

# Cultural Landscape Report, Treatment, and Management Plan for Branch Brook Park Newark, New Jersey

Postcard showing  
Edgewood Pool in the  
early 1900's



Edgewood Pool today



## Volume 3: Hydrology, Infrastructure, and Historic Fabric

Prepared for:

Branch Brook Park Alliance  
A project of Connection-Newark  
744 Broad Street, 31st Floor  
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Recreation and Cultural Affairs  
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14 July 2003

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## INTRODUCTION

This document is the third volume of the Cultural Landscape Report, Treatment, and Management Plan for Branch Brook Park in Newark, New Jersey, and builds upon the work accomplished and documented to date in Volume 1: Existing Conditions, and Volume 2: History of the Park and Critical Periods of Development.

Included in this report is an analysis of the period of significance, remaining historic fabric, spatial integrity, and a statement of treatment and management philosophy for Branch Brook Park. Also included is a detailed examination of hydrology, utilities, and vehicular circulation in the park. As mentioned, this work builds upon the existing conditions and historical research already undertaken in previous phases, and upon field work conducted between December 2002 and May 2003.



*Existing view across Branch Brook Lake, looking east toward the English Gardens and the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. Source: James Lecky.*



## Part I - Remaining Historic Fabric





## CHAPTER 1: PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE

### Determination of the Period of Significance

Having completed the documentation of the existing conditions and history of Branch Brook Park in Phase I of the Cultural Landscape Report, the next step in moving toward the development of Treatment and Management Plans for the entire site is to determine the "Period of Significance" for the park. In their publication *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques*, the National Park Service defines the period of significance as, "the span of time for which a cultural landscape attains historical significance and for which it meets National Register criteria." This period of significance for a cultural landscape becomes the date or range of dates that are used as a guide for developing treatment and management plans for the site. In essence, the period of significance determines how, and to what time period, a cultural landscape will be restored and/or treated in the future.

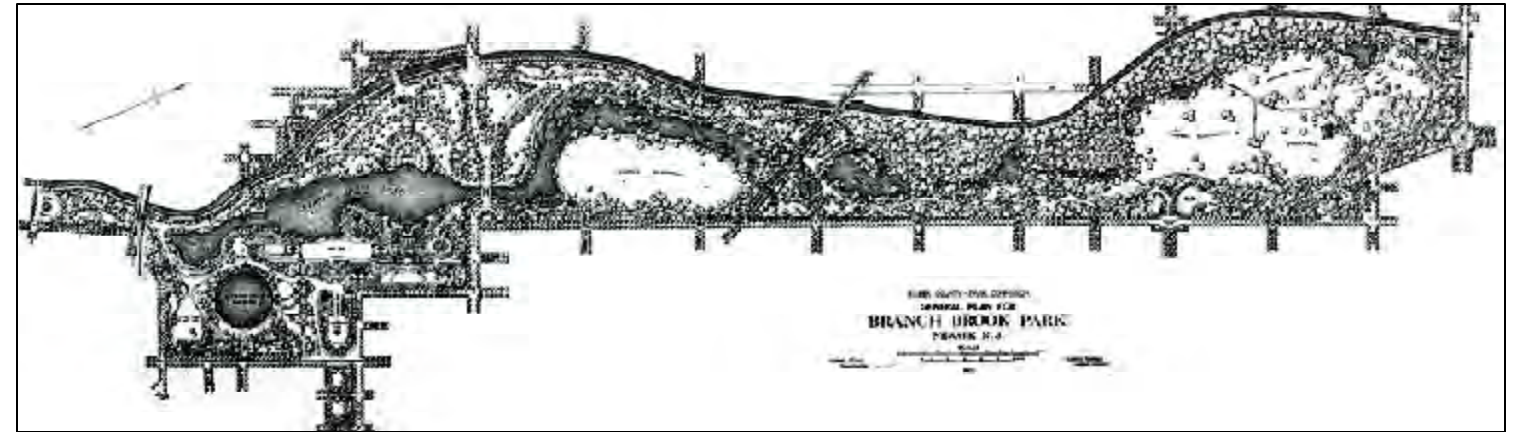
### Period of Significance for Branch Brook Park: 1896-1937

The Period of Significance for Branch Brook Park - the period when the design intent for the site was realized to its greatest extent - spans the time between 1896 and 1937. While the first ideas for a park in the area of the Branch Brook were developed as early as 1867 when Olmsted and Vaux proposed a large park for the site, it was not until Barret and Bogart, and later the Olmsted firm, were hired that specific plans were developed and a complete park was actually designed, implemented, and constructed. It is the period of work by these two design firms - first Bogart and Barret and then the Olmsted firm - that together constitute the Period of Significance for the park.

In understanding the historic development of the park, it is essential to consider the site not only in its entirety, but also as a series of separate units - the Southern Division, Middle Division, Northern Division, and the Extension - that were developed over time. Design and construction work on the Southern, Middle, and Northern Divisions of the park began in 1896 with Barret and Bogart's plans for the park and the construction of the Southern Division in accordance with their design. Design



Barret & Bogart Plan for Branch Brook Park, 1897. Source: 1897 *Annual Report*.

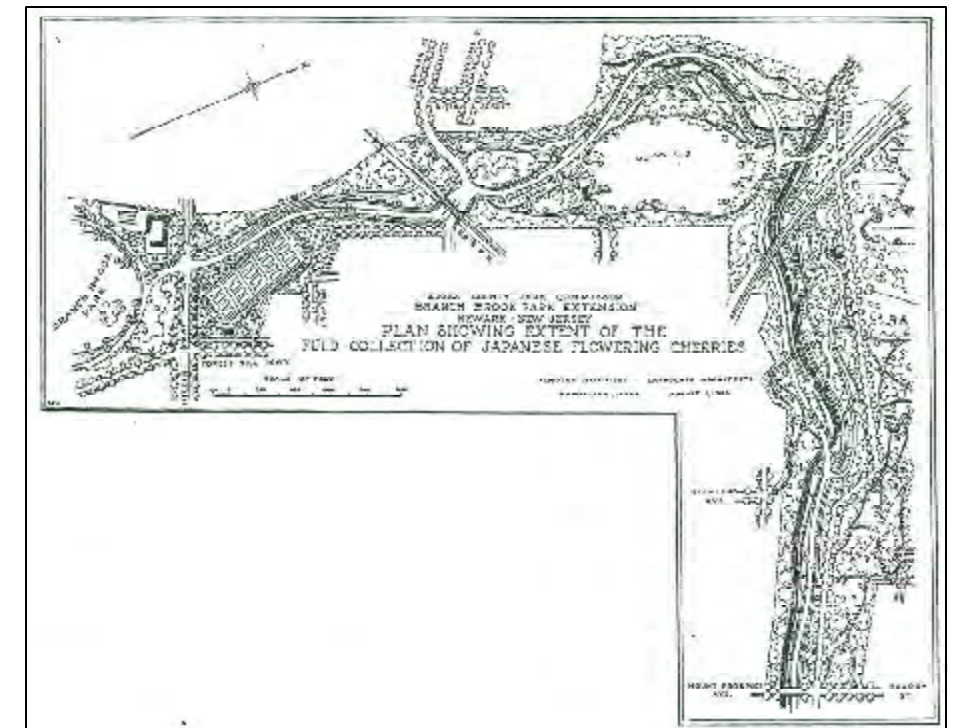


Olmsted Plan, 1901. Source: ONHS, plan #2121-501.

and construction continued more or less continuously through the transition to the Olmsted design team and the completion of the Middle and Northern Divisions under their supervision in 1906. It is in 1906 that the three lower divisions of the park could be considered complete, along with the two elements - the Park Avenue Bridge and the Bloomfield Avenue Bridge - that were so critical to defining and separating these three park divisions. Therefore, under the broad definition of the Period of Significance for the entirety of Branch Brook Park, it can be said that a shorter period, or subset, from 1896 to 1906, marks the defining period for the Southern, Middle, and Northern divisions of the park.

