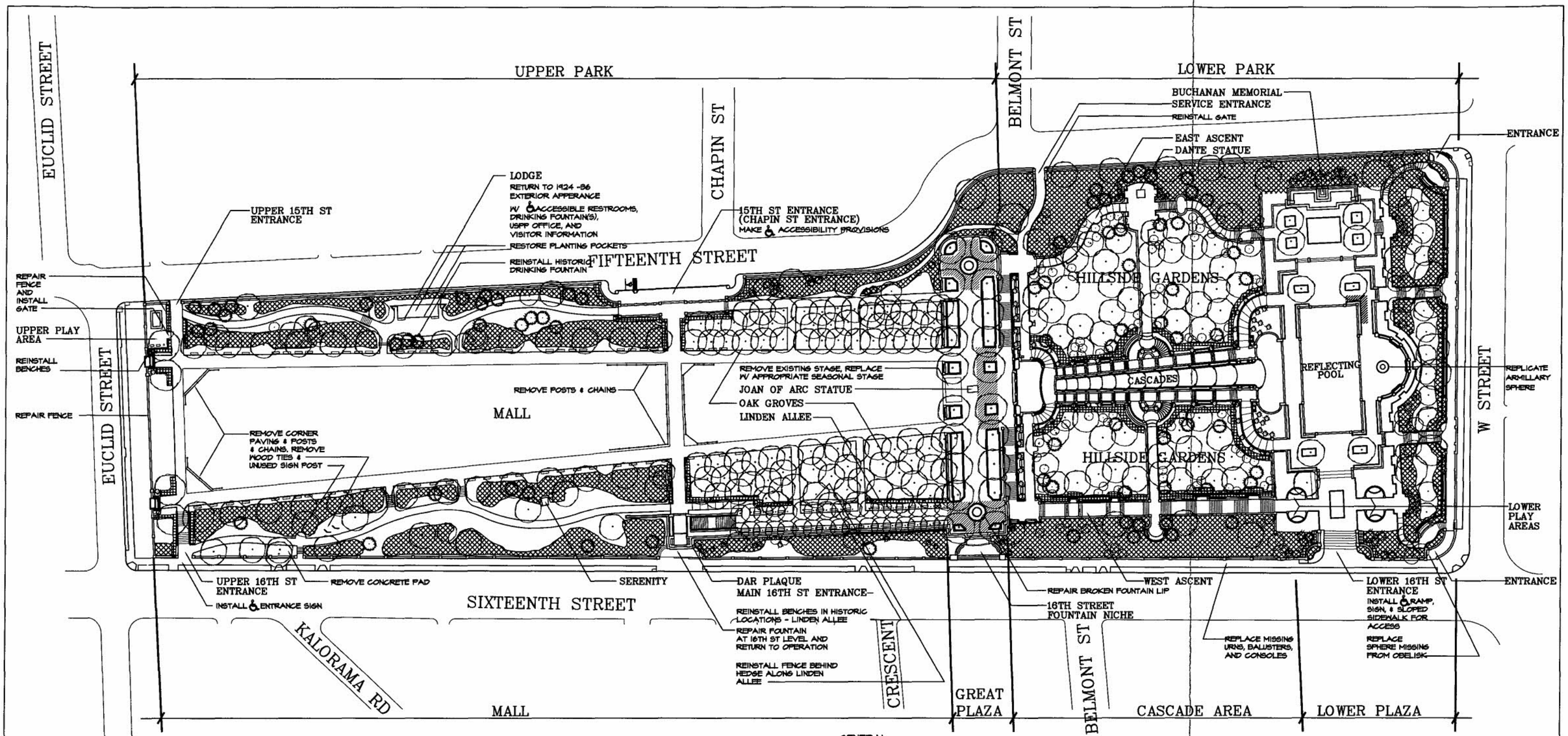
Likewise, there are numerous aspects of the structures, furnishings, objects, and sculpture that have suffered degradation from time, weather, and use. While the NPS has maintained most of the water features in operating condition, the water jets are less high and it is not possible to operate all the features at once because of constriction of pipes. Portions of the site drainage systems appear not to be functioning. Site paving needs attention as do various parts of the concrete structures. The sculpture on the site is generally in good condition except for the Armillary Sphere, missing altogether; the Serenity statue, which is in poor condition; and Joan of Arc, missing her sword, and her horse that is missing part of his bridle.

Please refer to Volume 1 of the Cultural Landscape Report for detailed descriptions of the park's existing conditions.

Phasing

Funding realities suggest that the preferred treatment alternative of *Preservation* is unlikely to be implemented either all at once or immediately. Likewise, some aspects of preservation of the park will require preliminary efforts such as detailed study and analysis of methods for repairing the concrete and of the existing mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and drainage systems, all investigations beyond the scope of a CLR. Therefore, the preservation of the entire park will be incremental and much of the intervening action taken at the park will entail the maintenance of existing intact structures and vegetation.

Under any funding scenario, however, the phases of treatment must parallel the ability to maintain them. For example, shrub beds or hedges that require extensive pruning would not be planted until funds and trained staff are available to maintain them.



LANDSCAPE TREATMENT PLAN: PRESERVATION

GENERAL:

- INSTALL TOPSOIL & SOD AS REQ'D
- REPLACE DETERIORATED OR MISSING HISTORIC PLANTINGS AS PRACTICAL
- REPAIR, REPLACE, AND MAINTAIN FOUNTAIN MECHANICAL, ELECTRICAL, AND PLUMBING SYSTEMS
- REPAIR ALL SUBSURFACE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS
- REPAIR EXTG WATER SUPPLY SYSTEMS
- REPLACE ALL EXTG TRASH RECEPT. W/ COMPATIBLE TYPE
- REPAIR AND REPLACE RECESSED WALK AND STEP LIGHTS
- REPAIR AND REPLACE WOOD SLAT BENCHES THROUGHOUT PARK
- MAINTAIN SCULPTURE IN PLACE AND CONSERVE AND REPAIR AS NECESSARY
- REPAIR ALL CONCRETE
- PERFORM ALL NECESSARY REPAIRS IN SPACES UNDER GREAT TERRACE STAIRS AND AT BASE OF CASCADES FOR OPERATIONAL USE

KEY

- DECIDUOUS TREE
- EVERGREEN TREE
- SHRUB MASS
- HEDGE
- AREA OF SETTLEMENT TO BE REPAIRED

50 25 0 25 75
SCALE IN FEET

MERIDIAN HILL PARK

National Park Service – National Capital Region
15th, 16th, Euclid, and W Streets, NW.
Rock Creek Park, Washington D.C.

Contract #: 1443CX300094034
Architrave Architects, P.C., Washington D.C.

Survey prepared by Greenhorne & O'Mara, Greenbelt, MD

DATE: 7/1/99

DRAWN BY: MACS

LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION PLAN
MERIDIAN HILL PARK

DRAWING NO. 872 87141

SHEET 1 OF 1

Recommended Landscape Treatment

The *Preservation* Treatment Alternative, as described, accepts Meridian Hill Park as it is, sustaining its form, integrity, and materials to prevent further losses to its structures and vegetation. Under this approach, stabilization efforts may be undertaken initially, while further research to allow repairs to the structures is done and while funding is sought. *Preservation* is consistent with the importance and national significance of the site.

Preservation is therefore recommended as the primary treatment for Meridian Hill Park. The preservation of the unique structural elements - the hardscape, the water features, the retaining walls and the architectural details - that comprise Meridian Hill Park is paramount to maintaining and caring for this National Historic Landmark. These elements define the site's use, its spatial organization, and its circulation patterns. *Preservation* would address all the structural elements of the site, stabilizing, repairing, and maintaining them as closely as possible to their original appearance at damaged areas.

The preservation approach would also address the space-defining aspects of as much of the as-planted vegetation as possible, with priority given to the main, structure-driven areas of the park. During the long period of the park's development between 1910 and 1936, the original 1920 planting plan, conceived by prominent landscape architect Ferruccio Vitale and revised many times by Irving Payne with input from Peaslee and the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA), was implemented in phases, with each phase of planting adapted and altered to fit the park's evolving architectural design. When the park was dedicated in 1936, the trees, shrubs, and ground covers enhanced and further delineated Meridian Hill's strong architectural character.

While less directly visible, infrastructure such as power, lighting, plumbing, drainage, and the water feature systems must be repaired, replaced, and maintained as needed to prevent damage to the historic fabric and to allow elements of the park to operate as they did historically. Issues such as settlement must be addressed.

Accessibility provisions will be made under the *Preservation* approach according to the analysis and evaluation presented in Appendix 4 of Volume 1.

Guided and self-guided tours are recommended for interpretation, both to minimize the visual impact of interpretive elements on the site and to educate more people about the significance of this historic designed landscape.

Preservation Treatment Recommendations

Various approaches to organizing a site into parts for maintenance, operation, or preservation can be taken. Sometimes the design of the site itself suggests units: natural wooded areas separate from formal designed areas. In the case of Meridian Hill Park, the unique nature of the site as an intensely developed design with a great deal of both vegetation and structure packed into a relatively small area, suggests treatment units by category rather than by park area. These categories are generally the same used in Volume 1 of the Park's CLR: spatial organization and land use; circulation and universal access; views and vistas; vegetation; structures, furnishings, and objects; mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and drainage systems; and sculpture. Some of these categories have sub-categories. All recommendations within each category are organized in a three-tiered priority ranking, as follows:

Critical:

to correct health, safety, and structural problems, to prevent further deterioration, to preserve space-defining elements, to re-establish space definition, or to repair damaged elements. Collateral investigations are essential to guide this work.

Important:

but not highest priority, including removal of non-original elements (like corner paving), limited replacement of missing elements, and collateral investigations

Desirable:

when feasible, such as replication of original elements (like the drinking fountains that are present and functioning but not the original design, replacement paving that is present and functioning but not consistent with the original, or replacement of all trash receptacles with a compatible design)

The above are recommended priorities. However, some actions may be implemented before others because of funding and operational considerations.

A further way to understand the park and the priorities of its preservation is to see it as *structure driven.* In other words, because the constructed elements shape, focus, and organize the park, their design largely determines what are the most critical areas of the park. Thus, the park may be seen as comprising two distinct character areas: the primary being the formally-defined portions where structure and vegetation are a highly integrated whole and the plantings are essential elements of the spatial and architectonic intentions of the design. These are the mall, the great terrace, the cascades, the ascents and hillside gardens, and the lower plaza. This intensely-designed core is bounded on its east and west sides by less formal, more naturalistic *edges* or *borders*, forming zones of secondary importance. The trees between the lower plaza and W Street are part of the primary zone because of their important space-defining function for the lower plaza.