Similarly, because design and construction work on the Extension began by the Olmsted firm in around 1925 and was completed in 1937, the defining period for the Extension can also be considered a subset of the park's Period of Significance. This period begins with the first Olmsted sketches and topographical studies, and ends with the last known correspondence regarding the final completion of the Extension in 1937.

Rather than divide the overall Period of Significance for Branch Brook Park into the two subsets outlined above, the project team feels it is more useful, and inclusive, to define the Period by the broader term, and then to further specify "defining periods" for the southern three divisions (together) and the Extension. Also, because minor changes were made in the Southern, Middle, and Northern divisions after 1906, it makes sense for the Cultural Landscape Report, as well as for the Treatment and Management Plans, to define the Period of Significance for Branch Brook Park in the most accurate, but broad, terms possible, therefore 1896-1937.



Plan showing the extent of flowering cherry trees in the Extension, 1928. Source: ONHS, plan #2121-757.



## CHAPTER 2: REMAINING HISTORIC FABRIC

Most of the existing physical fabric of Branch Brook Park is historic. Figures 1-6 depict this physical fabric and delineate those elements that contribute to the period of significance for the site. The existing fabric that is shown consists of buildings, structures, bridges, walls, stairways, fences, railings, sculptures, paths, roadways, and parking areas in Branch Brook Park. Also shown are the water bodies, lawns, meadows, and ballfields that are important components of the physical “structure” of the park. Vegetation, a crucial element of historic fabric, is to be studied in detail under a separate, future effort.

As can be seen by comparing Figures 1-6 with the period plans for the park (see Cultural Landscape Report Volume 2: History of the Park and Critical Periods of Development), much of what remains is complete and intact. However, other elements and areas, especially the non-contributing resources in the south area of the Southern Division of the park, remain only as fragments of what was once designed and built.

Figures 1-6 also show, in red, those elements that are considered *not* important to the historic integrity of the park. These “non-contributing resources” consist of elements that were either constructed after the period of significance, are of inappropriate design, or have been compromised to such an extent that they now detract from the original design intent of the park or a specific area of the park.

Figures 1-6 are important not only because they give a detailed classification of all the elements in the park, but also because they illustrate which of these features are original and essential to the design of the park and to the period of significance. This type of assessment is an essential part of the cultural landscape report process and is the next step in moving from the documentation of history and existing conditions (Cultural Landscape Report Volumes 1 & 2) toward the completion of treatment plans for the entire park. Simply, this assessment of historic fabric will be used in the next phase of work to dictate how Branch Brook Park will be preserved, rehabilitated, restored, or reconstructed in the future, as well as how the park will be managed.

Following are descriptions of the historic fabric in each area of the park that correspond to Figures 1-6.

### Figure 1: Historic Fabric – Southern Division

Evident in Figure 1, the Southern Division of Branch Brook Park has perhaps the greatest amount of remaining historic fabric in the park, ranging from historic structures (such as the Octagon Shelter) to remnant pathways and walls on both the east and west sides of the lake. This abundance of historic elements is not surprising considering the fact that this division once contained the most elaborate system of pathways, walls, and gardens in the park. While a large portion of these once ornate gardens is now either missing or highly compromised (see Figure 7), enough remains to

serve as a “framework” for the possible rehabilitation, restoration, or reconstruction of some or all of these areas in the future.

Existing historic structures include the Sand Court Shelter in the southeast corner of the park, the Octagon Shelter, the Park Avenue Bridge, and the [east and west] “subway” pedestrian underpasses (one on each side of the lake). All of these structures, with the exception of the Park Avenue Bridge, were designed by the renowned architectural firm Carrere and Hastings (working in collaboration with the Olmsted firm) and were constructed between 1898 and 1900. The Park Avenue Bridge was designed by the New York architectural firm Babb, Cook, and Willard, and was constructed in 1903.



The Sand Court Shelter, 1902. Source: ONHS, photo #2121-128.



Meeker Mound and the Octagon Shelter, 1899. Source: 1898-99 *Annual Report*.



Looking west through the eastern subway underpass, c. 1901. Source: ONHS, photo #2121-141.



The Park Avenue [Midlake] Bridge, c.1901. Source: 1907 *Annual Report*.

Prominent landscape features include the remaining lawn, pathways, and lakeside walls of the Music Court (on the west side of the lake) and the remaining fragments of the English, Diamond, Lotus, and Dutch Gardens on the east side of the lake. (See Cultural Landscape Report Volume 2, Period Plan 5, for exact location of historic gardens). These areas that together comprise the majority of the Southern Division — the Music Court on the west side of the

# BRANCH BROOK PARK

## Cultural Landscape Report Newark, New Jersey

### Major Features

- 1 [Sand Court] Shelter
- 2 Restrooms
- 3 Basketball courts field house
- 4 Playground
- 5 Roller rink
- 6 Boat house
- 7 South Branch Brook Drive Bridge
- 8 Subway-East
- 9 Mendelssohn bust
- 10 Octagon Shelter
- 11 Subway-West
- 12 Restroom
- 13 Lion sculptures
- 14 Restroom
- 15 Park Ave Bridge