There are a number of management decisions that impact the park but that are not strictly

physical fabric or vegetation issues. These decisions affect many of the specifics of the preservation of the park (for instance, the decision to provide public toilets at the park necessitates providing accessible restrooms in the lodge) and have been made within the context of the primary treatment.

Finally, under the preservation treatment, as any element is replaced because it is at the end of its useful life, such as drinking fountains, or plants, it should either be replaced in-kind, if it is original fabric, or according to the original design. This replacement would occur as cyclic maintenance, rather than according to the priority ranking above.

Spatial Organization and Land Use

•In addition to the current uses of the site implied by the original park design, which include passive recreation such as walking, jogging, sitting, reading, picnicking, frisbee playing, informal play, sunbathing, and other individual recreational activities, the park will consider ways to add more programmed minimal impact activities to attract greater numbers of people from the neighborhood and whole city, and to help foster a sense of safety by use. Additional activities implied by the original design are particularly desirable. Concerts are an excellent, historically appropriate use in the park that can take place on a portable stage with no threat to the architectural and visual integrity of the park. Life-sized checker or chess matches could be held on the chessboard in the lower plaza. Other similar activities may also be considered. Interpretive walking tours of the park would be both appropriate and desirable to explain the significance of the park to visitors.

•Rock Creek Park will work with the community to explore opportunities for more contemporary tot-lot, playground, and other active recreational opportunities at other nearby sites such as the Girard Street playground. Off site tot-lot and playground opportunities are more appropriate for children and play for several reasons. Because the only vehicular access to the upper level of the park is located next to the Euclid Street play area, this traffic creates a safety hazard for children. The preservation treatment guidelines preclude the re-establishment of the hedge-enclosed grassed mid-mall play areas. Finally, none of the historic play areas could be developed to contemporary expectations without unacceptable impacts on the park resources.

Circulation and Universal Access

As part of the development of a recommended landscape preservation treatment, there have been numerous meetings and discussions with NPS staff and management about specifics.[2]

Because all the work that is anticipated at this site only involves the treatment of existing elements, it is not believed that the requirements for handrails and their configurations apply to this site.

[2] One such meeting was held at the park on 2 February 1999 with Dave Park, National Park Service Accessibility Program Coordinator, Stanley Briscoe, National Capital Region Accessibility Coordinator and Architect, Daniel Hodgson, Darwina Neal, and Judith Capen where providing access to the park was discussed. The approach discussed here was presented to the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent and has received their approval.

Critical:

It is critical to maintain the access currently possible to the site while also doing the relatively modest things that will maintain and improve accessibility to the site.

•The park will maintain access to the upper park at the corner of Sixteenth Street and Euclid, one of the park's major entrances. The park will install signage identifying the wheelchair accessible route as part of the interpretive and signage program currently in process (Sketch, SK-1).
•The park will continue to provide interim repairs to deal with the accessibility impediments of heaved pavement joints until permanent pavement repairs are made.
•An accessible drinking fountain will be installed at the current location of the upper park drinking fountain. This drinking fountain will be replaced with a replication of the original design drinking fountain when the rest of the drinking fountains in the park are replaced with replications (Sketch, SK-2).

Important:

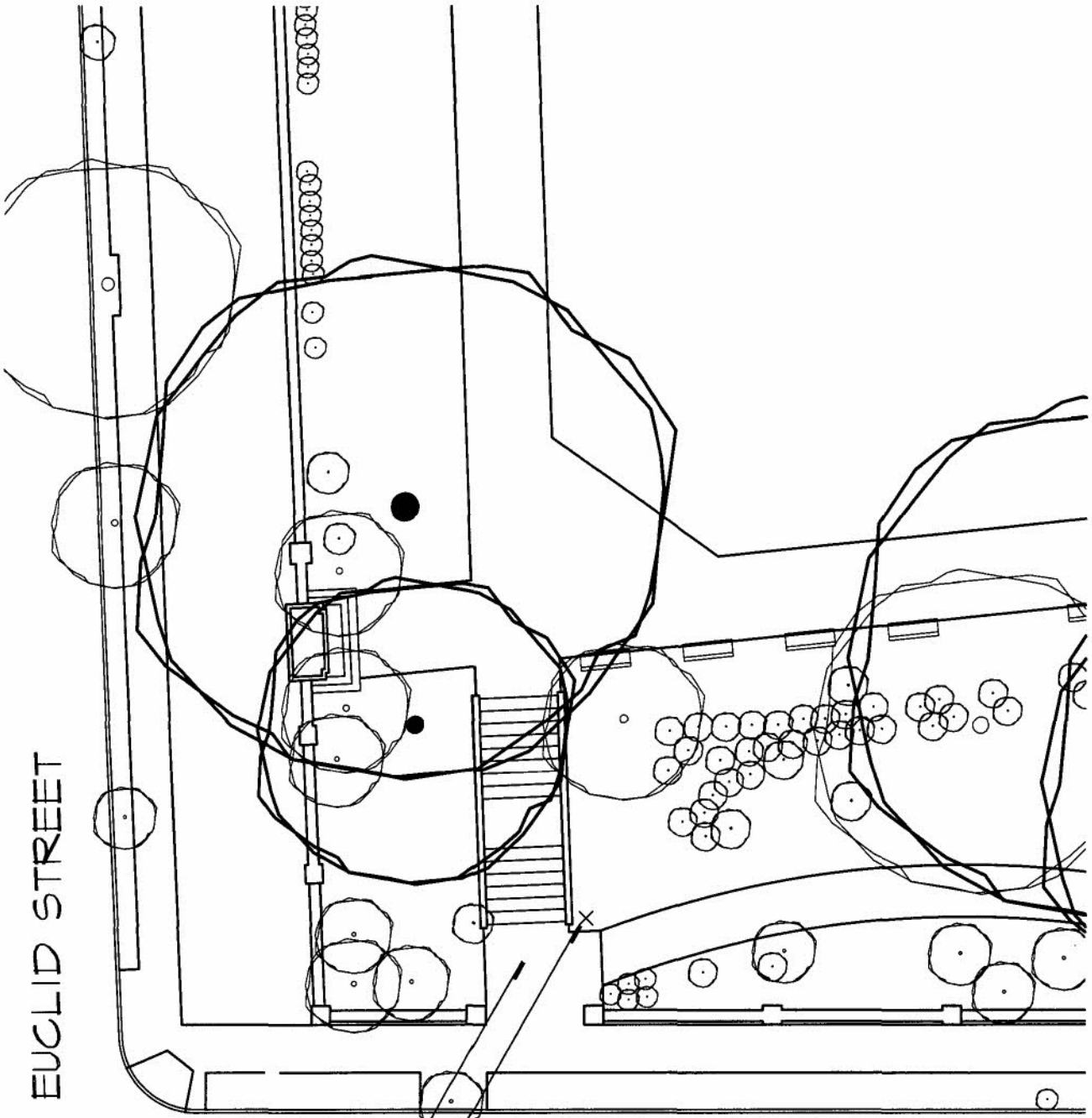
The following accessibility interventions should be made:

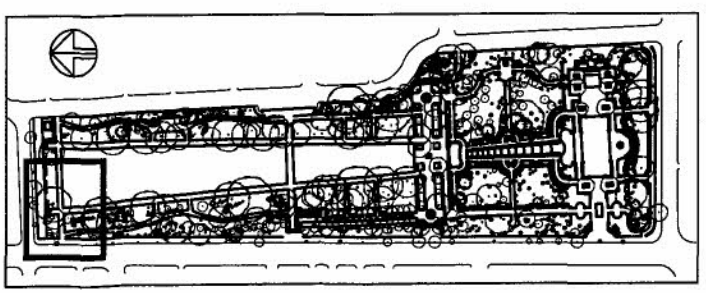
•The park has identified returning the lodge to its 1924-36 exterior appearance to be a high priority. The restored lodge would have accessible restrooms, an accessible drinking fountain, a U. S. Park Police office, and interpretive opportunities (Sketch, SK-3).

The existing inaccessible restrooms under the great terrace will be closed to the public once new and accessible restrooms are available in the restored lodge.
•The park will work with the District of Columbia government to designate a space at the Chapin Street entrance as an accessible parking space, and install a curb cut and ramp at that entrance (Sketch, SK-4).
•The park will install a ramp at the Sixteenth Street entrance to the lower plaza and a ramped sidewalk to the lower plaza itself to provide access to the best-known, most characteristic view of the park, up the cascades, (Sketch, SK-5).
•Appropriate identifying signage will be added as each provision is made.

Views and Vistas

The National Park Service will work with adjacent landowners to ameliorate the blocked major view to the south. Strategies may include purchasing the building to the south, encouraging decreased height in a new structure, obtaining a scenic easement, and removal of satellite dishes.



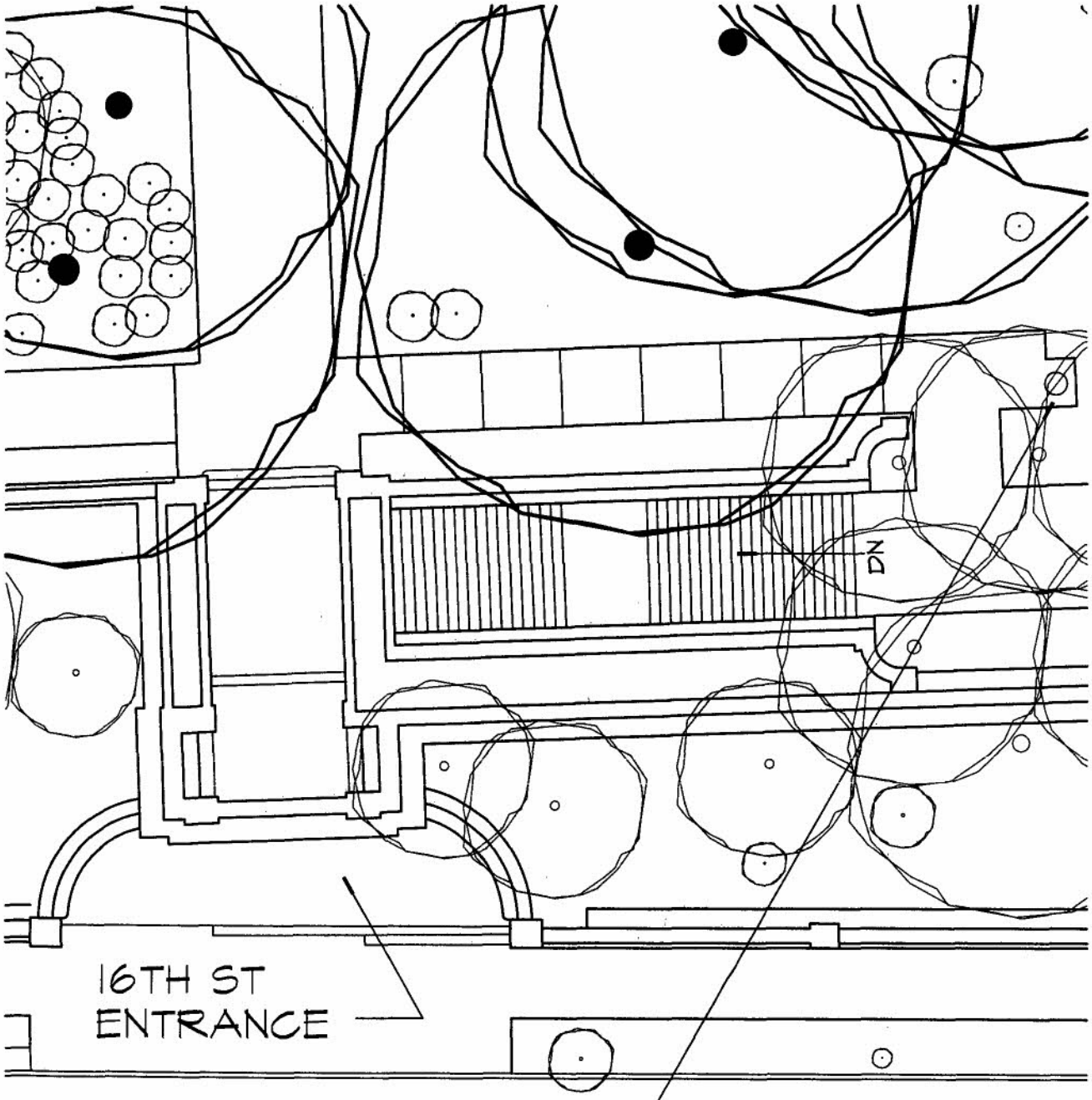


MERIDIAN HILL PARK ACCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

JUNE 1999

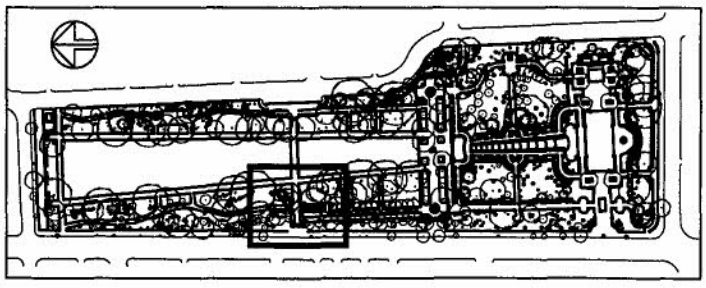
SKETCH SK-1



MERIDIAN HILL PARK ACCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS JUNE 1999