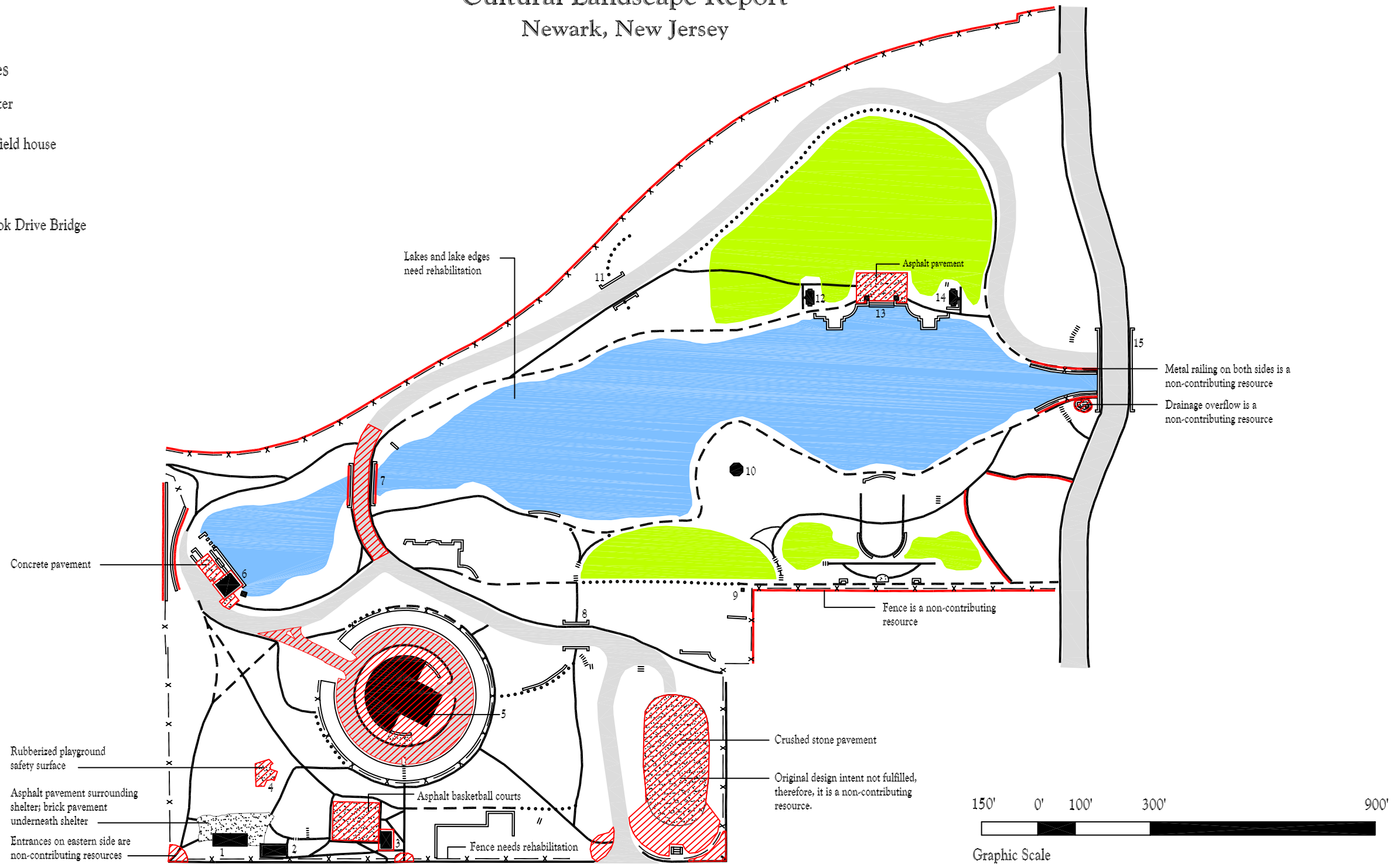


Figure 1 : Historic Fabric - Southern Division

Legend	
	Building
	Fence or Railing
	Wall
	Pedestrian path: asphalt
	Pedestrian path: dirt
	Mowed lawn
	Ballfield
	Bridge
	Stairs
	Water
	Pedestrian path: crushed stone
	Roads and parking areas
	Rough meadow
	Non-contributing resources

Sources:  
 ° City of Newark Engineering Department  
 Topographical Survey  
 ° Rhodeside & Harwell, Inc. field reconnaissance  
 ° Branch Brook Park Cultural Landscape Report.  
 Volume 2: History of the Park and Critical Periods  
 of Development. Rhodeside & Harwell, Inc, et. al.



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lake and the formal gardens on the east side — were features that were first proposed by Barrett and Bogart in 1897, were constructed beginning in 1898, and were later incorporated into the Olmsted firm's General Plan for Branch Brook Park in 1901.

A comparison between what once existed in the Southern Division (See Cultural Landscape Report Volume 2, Period Plans 5 through 8) and what remains today (Figure 1) reveals that what is seen



Gardens on the east side of Branch Brook Lake as they appeared in 1898, looking northwest. Source: ONHS, photo #2121-120.



Present-day remains of formal gardens, again looking northwest across lake. Source: James Lecky.

today on both sides of the lake are mere remnants, or apparitions, of a former glorious past. For the most part, however, those pathways, walls, and gardens that do remain can be considered contributing resources.

Along with containing a large number of historic elements and a great deal of spatial integrity, the Southern Division also contains perhaps the largest areas and numbers of non-contributing resources. This is partly due to the fact that the Reservoir, which existed before the construction of the park and was then integrated into the park design, no longer serves its historic purpose and instead is drained of water and houses

a modern-day adaptive reuse as the site for the roller rink building. The same is true of Concourse Hill, which was originally designed and constructed as a raised carriage and pedestrian concourse with several structures on it, from which the garden terraces were intended to be viewed as foreground to the lake. Though this mound still exists in physical form, it is now a barren, gravel-covered plateau that no longer meets its original design intent and is therefore considered a non-



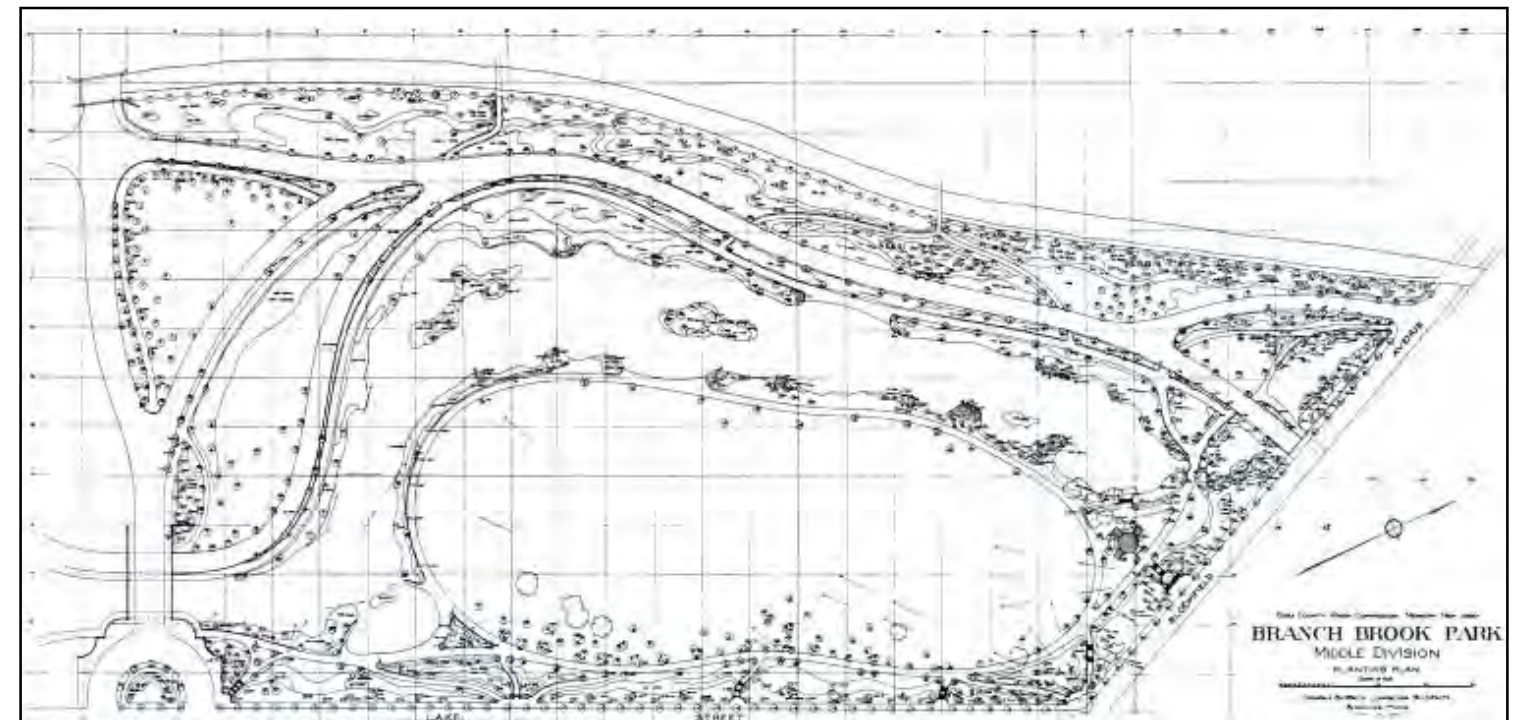
Historic view west across "Poplar Walk" and the reservoir. Source: James Lecky.

contributing resource. Also highlighted as non-contributing are: the South Branch Brook Drive Bridge, which had been a part of the original Barret & Bogart and Olmsted plans but was only added in 1971 (and in a changed location); the small existing Boathouse, which is a 1991 replacement for a once-grand boathouse structure that occupied this same location from 1906 to 1940; the playground; the basketball courts; and several pathways, entrances, and fences located throughout the Southern Division. The New Jersey Transit rail line, visible from all three divisions, is a non-contributing resource throughout the western edge of the park.

Notes: (1) For historic fabric no longer in existence (missing) see Figure 7. (2) Vegetation, a crucial element of historic fabric, is to be studied under a separate, future effort.

## Figure 2: Historic Fabric – Middle Division

The focus of the remaining historic fabric in the Middle Division is Branch Brook Lake and its planted edges, along with the "Middle Playfield" on the east side of the lake. Unlike the Southern Division, which was built as an amalgam of Barret & Bogart and Olmsted design features, the Middle Division is entirely Olmstedian. As a result,



Planting plan for the Middle Division, 14 February 1900. Source: ONHS, plan #2121-454.

the lake and its richly planted border were designed to provide a visually diverse, more solitary recreational experience (of boating and strolling) as a counterpoint to the more intensively active recreation intended for the adjacent Playfield. While the condition of the waterway and lakeside plantings in this division have been greatly compromised, they are still contributing resources that meet their original intent, though their condition is compromised by siltation of the stream and bank erosion in many areas. The Playfield, which was originally designed to serve as an athletic field for boys under fourteen years of age, meets its original design intent as well. This includes the existing softball and baseball fields, which are two of the original planned uses besides football, cricket, and

# BRANCH BROOK PARK

## Cultural Landscape Report

Newark, New Jersey

### Major Features

- 16 [Octagon] Field House
- 17 Water fountain
- 18 Roberto Clemente Field House
- 19 Water fountain
- 20 Rick Cirone Field House
- 21 Flaggpole
- 22 Seniors Building
- 23 Pump House
- 24 Bloomfield Ave Bridge

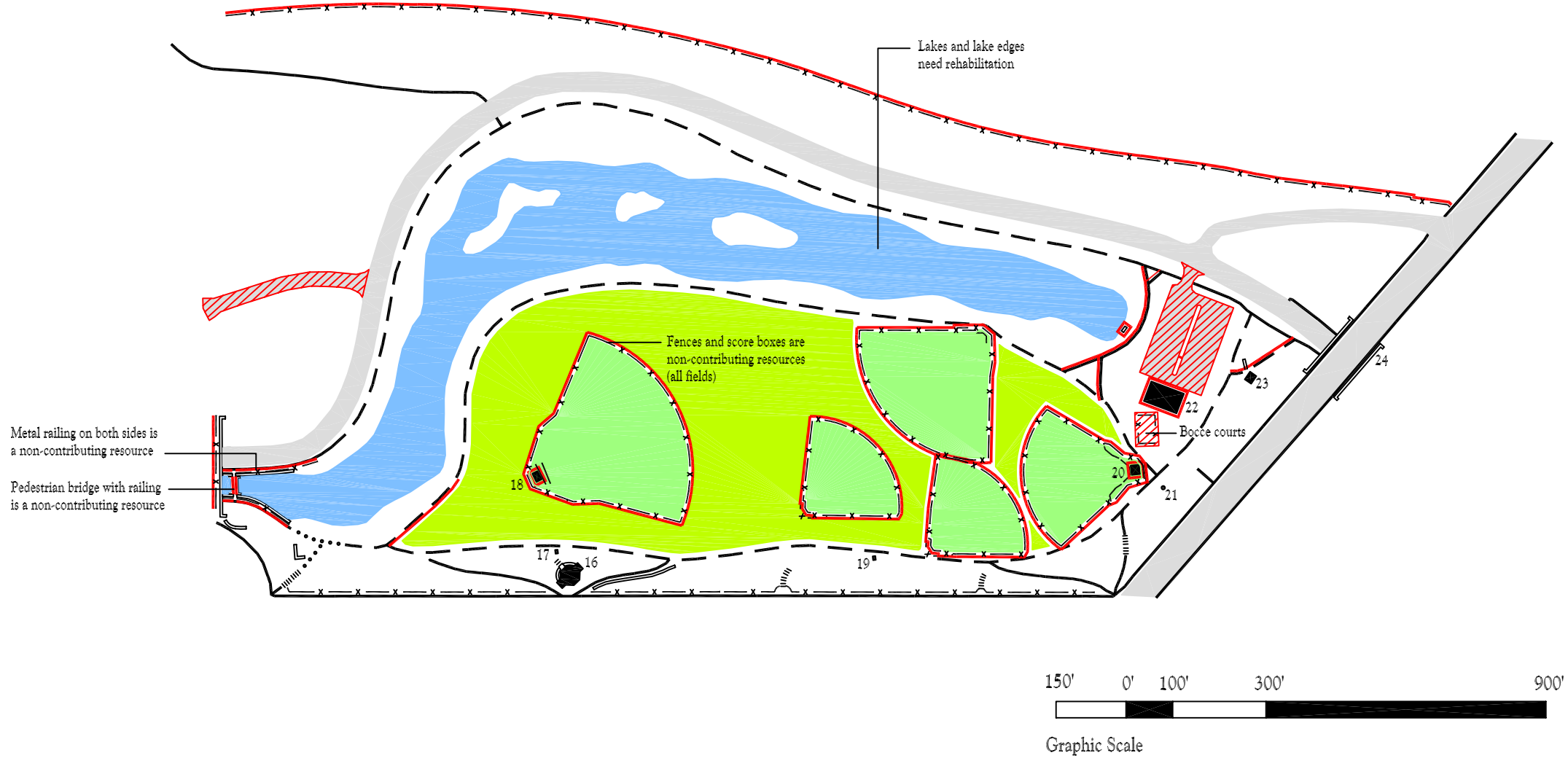
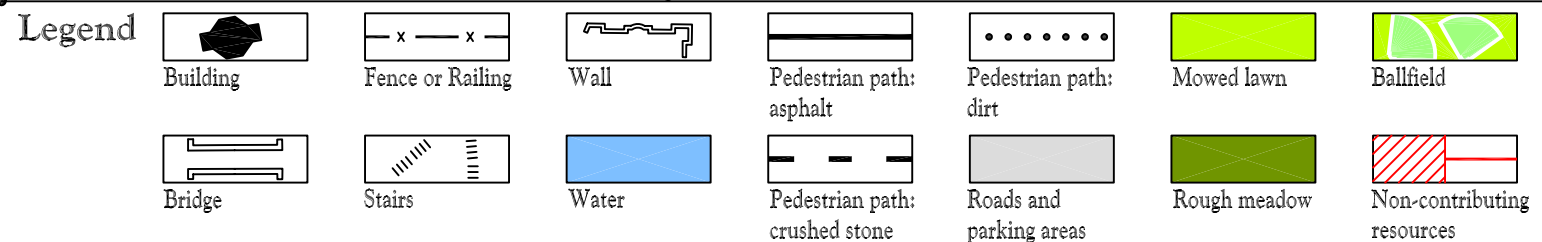


Figure 2 : Historic Fabric - Middle Division



Sources:  
 ° City of Newark Engineering Department Topographical Survey  
 ° Rhodeside & Harwell, Inc. field reconnaissance  
 ° Branch Brook Park Cultural Landscape Report. Volume 2: History of the Park and Critical Periods of Development. Rhodeside & Harwell, Inc, et. al.