SKETCH SK-2



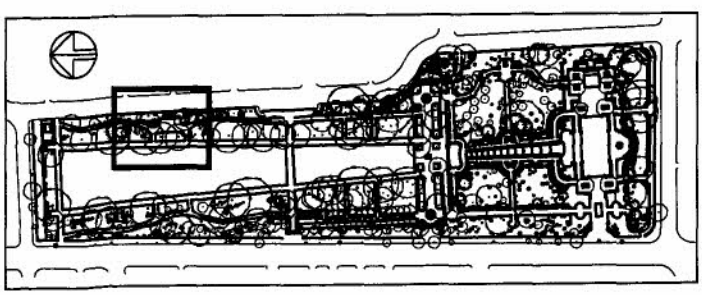
LODGE

ACCESSIBLE RESTROOMS AND DRINKING FOUNTAIN(S), USPP OFFICE AND VISITOR INFORMATION

FIFTEENTH STREET

DRINKING FOUNTAIN

MALL

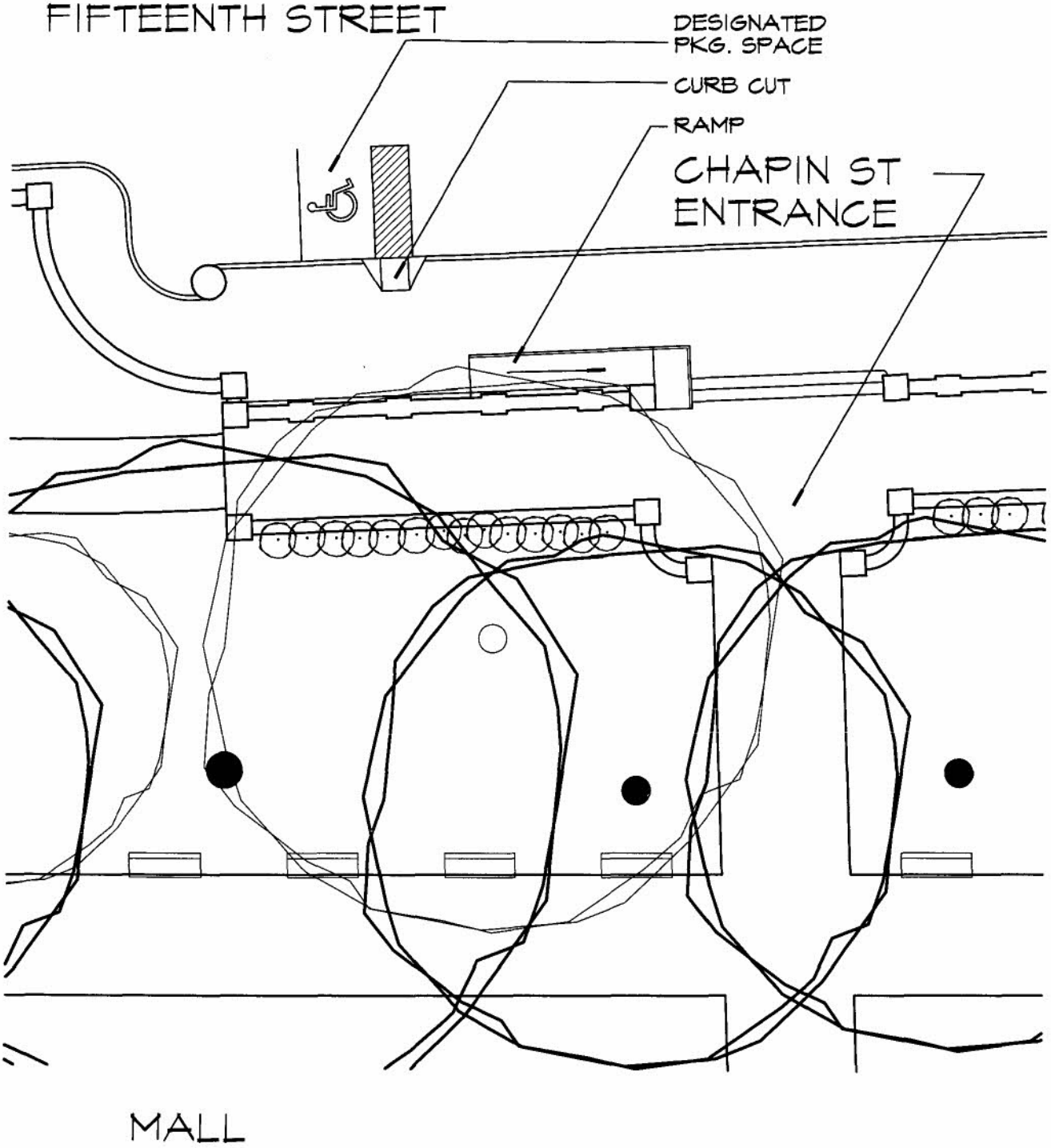


MERIDIAN HILL PARK ACCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

JUNE 1999

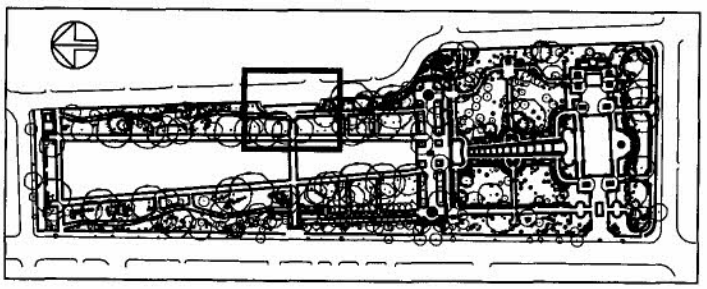
SKETCH SK-3

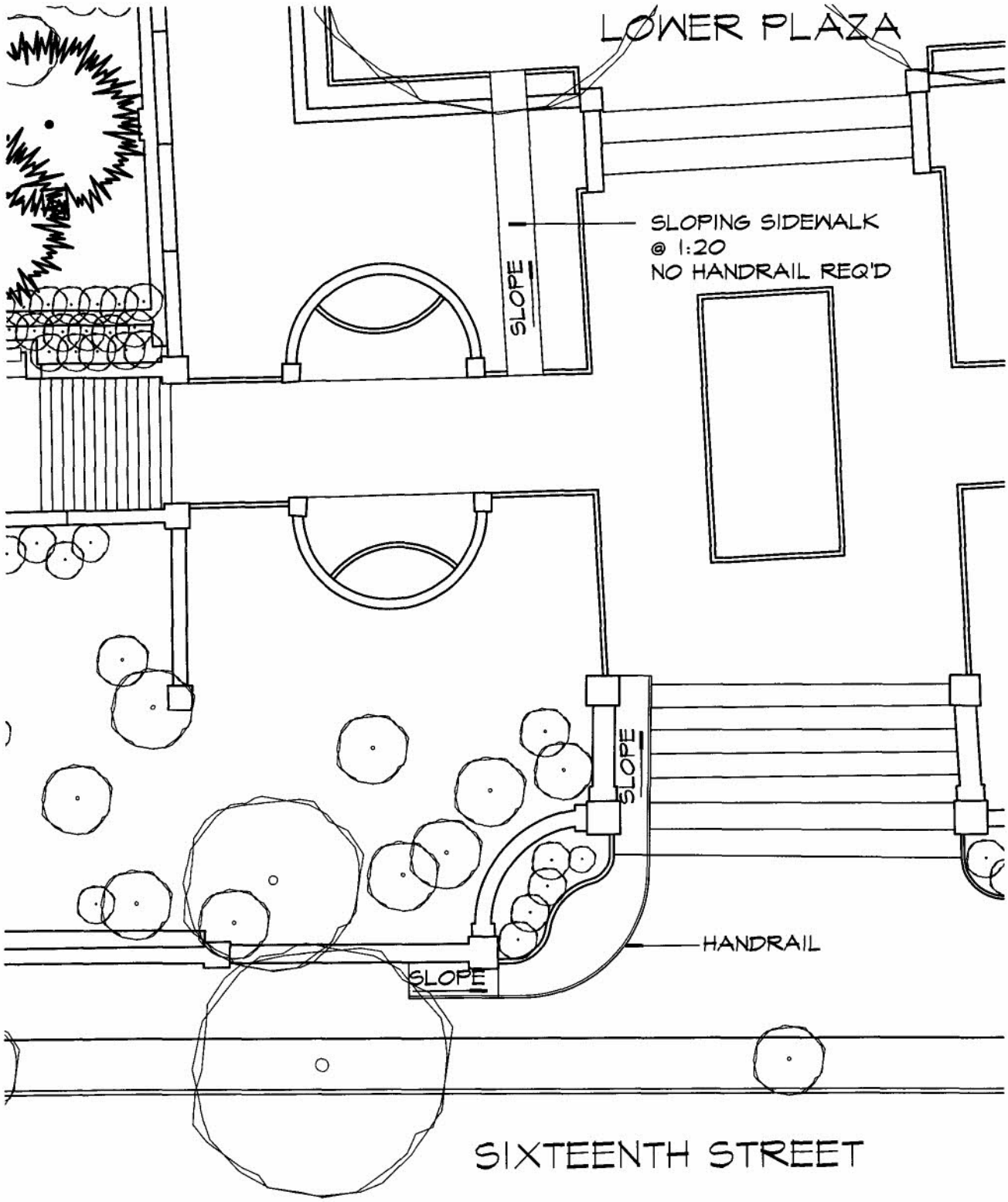


MERIDIAN HILL PARK ACCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS JUNE 1999

SKETCH SK-4



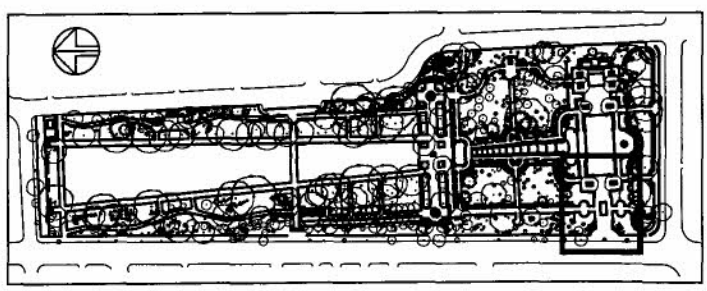


MERIDIAN HILL PARK ACCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION TREATMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

JUNE 1999

SKETCH SK-5



Vegetation

"In the original design for Meridian Hill vines, hedges and trees were as essential to the composition as the concrete structures underlying them."[3]

In the years since the official opening of the park in 1936, some elements of the planting design have survived and some have failed. The lines of white oaks along the mall, various mature specimen trees and the dense American holly hedges along the cascades and west ascent are remarkable for their longstanding presence in the park. Trees and shrubs that have not been replaced when their natural lifespan passed, or when environmental conditions warranted their removal, include hemlock and hawthorne hedges, and various shrub massings. Maintenance concerns also affected decisions about keeping dense groundcovers and vines. Presently, lawn predominates on the hillsides where groundcovers were historically planted and vines intended to grow up and over walls have not been replaced.

Developing a preservation planting plan is complicated by the voluminous and sometimes contradictory record of proposed schemes, questions of what was actually executed, and the fact that planting in the park spanned nearly fifteen years, during which time some early-planted materials were removed and replaced due to their failure to thrive or changes in design intent before the park's dedication in 1936.

The historic vegetation in this park will be re-established, as practical, based on drawings, photographs, and evidence of plants still on the site. Re-establishment of the park's planting is possible through the selection of the genus and species of trees, shrubs, and vines that replicate or nearly replicate the character of the original plant selection while reflecting today's environmental and maintenance conditions. Siting adequate quantities of plants in their original locations and maintaining them properly are essential to the overall preservation of the park.

A further way to understand the park and the priorities of its preservation is to see it as *structure driven.* In other words, because the constructed elements shape, focus, and organize the park, their design largely determines what are the most critical areas of the park. Thus, the park may be seen as comprising two distinct character areas: the primary being the formally-defined portions where structure and vegetation are a highly integrated whole and the plantings are essential elements of the spatial and architectonic intentions of the design. These are the mall, the great terrace, the cascades, the ascents and hillside gardens, and the lower plaza. This intensely-designed core is bounded on its east and west sides by less formal, more naturalistic *edges* or *borders*, forming zones of secondary importance. The trees between the lower plaza and W Street are part of primary zone because of their important space-defining function for the lower plaza.

Because of the contribution of the original street trees in defining the perimeter of the park, (see Figs. 79 and 80 in Volume 1 of the Cultural Landscape Report), the park will explore the possibility of replacing the trees on the surrounding streets in cooperation with the District of Columbia.

Addressing the issue of volunteer paths in non-obtrusive ways that are appropriate to the park should be part of the preservation planting plan.

[3]Ethan Carr, National Historic Landmark Nomination, December 15, 1993.

Critical:

It is critical to have a Preservation Planting Plan.

The Rock Creek Park management is having a planting plan prepared based on thorough review of the many planting plans and photographs for each area through 1936, as well as detailed as-planted plans for 1936. This planting plan will reflect decisions of how each area should be treated considering changes in environmental conditions, original plant materials that never thrived, safety, contemporary maintenance capabilities, careful identification of inappropriate plants added to the park over the years, assessment of their condition, and determinations about removal.

It is critical to replace individual deteriorated or missing space- and view-defining trees, including understory flowering trees in the primary areas of the park: the mall, at the great terrace, the cascades, the ascents and hillside gardens, the lower plaza, and the buffer along W Street. It is also critical to replace space- and view-defining single shrubs or entire plant groupings when the vegetation is missing, too deteriorated, or too damaged to be saved.[4]

Space-defining planting in the park:

- the rows of trees along the mall
- the oak groves at the southern end of the mall
- the hedges along the cascades
- the hedges along the west ascent
- trees and shrubs in the hillside gardens
- trees and shrub massings in the border space between the lower plaza and W Street

Planting terminating major axes and background planting:

- behind the Dante statue
- behind the Buchanan statue
- tree masses between lower plaza and W Street

Important:

It is important to replant missing trees, understory trees, and shrub massings in the edges or borders such as:

Planting in the borders along 15th and 16th Streets

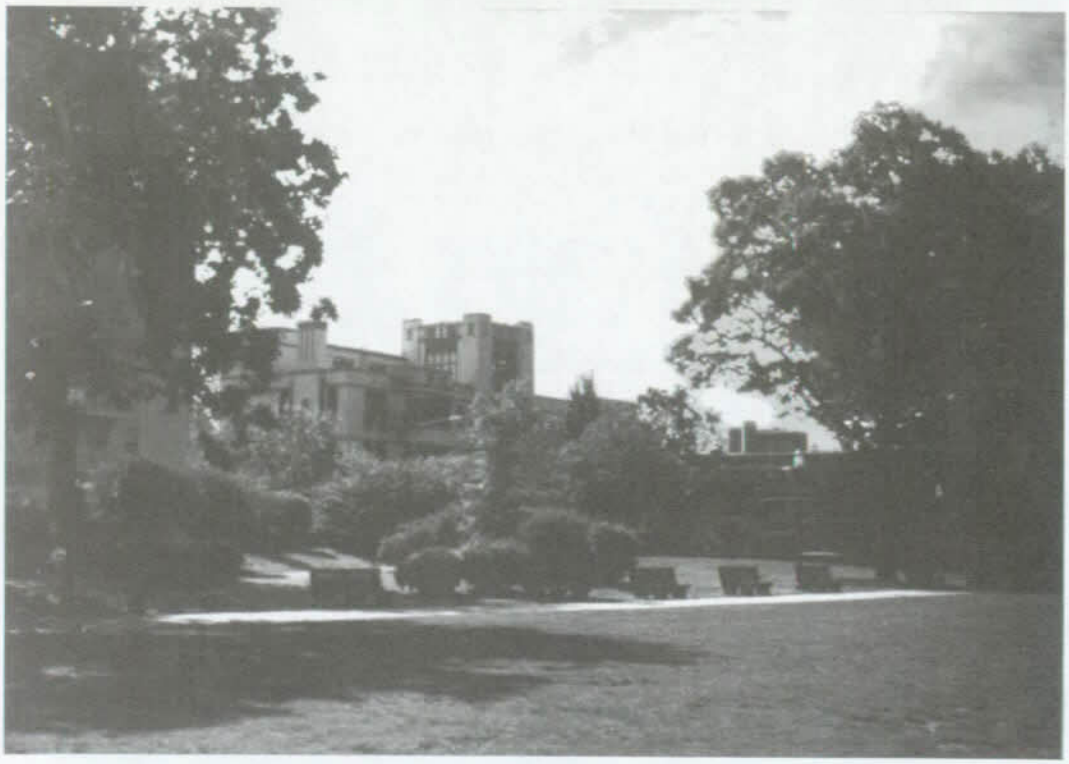
Planting terminating minor axes at the southern ends of the axes from the east and west ascents

Missing view-defining trees and shrubs on either side of the Sixteenth Street overlook off the west ascent, on axis with the Dante statue

Missing street trees along Sixteenth Street and Euclid Street, working with the District of Columbia

[4] However, it is not feasible to replant the hedges along the mall or the masses of hornbeam at the lower plaza. The hemlock hedges behind the benches and in front of the trees along the mall cannot feasibly be replanted because of the likelihood of damage to the root systems of the existing trees. The densely planted masses of hornbeam at the lower plaza would be extremely difficult to establish and maintain due to environmental conditions and lack of resources. Safety concerns are another reason not to replant.





Above: This view south along the main axis of the park through the mall toward the great terrace overlook shows how effectively the mature oaks behind the mall walkways contain and define the mall space.
Below: However, as seen in this image, the loss of two of these mature trees leaves a substantial gap in that edge definition.