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Plantings along bank of lake in Middle Division, 1914. Source: ONHS, photo #2121-166.



View north over lake channel in the Middle Division, with Playfield visible in the background, c.1901. Source: 1901 *Annual Report*.

soccer. The modern fencing that surrounds the fields, however, is considered a non-contributing resource, along with the score boxes, light poles, and recreation buildings.

Historic structures of note in the Middle Division include the [Octagon] Field House and the Bloomfield Avenue Bridge, the later of which, like the Park Avenue Bridge, was designed by the firm Babb, Cook and Willard (though in a simpler style).



Present-day view of Middle Division ballfields, looking southwest from entrance off Lake Street.

Also remaining in this division are the various paths, stairs, fences, and entrances to the park along Lake Street, most of which remain intact and all of which contribute to the historic fabric of the area. Perhaps most important to both the historic design and the circulation pattern in the Middle Division are the two historic pathways – originally referred to by the Olmsted firm as the “shore walk” — that parallel the shoreline of Branch Brook Lake on both its east and west sides.

Apparent in Figure 2 is that there are quite a few elements at the north end of the Middle Division that are not original to the park design, including the Seniors’ Building, the parking lot, the bocce courts, and several pathways. Because the north end of Branch Brook Lake was filled in, around 1969, for the construction of the Seniors’ Building, all of these elements (including the reconfigured pathways south of the parking lot) are considered non-contributing resources. Another non-contributing element of note is the entrance road that connects Park Avenue to Branch Brook Drive (on the west side of the lake). The original entry road was changed into a footpath in the 1980’s (visible in the upper left hand corner of Figure 2), and the present-day ramp is therefore considered to be non-contributing.

It should be noted that when the Middle Division was first constructed, a great deal of drainage and engineering work was required to convert the irregular and swampy land of the area into the lake and playfield. An extensive network of pipes, drains, and catch basins was constructed to drain the

playfield. Unfortunately this system is present but no longer functioning, and poor drainage continues to be a problem today. Consequently, any future restoration work undertaken in the playfield and along the lake edges would require the rehabilitation of the existing drainage network or the construction of a new system.

Notes: (1) For historic fabric no longer in existence (missing) see Figure 7. (2) Vegetation, a crucial element of historic fabric, is to be studied under a separate, future effort.

### Figure 3: Historic Fabric – Northern Division (Bloomfield Ave. to Ballantine Gateway)

As can be seen in Figures 3 and 4, the Northern Division of Branch Brook Park has a large number of historic elements, is largely intact, and contains very few non-contributing resources. In fact, despite the silted and deteriorated condition of the stream, ponds, and lake, the Northern Division remains truest to the original design of any of the three main divisions of Branch Brook Park (Southern, Middle, and Northern). Moreover, it is not just the original design, but the spatial integrity and feel of the Northern Division that is in excellent condition.

Figure 3 depicts the features in the southern end of the Northern Division, an area dominated by the central stream, ponds, and pools that are the focus of the original park design. Specifically, the park is oriented around Clark’s Pond, the Midwood Pool, and the Edgewood Pool, all of which are strung along the Branch Brook. While



Historic view of Clark’s Island in an antique postcard, date unknown. Source: James Lecky.



Present-day view of Clark’s Island, which is no longer separated from the shoreline. Source: James Lecky.

Clark’s Pond Island and Abeona Pool (original features of the park – see Figure 7) no longer remain, the various parts of the water system can be considered the character-defining elements of the Northern Division and the park as a whole. These elements, along with the shoreline plantings, streamside forests, and hillsides sloping down to the water are all considered contributing resources.

Before the construction of the park, the entire Northern Division up to Heller Avenue existed as a wet lowland called the “Bluejay Swamp.” This swamp, much the same as in the Middle Division, required extensive drainage before construction and still has a remnant drainage system underneath.

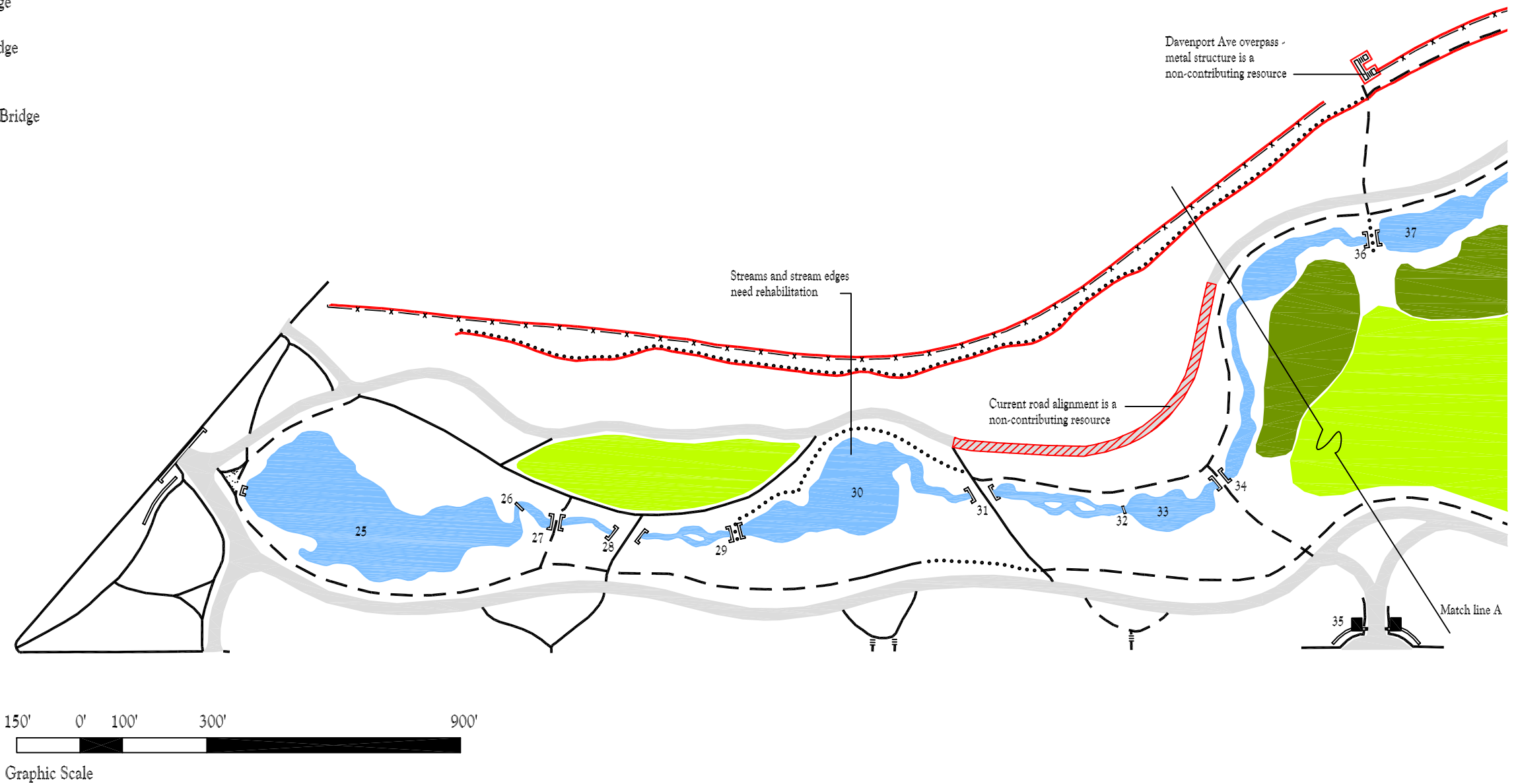
Distinct to the Northern Division are a number of character-defining structures, including the six stone, rubble, and