It is also important to:

- continue to install aquatic plantings annually
- replace the hedges along the east-west axis at the northern end of the mall
- replace the hedges along the linden allee

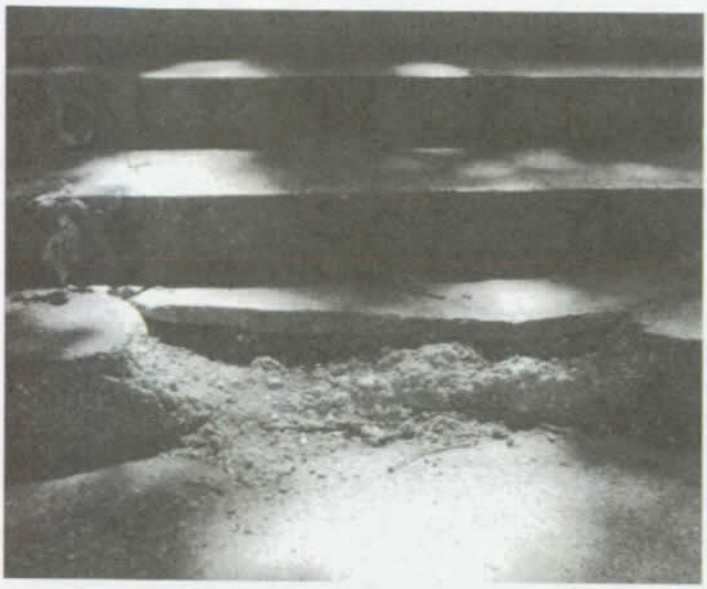
Desirable:

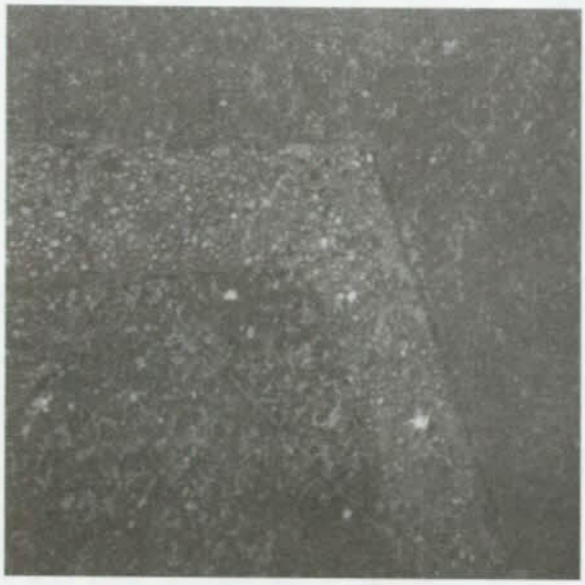
It is desirable to replace the secondary space-defining hedges along the cross axis from the Chapin Street entrance to the Sixteenth Street entrance.

It is desirable, if feasible relative to maintenance and environmental constraints, to replace missing small-scale vegetation, such as:

- vines
- herbaceous materials
- other missing detail plantings
- ground covers

Below left: Corroboration that the method called for in the specifications for pouring pavement in two layers is provided in this picture of the deteriorated steps at the upper 16th Street entrance.







Above and above right: While the colors are not seen in these pictures, the tonal and textural differentiation created by polychromy in the concrete aggregate is nonetheless visible. It is critical that the colors and types of aggregates used in the historic concrete in the park be matched exactly in any new or repair concrete work.

Structures, Furnishings, and Objects

The repair and limited replacement in kind the structures, furnishings, and objects of this park will return them as much as physically possible to their historic appearance. Because of the high level of integrity of the structures, furnishings, and objects at this site (i.e., that they are largely present, although deteriorated in some instances), most of the required work centers around new repairs and reversal of previous unsuccessful repairs.

Some of the furnishings are missing, such as the benches and ornamental fence at the linden allee and the upper play area; the original drinking fountains have been replaced with a different design; and there are many types of non-original trash receptacles.

Critical:

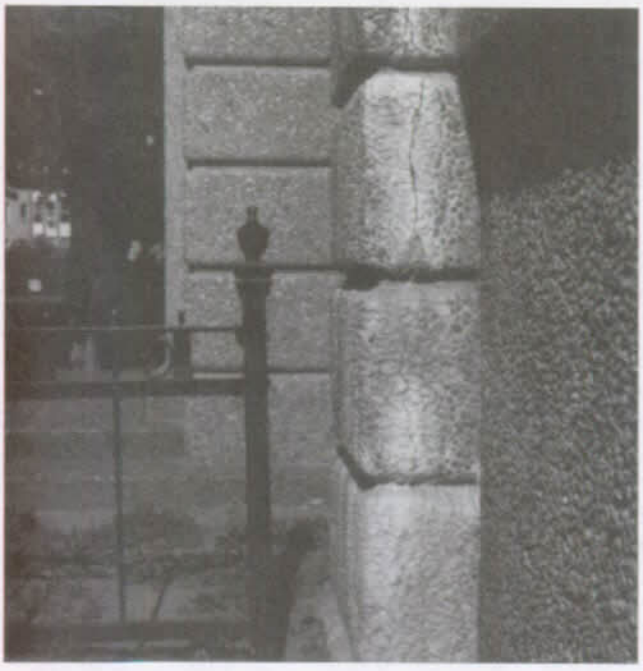
Critical actions include:

- development of a short term, interim, emergency stabilization and patching approach to arrest deterioration of built site elements as longer-term efforts proceed
- amelioration of heaved and irregular joints in paving to eliminate tripping hazards and facilitate access
- continued immediate removal of graffiti
- removal of the existing inappropriate stage. It should be replaced with a new seasonal stage that complies with code requirements and that can be disassembled.

It is critical that existing causes of deterioration of the character-defining concrete work on this site be identified and diagnosed, and strategies for preservation developed. It is also critical that methods to repair the particular concrete on this site, in all its various profiles, colors, textures, and applications be developed and implemented. These methods must result in reliable and consistent concrete to match the appearance of the site's original concrete. Categories of these investigations include: construction methods used in the original concrete work, settlement/movement analysis, and analysis of the mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and drainage systems. All these areas are related, but will require different professional specialties. It is critical that communication is maintained between disciplines. For example, electrical proposals cannot be made without consideration of concrete and settlement issues. Critical collateral investigations include:

Fountain basin with missing lip and severe deterioration at main 16th Street entrance.







(above left) An example of cracks and efflorescence, on the northern wall of the park, looking west from the children's play area. This fence finial is the only one still in place on the fence at this play area.

(above right) This picture illustrates the agglomeration that has occurred in the park since its official opening in 1936. Intrusive and non-original elements include the signage, the replacement drinking fountain, the tulip- type trash receptacle, and the informal path. This view is taken from the entrance at 15th and W Streets looking toward the lower plaza.

Concrete Construction Methods

Critical concrete investigative efforts must include:

•review of previous patching and repair work to identify successful efforts and consultation with the contractors who have worked on the site to discover both successful and unsuccessful methods.

•development of mixes for the various types of concrete used on the site (structural, decorative, and paving).

•identification and location of colored aggregates to match those used in the park

•development of a methodology for concrete repair and restoration, specific to each type and color of aggregate; each application of concrete, paving, walls, objects; and each method, site-cast or precast. Part of the protocol for concrete repair must also be diagnosis of causes of efflorescence and recommendations both to halt continuing efflorescence and to remove existing.

•demonstration of the efficacy of methods, accuracy of aggregate selection and mix design by construction of samples at the site for comparison with *in-situ* work.

•recording of detailed methods, materials, and sources involved in the process, once acceptable samples are provided.

Settlement

It is critical to establish existing conditions for the settled areas in the park and then monitor continued movement, if present, at the following locations:

•The south-east corner of the reflecting pool in the lower plaza has settled, allowing water from the pool to splash over the top of the containing wall coping.

•The Sixteenth Street retaining wall, just north of the great terrace, was stabilized in 1982 with installation of dead-man ties, but movement appears to be continuing at the south end.

•The great terrace, where a great deal of settlement has occurred, needs to be evaluated to determine whether settlement is active or most of it occurred soon after construction.

Action cannot be taken to remedy any of these conditions until it is known whether they are progressive or occurred soon after construction and have stabilized.

Once collateral investigations are complete, critical concrete preservation work in the park includes repairing and replacement in kind of the major areas of concrete deterioration, including:

•all cracks and spalls in walls, piers, and paving
•the lip of the western bowl fountain on the great terrace
•damaged stairs
•heaved and deteriorated paving
•all locations of exposed reinforcing steel





The original bench slat attachment detail on these contoured benches is both elegant and difficult to maintain. It is critical to develop a practical method of attachment that is consistent with the historic character of the benches.

Once each settlement condition has been identified in the collateral investigation as progressive or historic/stable, feasible interventions or repairs must be developed and implemented.

***Site Furnishings*:**

benches: As part of routine maintenance, the park will begin to implement a revised bench slat securing detail that both preserves the integrity of the historic design and also responds to the practical demands of contemporary maintenance. All bench slats that do not match the original ones in size, shape, material, and appearance will be removed and replaced with conforming ones. The park will restore contoured configurations of all originally contoured wood-slat benches.

trash receptacles: Because no record of original trash receptacles at the park has been found, ROCR must select an appropriate trash receptacle for this park.

Because the existing locations of trash receptacles are not historic and original locations are not known, locations of new trash receptacles should be determined on the basis of need and compatibility with the historic park design.

***Signage*:**

The park will develop recommendations for signage to address interpretive, identification, directional, regulatory, accessibility, and safety needs. Any such signage will be kept to a minimum and be compatible with the historic and visual integrity of the park.

The park will implement components of the interpretation plan currently under development as the related elements of the park are restored.

Other structural, furnishing, or object elements that affect the spatial definition in that park and are critical to remedy include:

Removal of non-original posts and chains on mall and exploration of alternative visually non-intrusive ways to control service vehicle traffic on the mall.

Important:

It is important, once the structures, furnishings, and objects of the site are stabilized and any threats to them through deterioration halted, that specific elements be restored to as near as possible to their original condition:

Return Lodge to its 1924-36 exterior appearance. Incorporate a U. S. Park Police office, accessible rest rooms, an accessible drinking fountain, and visitor information. Consider incorporating interpretation opportunities.

Replace missing elements, including:

- two benches, missing fence finials, and gate at upper sand play area;
- missing benches and fence at linden allee;
- hooded lights inset in walls, steps, and around pool.

Remove efflorescence on concrete and treat to prevent further deterioration if study determines that is the appropriate action.