# BRANCH BROOK PARK

## Cultural Landscape Report Newark, New Jersey

### Major Features

- 25 Clark's Pond
- 26 Wier 1
- 27 Laurel Wood Boulder Bridge
- 28 Crossover Drive Bridge
- 29 Midwood Pool Bridge
- 30 Midwood Pool
- 31 Midwood Drive Bridge
- 32 Wier 2
- 33 Edgewood Pool
- 34 Brownstone Bench Bridge
- 35 Ballantine Gateway
- 36 Crossover Bridge
- 37 Meadow Pool



**Figure 3 : Historic Fabric - Northern Division (Bloomfield Ave. to Ballantine Gateway)**

Legend							

Sources:  
 ° City of Newark Engineering Department  
 Topographical Survey  
 ° Rhodeside & Harwell, Inc. field reconnaissance  
 ° Branch Brook Park Cultural Landscape Report.  
 Volume 2: History of the Park and Critical Periods  
 of Development. Rhodeside & Harwell, Inc. et. al.



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Condition of the Northern Division before improvement, c. 1901. Source: 1901 *Annual Report*.



"Cobble Bridge," located between the Ballantine Gates and Abington Pool, 1901. Source: ONHS, photo #2121-73.

rough-cut granite bridges that cross over the stream between Clark's Pond and Ballantine Parkway. All of these bridges, each one slightly individual in design and character, were designed by the Olmsted firm and were constructed between 1900 and 1901. Also notable are two stone wiers (features #26 and #32 in Figure 3), which were used to control the water level in the brook. Perhaps no structure, however, is more visible and distinctive in the Northern Division than the Ballantine Gateway. This grand entrance, built with money and land donated by the Ballantine brewing family (who had been major park benefactors), was designed, like several structures in the Southern Division, by the well-known architectural firm of Carrere and Hastings.

Other historic elements include all of the various roads, footpaths, stairways, and entrances that traverse the wooded streamside and connect the park to the Forest Hill neighborhood (located on the east side of the park).



Present-day view of Ballantine Gateway, looking west across Lake Street.

The only non-contributing elements in this area are the fence and pathway along the western boundary of the park, a portion of Brookside Drive that was re-aligned in the 1980's, and the pedestrian overpass that connects the park to the New Jersey Transit subway stop at Davenport Avenue. (It should be noted that a foot-bridge appears in this location on several period plans. Therefore, although the concept of a bridge in this location is a contributing element, the existing metal bridge is a non-contributing resource due to its inappropriate design). The butterfly garden, though a non-contributing element, is not significantly descriptive of the overall spatial quality of the Northern Division.

Notes: (1) For historic fabric no longer in existence (missing) see Figure 7. (2) Vegetation, a crucial element of historic fabric, is to be studied under a separate, future effort.

#### Figure 4: Historic Fabric – Northern Division (Ballantine Gateway to Heller Parkway)

Like the southern end of the Northern Division, this area is one of the character-defining regions of the park, is largely intact, and contains very few non-contributing resources. Unlike the southern end, however, this northern part of the division is focused mainly on the large expanses of open lawn and meadow that dominate the area



Present-day view south across the Upper Meadow in the Northern Division.



Tennis courts on the North Playfield, c. 1901. Source: ONHS, photo #2121-130.

(rather than on the water course). While the stream and the pools along it are important features, they are not the central focus that they are just a short distance to the south. The most prominent features, therefore, are the Upper Meadow, Brookside Meadow, Knollfield, and North Playfield (as well as the bordering meadows) that together compose such a large portion of the site. John C. Olmsted explained the design for the Upper Northern Division in 1899 when he noted, "The greatest landscape value of the land will be obtained by throwing the drive and brook at least as far west as I have contemplated, thus securing the largest possible unbroken extent of meadow in one body and making the brook with the trees which will shade it and the adjoining walk and drive a bordering feature for the open meadow. Rather than reduce the meadow in extent, I have concluded in this portion of the waterway to keep it narrow for a greater part of its length."

Significant structures include the two stone footbridges at the northern end of the stream, a third wier, and the maintenance facility for the Essex County Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs. While most of the existing maintenance buildings were constructed in 1962, there have been green-



Present-day photo of wier in the Northern Division - one of three that was used to control water level in the brook. Source: James Lecky.



# BRANCH BROOK PARK

## Cultural Landscape Report Newark, New Jersey

### Major Features

- 33 Edgewood Pool
- 34 Brownstone Bench Bridge
- 35 Ballantine Gateway
- 36 Crossover Bridge
- 37 Meadow Pool
- 38 Wier 3
- 39 Policemen's Memorial
- 40 Brookside Meadow Bridge
- 41 Brownstone Lintel Bridge
- 42 Upper Pool
- 43 Maintenance area
- 44 Upper Meadow
- 45 Brookside Meadow
- 46 Knollfield
- 47 North Playfield