Replace all missing and non-original drain inlet covers with covers of the original configuration. The material may be changed to cast iron or other material to make the covers less attractive targets for theft. The drain covers should be secured with tamper-proof fasteners, rather than welded, to facilitate maintenance.

Implement integrated signage program, including indication of accessible routes.

Remove non-original additions such as triangular corner paving at the north end of the mall and the non-original concrete slab north of the secondary Sixteenth Street entrance, south of the main entrance at Sixteenth and Euclid.

Desirable:

It is desirable to replace some otherwise functioning, but not original, materials and features with ones more consistent with the historic originals.

Replicate drinking fountains according to the original designs and install them at all original locations.

Remove replacement paving that is not consistent with original paving, including:

- flagstone paving at lower sand play areas. Consider replacing with large, beige pebble, exposed aggregate to suggest the gravel originally present there.
- new sections of paving that do not match either their immediate surroundings or the original paving.

Reverse all instances of previous repair work and patches to the concrete that do not match either their immediate surroundings or the rest of the concrete work, as they fail or as part of other projects, using the results of the concrete methods investigations previously done to insure good matches.

It is desirable to replace the missing fountain lip at the main 16th Street entrance fountain.

Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing, and Drainage Systems

The operational aspects of the park, the mechanical, electrical, plumbing (MEP), and drainage systems are not significant as space-defining elements, like the vegetation and the structures, but their function is essential to preserve the character-defining features of the park. The structures of the water features in the park are only half the equation: they must have water. Although the post top light fixtures are present, unless they have operational wiring, they lose their function. Proper functioning of elements of the park's drainage systems is critical to prevent deterioration of its structures. An adequate water supply for supplemental watering is needed to insure survival of vegetation.

The repair, replacement, and maintenance of all the MEP and drainage systems must be fully integrated with the preservation of the structures and other features and previous temporary or inappropriate work should be reversed.

Critical:

It is critical to know what the current state of the systems serving the park are. Studies of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems were done in 1966 and again in 1977 but the recommendations of these studies were never implemented under a single construction contract. However, the park maintenance staff has kept the park systems functioning by implementing repairs on an as-needed basis. Before major restoration of systems at the park can be undertaken, several critical collateral investigations must be done, including:

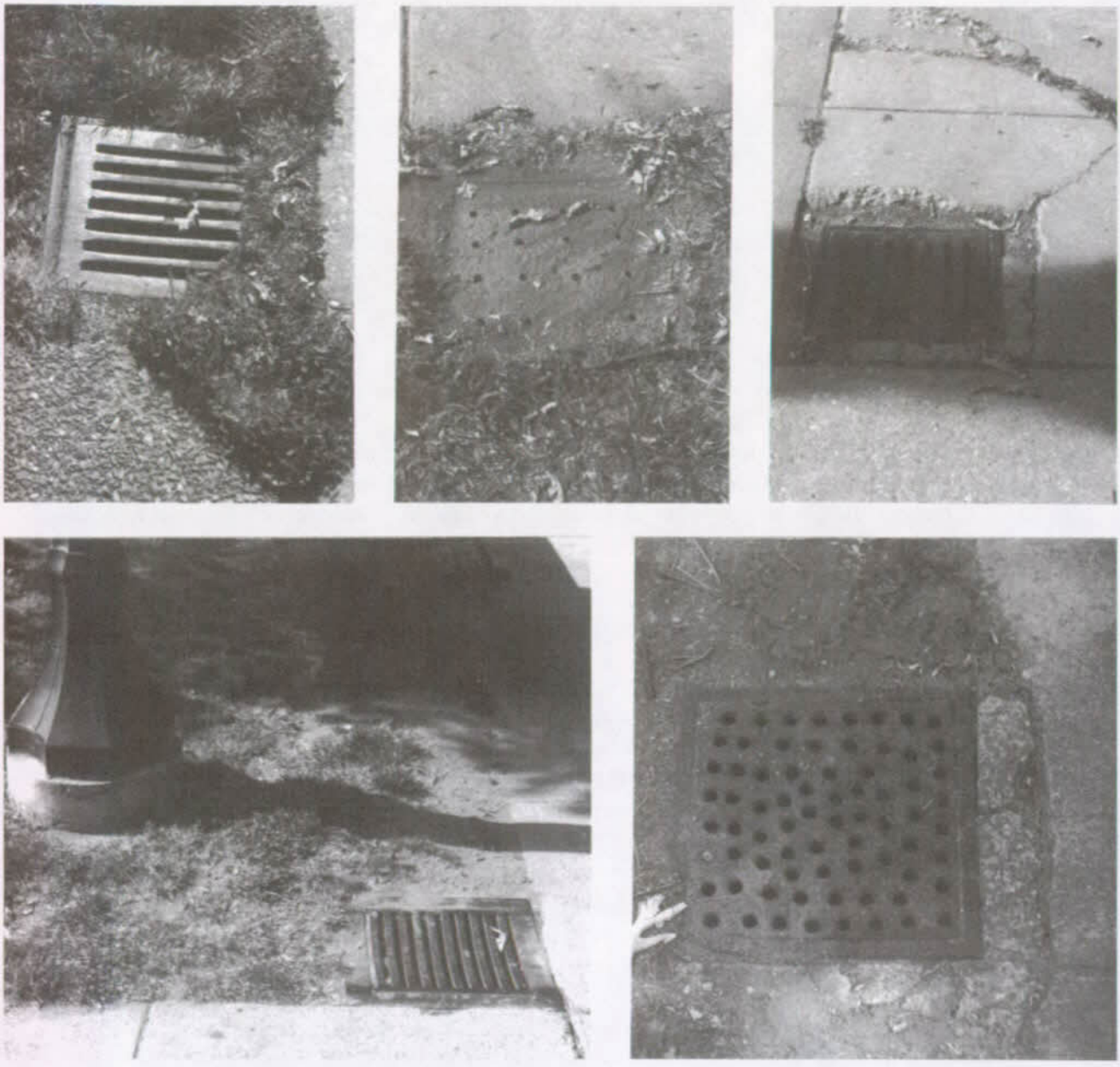
- Review the 1966 and 1977 reports on the park's systems and update the condition assessments to reflect maintenance and repair work done to date, in consultation with park personnel who manage and operate the systems.

Once a current condition assessment has been made, recommendations for repair and/or replacement of various systems and components of them must be developed with special attention to the particular requirements of this site. Developing recommendations for this site will require an element-by-element analysis of the water features, tracing routing of piping, evaluating conditions of lines, and developing replacement strategies that will not damage visible elements of the historic concrete. The same hands-on analysis and evaluation will be necessary for the recessed walkway lighting. Alternatives to wholesale removal and replacement of old wiring and conduit would be studied since such an approach would cause unacceptable damage to the historic fabric. To minimize damage to the concrete, some elements might be abandoned in place. Alternate routing that would not impact historic elements, especially the concrete work, or would minimize impact would have to be considered. In preparing a design for replacement, in addition to the normal review of as-built drawings, mock-ups to test efficacy of re-wiring approaches would be desirable. Because many of these original fixtures are missing, mock-ups of alternative fixture approaches would be important.

Systems study for the park must also consider power needs and provisions; and ways to increase or improve lighting levels should also be incorporated.

As part of the comprehensive systems study, the drainage system would be evaluated for integrity of its subsurface elements as well as element-by-element evaluation of drain inlets.

A part of this study may overlap the concrete restoration analysis as some of the water features are leaking. One example is at the cascades where water is leaking into the adjacent planting



These pictures illustrate the diversity of non-original catch basin inlet covers found in the park. The one located in paving (obscured by the light fixture shadow) is an original location for a catch basin, but has had paving added around it. The steel plate inlet covers with holes are apparently expedients to replace the original brass covers, which have been stolen.

pockets. At other locations, such as the lower plaza reflecting pool, settlement is causing or exacerbating leakage and damage.

Once investigation has determined what repairs and replacements are necessary and feasible and how to perform the work at this site:

- All elements of the mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and drainage systems whose operation is determined to be critical to the preservation/stabilization of the site and/or critical to maintain safety will be repaired, replaced, and maintained as necessary to make them fully functional. Instances include: elements of the drainage system that are not functioning; lighting that is not functioning; and elements of the electrical system that are deteriorated and not functioning. In all such cases, contemporary interior, non-visible, solutions may be made as long as the historic appearance of the element and its surroundings is preserved.

Because the complete functioning of the water features as contributing site elements, (that all the fountains function, that the heights of water jets are similar to the original design, that all the water features can operate at once, and that the entire system may be feasibly maintained) is critical to the enhancement of the major spaces of the park, a comprehensive systems restoration must be undertaken.

Important:

- Restore site lighting, incorporating contemporary functional requirements.

- Repair systems in spaces under the great terrace stairs to provide adequate conditioning, including ventilation, heating, and fully functioning plumbing.

Desirable:

- Restore 16th Street entrance fountain to full operation.

- Reverse all instances of temporary or inappropriate MEP or drainage installations or temporary repairs such as the temporary telephone wiring on the face of the great wall and all instances of exposed exterior conduit clearly visible from public spaces.

Sculpture

Preservation of the sculpture in this park requires actions such as replacement of missing elements of the Joan of Arc statue, cleaning and routine repair, and regular monitoring of all the park sculpture. The *Serenity* statue will be preserved in place. It is critical to replicate the missing armillary sphere because it serves as the focal point of the southern terminus of the major park axis.

Critical:

Actions critical to prevent deterioration of the park's sculpture include:

- Continued immediate removal of all graffiti
- Continued monitoring of *Serenity* statue: If current level of deterioration accelerates or major damage occurs to the statue, removal might be considered.
- Replication and reinstallation of the armillary sphere

Important:

- Continued monitoring and periodic inspection by a qualified professional of all the sculpture on the site with recommendations for necessary conservation

Desirable:

- Conservation of all park sculpture
- Complete restoration of the Joan of Arc statue including structural stabilization and possible reversal of previous structural repairs and replacement of missing elements including the sword, scabbard, and parts of the bridle
- Comprehensive conservation of the Buchanan Memorial including stabilization, repointing, caulking, and repair of the structure and of damaged flanking sculpture

Other

Preservation Maintenance Plan

It is critical to have a comprehensive Preservation Maintenance Plan.

As a part of implementing the preservation treatment, the park should initiate the development of a comprehensive Preservation Maintenance Plan for all structural and vegetative elements. For the vegetative elements, such a plan will incorporate specific maintenance recommendations. Investigation of the following is recommended: soil improvement, watering systems, and maintenance schedules. For the structural elements, such a plan will incorporate specific maintenance recommendations to preserve repair work and prevent further deterioration.

A comprehensive Preservation Maintenance Plan is distinguished from a regular maintenance program in its emphasis on the historic designed landscape with all of its features including structures and vegetation. Thus, while a regular maintenance program might call generally for pruning, a Preservation Maintenance Plan would explain the original design intent, such as height of hedges, and include a schedule of pruning needed to maintain that designed height. A Preservation Maintenance Plan for Meridian Hill Park is necessary in any case to stabilize the park as work is done, since implementation of the treatment would need to be phased, in accord with available levels of preservation and maintenance funding.

As work is done, the plan would be updated with a record of treatment to guide maintenance of the park. Documentation of the removal and replacement of original plants should be a part of the Preservation Maintenance Plan.

Security

•ROCR will continue to work with the U.S. Park Police on ways to enhance security in Meridian Hill Park within the context of preserving its integrity as a National Historic Landmark.

•Call boxes could be installed in locations convenient for security without compromising the visual integrity of the park.

Use of various spaces and structures

•After the lodge is returned to its 1924-36 exterior appearance, incorporating accessible restrooms and other functions within, the existing restrooms under the great terrace stairs will be closed to the public. The other spaces under the great terrace stairs and at the base of the cascades will continue to be used according to the original intentions for utilitarian, operational, purposes.

Part C
Implementation

Phasing and Sequencing Priorities

The collateral investigations necessary for preparation of construction and contract documents and the stabilization of all progressive deterioration must be the first priority. Planting can proceed in areas that will not be affected by work on park structures.

Otherwise, phasing and sequencing priorities are subject to funding.

Cost Estimate

The following cost estimate is based on that prepared by Ben Biderman, DSC-EAA in August of 1990, escalated to 1995, and revised and escalated herein to 1999. The tasks and amounts have been adjusted to reflect the Recommended Treatment as outlined in Section B of this volume. Much of this estimate is, of necessity, somewhat speculative as the extent of work required to restore certain elements of the park, the concrete and water systems, for example, or to repair other parts, such as the settlement, will not be known until the investigations relating to those elements are accomplished under Phase I.

The cost estimate is organized in the same phases used in previous estimates for comparison purposes only.

Construction cost estimate for Meridian Park based on Ben Biderman 1990 cost estimate, modified to reflect the subsequent nine years and escalated to 1999.

Summary	**1999**
Phase I (Construction Documents and Engineering Analyses)	
Prepare landscape preservation maintenance plan (with in-house support)	50,000
Concrete repair analysis	70,000
Engineering analyses: plumbing, drainage, settlement, elect.& fountain systems incl. pump	108,000
Soil analysis and recommendations	5,000
Phase II upper gardens (constr. doc.) *	231,000
Fountain repairs on great terrace and at 16th Street entrance (constr. doc.) *	7,000
Pavilion (prelim. design and constr. doc.)	31,000
Sculpture conservation (constr. doc.)	80,000
Phase I Construction (gross constr.)	797,000
total Phase I	**1,379,000**
Phase II Upper Gardens	
Phase III (const. doc.)	167,000
Upper gardens (gross constr.)	2,364,000
total Phase II	**2,531,000**
Phase III Lower Gardens	
Phase IV (constr. doc.)	102,000
Lower gardens (gross constr.)	2,900,000
total Phase III	**3,002,000**
Phase IV Upper/Lower Gardens	
Balance of planting (gross constr.)	1,075,000
total Phase IV	**1,075,000**
total phases I - IV	**7,987,000**

*items included on 1990 estimate but numbers changed

		1999
Phase I Upper Gardens		
1.	Repair 2 fountains on great terrace and fountain at 16th Street entrance	100,000
2.	Restore pavilion on 15th St	269,000
3.	Bench restoration, entire park	25,000
4.	New pump with installation	403,000
	total Phase I construction	**797,000**
Phase II Upper Gardens		
1.	Miscellaneous demolition: (dumpster slab, posts&chains, corner paving, temp.bandstand)	16,000
2.	Restore wrought-iron fence on Euclid St.	
	122 ft @ $100/LF	16,000
3.	Restore wrought-iron fence @upper play area (incl. gate)	11,000
4.	Repair exposed aggregate walls (patch/replace)	180,000
5.	Replace exp. agg. walks & steps	500,000
6.	Restore/reinstall benches at upper play area & Linden Allee	
	15 w/backs @ $1000 ea., 15 w/o backs @ $750 ea.	26,000
7.	Install fence behind hedge at linden allee 75 ft. @ $250/LF	19,000
8.	Repair underground drainage system	
	6.307 acres @ $13,000/acre	110,000
9.	Install top soil and sod in all grass areas	
	18,000 sy @ $12/sy *	290,000
10.	Install 1 new accessible drinking fountain	
	@ $4,000 ea. *	5,000
11.	Planting	100,000
12.	Implement signage system	27,000
13.	Repair settlement @ great terrace and 16th St. retaining wall	672,000
14.	Accessibility provisions (signage, Chapin St. entrance)	200,000
15.	Repair existing water system, clean lines, repair/ replace quick couplers	40,000
16.	Install 15 trash receptacles	
	15 @ $800 = 12,000	12,000
17.	Restore Joan of Arc and Serenity statues	140,000
	total Phase II construction	**2,364,000**

*items included on 1990 estimate but numbers changed

Phase III Lower Gardens		1999
1.	Repair exposed aggregate walls (patch/replace) + elements, incl. fountain elements	250,000
2.	Replace damaged exposed aggregate walks & steps	100,000
3.	Repair underground drainage system	
	4.302 acres @ $13,000/acre	75,000
4.	Install top soil & sod in all grass areas	
	20,800 sy @ $12/sy *	335,000
5.	Replace all wall light fixtures & rewire as required (lump sum) *	403,000
6.	Repair and/or replace drain lines & covers	134,000
7.	Install trash receptacles	
	15 @ $800 = $12,000) *	12,000
8.	Install new exposed aggregate drinking fountains (orig. design)	
	6 @ $4,000 ea (at upper and lower garden) *	24,000
9.	Restore armillary sphere on existing base (lump sum per NCR)	202,000
10.	Planting	168,000
11.	Repair existing water system, clean lines, repair/ replace quick couplers	40,000
12.	Repair settlement @ lower plaza, se corner of reflecting pool	250,000
13.	Accessibility provisions (entrance at lower 16th St. entrance to lower plaza)	336,000
14.	Restore gate at service entrance	8,000
15.	Replace/repair, fountain water lines throughout park	403,000
16.	Restore Buchanan Memorial sculpture and granite surround	160,000
	total Phase III construction	**2,900,000**

Phase IV Upper & Lower Gardens		
1.	Balance of all other planting (lump sum)	1,075,000
	total Phase IV construction	**1,075,000**

*items included on 1990 estimate but numbers changed

Appendices

Appendix 1:

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes:

Standards for Preservation

1. A property will be used as it was historically, or be given a new use that maximizes the retention of distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships. Where a treatment and use have not been identified, a property will be protected and, if necessary, stabilized until additional work may be undertaken.

2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The replacement of intact or repairable historic materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Work needed to stabilize consolidate, and conserve existing historic materials and features will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.

4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.

5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

6. The existing condition of historic features will be evaluated to determine the appropriate level of intervention needed. Where the severity of deterioration necessitates repair or limited replacement of a distinctive feature, the new material will match the old in composition, design, color and texture.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.

8. Archaeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

Appendix 2:

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes:

Standards for Rehabilitation

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.

2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.

4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.

8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Appendix 3:

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes:

Standards for Restoration

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use which reflects the property's restoration period.

2. Materials and features from the restoration period will be retained and preserved. The removal of materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize the period will not be undertaken.

3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate and conserve materials and features from the restoration period will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.

4. Materials, features, spaces, and finishes that characterize other historical periods will be documented prior to their alteration or removal.

5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize the restoration period will be preserved.

6. Deteriorated features from the restoration period will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials.

7. Replacement of missing features from the restoration period will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence. A false sense of history will not be created by adding conjectural features, features from other properties, or by combining features that never existed together historically.

8. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.

9. Archeological resources affected by a project will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

10. Designs that were never executed will not be constructed.

Appendix 4:

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes:

Standards for Reconstruction

1. Reconstruction will be used to depict vanished or non-surviving portions of a property when documentary and physical evidence is available to permit accurate reconstruction with minimal conjecture, and such reconstruction is essential to the public understanding of the property.

2. Reconstruction of a landscape, building, structure, or object in its historic location will be preceded by a thorough archaeological investigation to identify and evaluate those features and artifacts which are essential to an accurate reconstruction. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be taken.

3. Reconstruction will include measures to preserve any remaining historic materials, features, and spatial relationships.

4. Reconstruction will be based on the accurate duplication of historic features and elements substantiated by documentary or physical evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different features from other historic properties, a reconstructed property will re-create the appearance of the non-surviving historic property in materials, design, color, and texture.

5. A reconstruction will be clearly identified as a contemporary re-creation.

6. Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed.

Appendix 5:
Definitions and Terminology

A "term of art" is a word or expression that might be commonly used, but that has a specific technical definition when used in a particular professional context. Many of the terms used in a Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) are terms of art. Thus, while we all use the word "plantings" in everyday conversation, the term as used in this document, refers to materials *deliberately planted* to differentiate them from naturally occurring plants, as might be found in a woods or forest.

Most of the following definitions are from *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*[1] and are standards in the field of preservation.

The following three terms are of particular importance in the context of a CLR. Each of the terms has a very specific definition with associated, and quite distinct, implications. As used in this document as terms of art, these terms and implications are not the same as when used in general conversation.

Preservation may also be considered as stabilizing the landscape. It is the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of a historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features, rather than extensive replacement and new construction. New exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment; however, the limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a preservation project.

Rehabilitation, which can include the addition of contemporary elements, is the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features that convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

Restoration may be considered as re-establishing the historic landscape. It is the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular time by means of the removal of features from other periods of its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a restoration project.

Reconstruction is defined as the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.

Other terms that are used consistently to refer to elements of Meridian Hill Park with specific meanings, include the following:

[1] *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes.* ed. by Charles A. Birnbaum. U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships, Heritage Preservation Services, Historic Landscape Initiative. Washington, D.C. 1996.

Character-defining feature - a prominent or distinctive aspect, quality, or characteristic of a cultural landscape that contributes significantly to its physical character. Land use patterns, vegetation, furnishings, decorative details and materials may be such features.