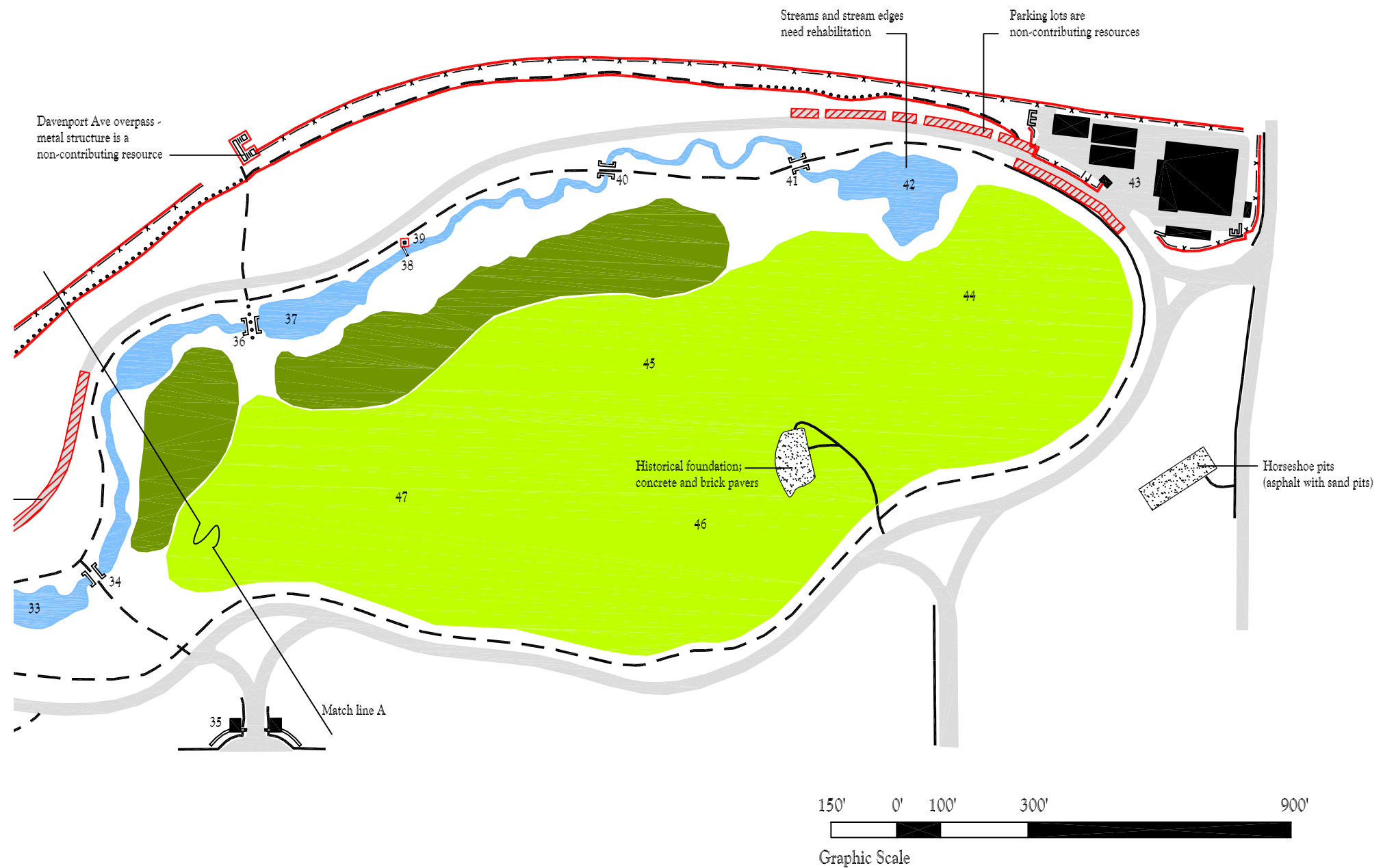


Figure 4 : Historic Fabric - Northern Division (Ballantine Gateway to Heller Ave.)

Legend	Building	Fence or Railing	Wall	Pedestrian path: asphalt	Pedestrian path: dirt	Mowed lawn	Ballfield

Sources:  
 ° City of Newark Engineering Department  
 Topographical Survey  
 ° Rhodeside & Harwell, Inc. field reconnaissance  
 ° Branch Brook Park Cultural Landscape Report.  
 Volume 2: History of the Park and Critical Periods  
 of Development. Rhodeside & Harwell, Inc, et. al.



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Existing maintenance facility, as seen from Brookside Drive at Heller Parkway.



greenhouses, utility structures, and stables in this location since the construction of the Northern Division in 1899. Consequently, while the current maintenance facility does not fit in with the character of the park and is poorly screened, its location can be considered a contributing resource. Also visible on Figure 4 is the foundation of the former Knollfield Shelter, which had been built in 1906 as a facility for players using the northern playfields for tennis, gymnastics, cricket, baseball, and football. This structure existed until the late 1990's, when it burned down and left the meadow without one of its anchors.

Other prominent features at the north end of the division include the circumferential roadway (Brookside Drive and North Branch Brook Drive), the foot path that parallels it, and the roadway entrances from Heller Parkway and Elwood Avenue.

Non-contributing elements in this area of the park include the fence and pathway along the western boundary of the park and the parking areas on either side of Brookside Drive.

Notes: (1) For historic fabric no longer in existence (missing) see Figure 7. (2) Vegetation, a crucial element of historic fabric, is to be studied under a separate, future effort.

### Figure 5: Historic Fabric – Extension

Figure 5 shows that there is a great deal of historic fabric in the Branch Brook Park Extension, the last of the four park divisions to be designed and constructed. Because of the linear nature of this part of the park, much of what exists in the Extension consists of roadways and paths along Branch Brook Drive, Mill Street, and the Second River. While the central point of the western part of the Extension is the Visitors' Center and accompanying ballfields, it is the meandering pattern of Branch Brook Drive and the paths that parallel it (as well as the Second River) that are most significant. Important structures include the two railroad bridges that cross over Branch Brook Drive as well as the Visitors' Center Building. Also of note is the fact the Second River is channelized along its entire length through the Extension, an engineering solution to the problem of converting a steeply sloping river valley into a scenic parkway. All of these concrete walls along the river exist today; Figure 5 points out the varying materials along the bottom of the river channel.



Railroad tracks crossing the Second River, prior to the development of the Extension, c.1925. Source: ONHS, photo #2121-204.



Second River channel during construction, no date. Source: Newark Public Library.

The idea for the Extension was first conceived as early as the late-1880's, when the lower three divisions of Branch Brook Park were being designed and built. The Olmsted firm saw an opportunity to protect the wild scenery around the Second River by incorporating it into a tree-covered route that would link Branch Brook Park (at its northern edge) to the Passaic River and other scenic areas of the county. It was not until 1926, however, that design and construction work began to convert the sloping industrial land of the Second River valley into a picturesque park.

In comparing the Extension, as it exists today, with the period plans for the park (see Cultural Landscape Report, Volume 2), it becomes evident that the Extension appears today much as it did when it was completed by the late 1930's – early 1940's. This includes the recreation areas, the first of which — the 20 tennis courts — were completed in 1928. Expansion of the sports facilities continued, and by 1949 an inventory included the tennis courts, 4 baseball fields, a bicycle area, and 2 fieldhouses (at the tennis courts and the baseball fields). All of these facilities from the 1949 inventory still remain (except the "bicycle area"), and have been heavily used over the decades.

The historic walls, paths, parking lots, and roadways are also largely intact. Part of this may be due to the fact that the Extension was constructed after the lower three divisions of the park and is therefore younger. It may also be due to the linear nature of the park, which places less demand on the physical spaces of the park. Indeed, much of the value of the Extension is the visual stimulation that it gives to viewers driving through it along Branch Brook Drive and Mill Street.

Perhaps most remarkable about the western Extension are the remaining historic plantings, particularly the cherry



Present-day view of cherry trees along Branch Brook Drive in the Extension. Source: Greensward Foundation, Inc.