Component landscapes - A discrete portion of the landscape that can be further subdivided into individual features. The landscape unit may contribute to the significance of a National Register property, such as a farmstead in a rural historic district. In some cases, the landscape unit may be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, such as a rose garden in a large urban park.

Comprehensive landscape preservation maintenance plan - A comprehensive landscape preservation maintenance plan is distinguished from a regular maintenance program in its emphasis on the historic designed landscape with all of its component elements including structures and vegetation. Thus, while a regular maintenance program might call generally for pruning, a comprehensive landscape preservation maintenance plan would explain the original design intent, such as height of hedges, and include a schedule of pruning needed to maintain that designed height. Such a plan could be a holding plan, characterized by strategies for stabilizing the park until it can be restored. It could be a staged restoration plan, divided into feasible implementation phases. It would incorporate detailed recommendations for the maintenance of the park, once restored.

Conservation (sculpture) - includes "...condition assessment, treatment and maintenance, and conservation strategies." National Center for Conservation, Preservation Training and Technology (NCPTT) Notes 21: November 1997, Workshop Report - Brookgreen Gardens.

Contributing Feature - A biotic or abiotic feature associated with a landscape characteristic that contributes to the significance of the cultural landscape

Contributing Resource - A building, site, structure, or object that adds to the historic significance of a property. A contributing building, site, structure, or object adds to the historic associations, historical architectural qualities, or archaeological values for which a property is significant because of the following: it was present during the period of significance; it relates to the documented significance of the property; it possesses historic integrity or is capable of revealing information about the period; or it independently meets the National Register criteria.

Cultural landscape - a geographic area (including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein) associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values. There are four general types of cultural landscapes, not mutually exclusive: historic sites, historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes, and ethnographic landscapes.

Ethnographic landscape - a landscape containing a variety of natural and cultural resources that associated people define as heritage resources. Examples are contemporary settlements, sacred religious sites, and massive geological structures. Small plant communities, animals, subsistence and ceremonial grounds are often components.

Feature - The smallest element(s) of a landscape that contributes to the significance and that can be the subject of a treatment intervention. Examples include a woodlot, hedge, lawn, specimen plant,

allee, house, meadow, or open field, fence, wall, earthwork, pond or pool, bollard, orchard, or agricultural terrace.

Historic character - the sum of all visual aspects, features, materials, and spaces associated with a cultural landscape's history, i.e. the original configuration together with losses and later changes. These qualities are often referred to as character-defining.

Historic designed landscape - a landscape that was consciously designed or laid out by a landscape architect, master gardener, architect, engineer, or horticulturist according to design principles, or an amateur gardener working in a recognized style or tradition. The landscape may be associated with a significant person, trend, or event in landscape architecture; or illustrate an important development in the theory and practice of landscape architecture. Aesthetic values play a significant role in designed landscapes. Examples include parks, campuses, and estates.

Historic vernacular landscapes - a landscape that evolved through use by the people whose activities or occupancy shaped it. Through social or cultural attitudes of an individual, a family, or a community, the landscape reflects the physical, biological, and cultural character of everyday lives. Function plays a significant role in vernacular landscapes. This can be a farm complex or a district of historic farmsteads along a river valley. Examples include rural historic districts and agricultural landscapes.

Historic site - a landscape significant for its association with a historic event, activity or person. Examples include battlefields and presidential homes and properties.

Integrity - the authenticity of a property's historic identity, evinced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's historic or prehistoric period. The seven qualities of integrity as defined by the National Register Program are location, setting, feeling, association, design, workmanship, and materials.

Land Use - the principal activities in the landscape

Landscape Feature - The smallest physical unit that contributes to the significance of a landscape that can be managed as an individual feature.

Period of Significance - the time period in which the property achieved the qualities that make it eligible for the National Register or other recognized designation

Significance - the meaning or value ascribed to a cultural landscape based on the National Register criteria for evaluation. It normally stems from a combination of association and integrity.

Spatial Organization - the three-dimensional organization of physical forms and visual associations in the landscape, including the articulation of ground, vertical, and overhead planes that define and create spaces.

Structures and Buildings- elements constructed primarily for sheltering any form of human activities are considered buildings. Elements constructed for functional purposes other than sheltering human activity are considered structures.

Treatment - work carried out to achieve a particular historic preservation goal.

Vegetation - the individual and aggregate plant features of deciduous and evergreen trees, shrubs, vines, ground covers, and herbaceous plants, and plant communities

Views and Vistas - the prospect created by a range of vision in the cultural landscape, conferred by the composition of other landscape characteristics. Views and vistas are distinguished as follows:

> *views* - the expansive or panoramic prospect of a broad range of vision, which may be naturally occurring or deliberately contrived.
>
> *vista* - the controlled prospect of a discrete, linear range of vision, which is deliberately contrived

Water Feature (Constructed) - built features and elements that use water for aesthetic or utilitarian functions in the landscape.

Appendix 6: Design Guidelines

Maintain the Land Use of the park as originally intended and constructed

The park's original land use for passive recreation is intact as designed and constructed, has great integrity, and will be retained in all alternatives. The use of Meridian Hill Park as a public national park was established by the legislation authorizing its acquisition.

From its initial authorization by Congress in 1910, through design and construction until its completion in 1936, its period of significance identified by the National Historic Landmark nomination, Meridian Hill Park was intended to be a passive recreation park for the benefit of the entire nation. The May 1910 Senate Report recommending passage of the bill (S.7725) to acquire land in the subdivision of Meridian Hill for a public park included a letter from Henry B.F. MacFarland, President, Board of Commissioners, stating it was the commission's belief that the acquisition of the site would "greatly enhance the beauty of the city and its environments" and "would be of benefit to all of the people of the United States." This mandate for Meridian Hill Park to serve a national constituency was reinforced by the April 1913 Commission of Fine Arts minutes stating that the park should be designed as "a general congregation point attracting large numbers of visitors from all over the City" and that "to design the park as a neighborhood recreation ground...would not be advisable as the location and view to be obtained of the city will give the park a wide interest..."[2]

Thus, although the park was to be used for passive recreation by visitors from the city as well as those from the neighborhood, it was not established as a neighborhood park to provide active play or recreation opportunities. The only play facilities incorporated in the historic design were low-key, i.e., small sandbox areas or hedge-enclosed grassed play areas that had no impact on the axial views and high use areas of the park. These play areas have lost their integrity - the upper sand box has no sand, the benches are gone, the hedge outside the fence is gone, and the fence itself has lost its post-top finials and gate. The mid-mall hedge-defined play areas are gone. The lower sandboxes with flagstone bases are unrecognizable as such without their sand.

From its beginning, the park has been used and continues to be used by children playing informally throughout it as well as for concerts and other cultural events that attract citywide audiences. The concerts were staged in the lower plaza during the 1940's, although more recent concerts have been at the great terrace end of the mall. All the staging for these events has been temporary and no permanent concert provisions were ever made.

While not a change in use from passive to active, because it's still passive, the slopes on either side of the cascades have acquired a use they did not originally have. Because these slopes are now grassed, whereas they were historically planted with ground cover, people now use them for picnicking, sunning, and sitting.

[2]Minutes of the Commission of Fine Arts, 4 April 1913, cited in CLR, pg. 37.

Maintain the circulation of the park as originally designed and constructed while responding to contemporary accessibility mandates

The original park circulation is substantially intact as designed and constructed and retains its integrity. Responding to contemporary access mandates poses the greatest potential impact on circulation, and must be made in accord with accepted guidelines for the treatment of historic landscapes.

A secondary circulation and vegetation issue has to do with the wearing of informal paths across the grass panels of the mall. A management approach to dealing with these informal paths is to increase maintenance and sod replacement schedules. Installation of stabilized turf could also be part of this strategy.

The park has installed posts and chains and, at the north end of the mall, triangular paving sections and more posts and chains to protect turf and prevent service vehicles from damaging quick couplers. Solving this problem will have to be addressed using other, visually non-intrusive, means.

Universal access requirements mandate that every practical effort be made to make the site accessible. In other words, the highest level of access with the least impact on the integrity of the landscape must be accomplished. However, because of the twenty-foot change in elevation at the great wall and the terraced topography of the cascade area, the area below the great terrace cannot be made accessible to people in wheelchairs without severely impacting its historic character and design integrity. Nor can every path on the site be made accessible since step-ramps and steps are an integral part of the design.

The upper mall already has accessible entrances and routes within and to the great terrace overlook, but the lower plaza is not accessible. Likewise, the existing restrooms under the great terrace are not accessible to people in wheelchairs and cannot practically be made so. Since management has decided that restrooms should be provided in the park, various means of doing so have been addressed in the alternatives, as have means of providing access to the lower plaza. Provisions for accessible site furniture, and amenities such as drinking fountains, trash receptacles, and interpretive materials have also been considered in treatment alternatives.

Space Under the Great Terrace

The rooms and spaces under the great terrace are primarily utilitarian and are not considered as contributing to the historical significance of this site. Therefore their use is a management decision as long as such uses do not impact on the visible exterior portions of the site.

Maintenance

Do all routine maintenance with *Preservation* in mind.

Under any treatment alternative, the phases of work must parallel the ability to maintain them. For example, shrub beds or hedges that require extensive pruning would not be re-established until funds and trained staff are available to maintain them.

Signage

Signage must be visually and historically compatible with the character of the site. For example, it would be inappropriate to use rustic signs in this urban designed landscape. Signage

should not be mounted on any historic fabric. Text and location of existing regulatory signage would be reviewed for needs and visual compatibility, then eliminated, redone, or relocated, as appropriate, to be compatible with the historic character of the site.

Any signage should incorporate graphics and tactile information to meet the applicable accessibility standard.

Interpretation

Current NPS interpretation of the site is accomplished through intermittent scheduled tours seasonally-conducted by park staff and other interested parties. In addition, Rock Creek Park is developing a comprehensive interpretive plan for all of its park units, including Meridian Hill Park, along with a visitor use survey. Specific recommendations for interpretation of Meridian Hill Park will be included in that document. In any case, it would be appropriate to offer regularly-scheduled interpretive tours and to have a brochure available on-site to make all visitors aware of the importance of the park as a nationally significant, formal, designed historic landscape.

No interpretive elements may negatively impact the site. For instance, interpretive plaques set in the public sidewalk outside the park itself would have no impact on the historic landscape. Printed brochures and self-directed tours would be flexible and non-intrusive interpretive tools. However, signs mounted to historic fabric are inadvisable as are inappropriately-sized or located post-mounted signs.

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