# BRANCH BROOK PARK

## Cultural Landscape Report Newark, New Jersey

### Major Features

- 48 Tennis Building
- 49 Tennis courts (Althea Gibson Tennis Center)
- 50 Erie Railroad Bridge
- 51 Flagpole
- 52 Visitors' Center
- 53 Maintenance Building
- 54 Boonton Line Bridge [Greenwood Lake Branch Bridge]
- 55 Footbridge

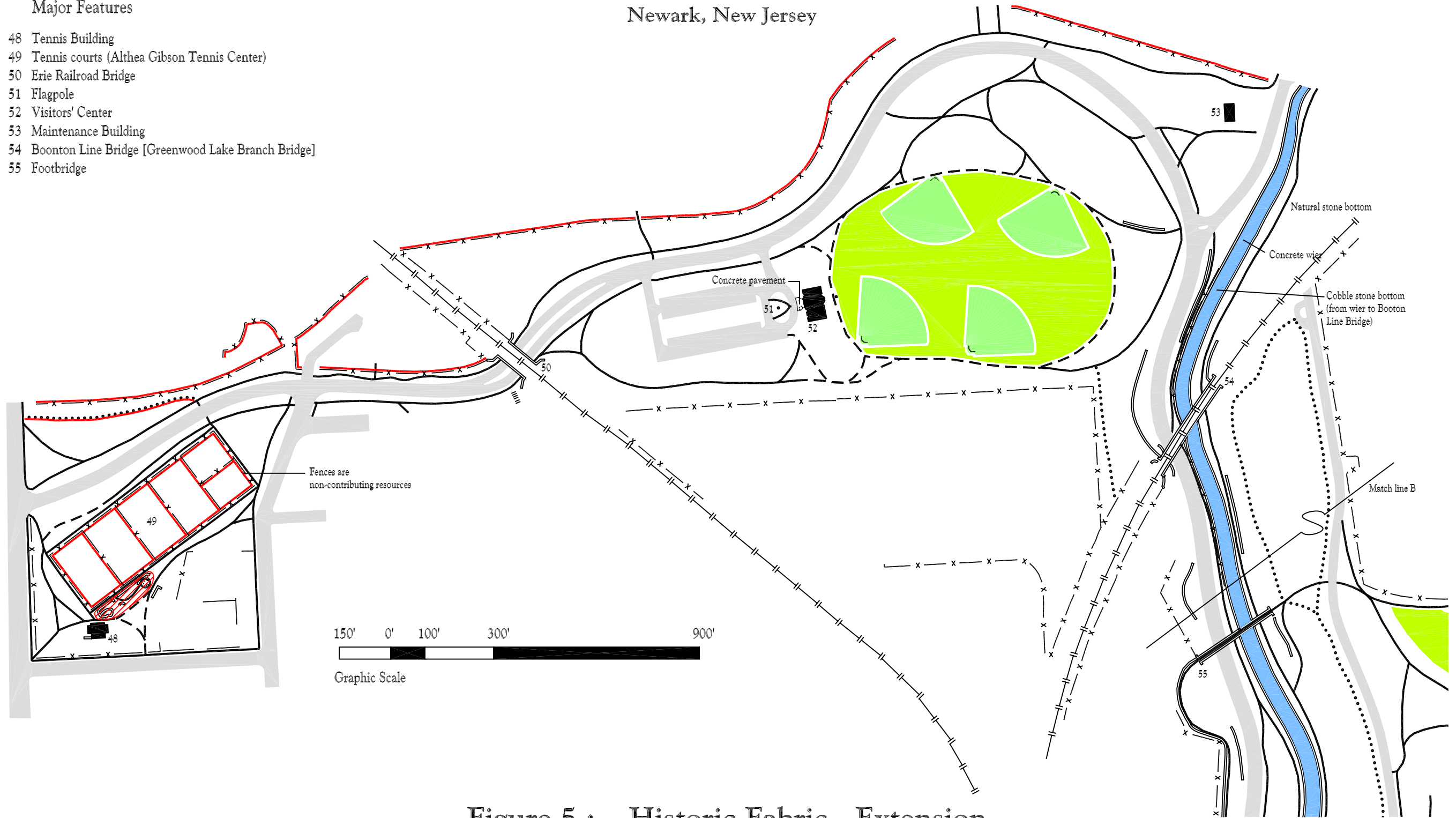


Figure 5 : Historic Fabric - Extension

Legend	Building	Fence or Railing	Wall	Pedestrian path: asphalt	Pedestrian path: dirt	Mowed lawn	Ballfield
	Bridge	Stairs	Water	Pedestrian path: crushed stone	Roads and parking areas	Railroad tracks	Non-contributing resources

Sources:  
 ° City of Newark Engineering Department Topographical Survey  
 ° Rhodeside & Harwell, Inc. field reconnaissance  
 ° Branch Brook Park Cultural Landscape Report. Volume 2: History of the Park and Critical Periods of Development. Rhodeside & Harwell, Inc., et. al.

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trees. These distinctive and character-defining trees, which have so much value as a cultural icon for the park, will be studied, along with the rest of the vegetation, under a separate, future effort.

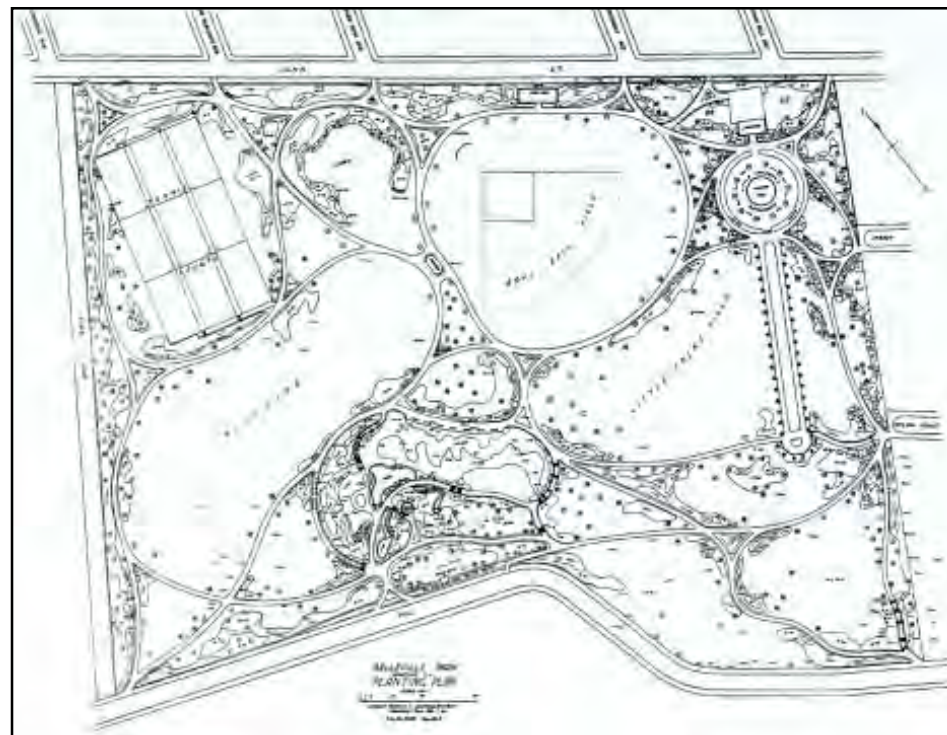
The non-contributing resources in this area of the park are the fences and one dirt path along the western boundary of the site, as well as the fences surrounding the tennis courts. There is also a small area adjacent to the tennis courts on the east side that contains some paths, walls, and planters that are non-contributing.

Notes: (1) For historic fabric no longer in existence (missing) see Figure 7. (2) Vegetation, a crucial element of historic fabric, is to be studied under a separate, future effort.

### Figure 6: Historic Fabric – Extension (eastern end)

Figure 6 illustrates the remaining historic fabric on the eastern end of the Extension and in Belleville Park. While the majority of the historic elements in this area are in Belleville Park, there is also Mill Street itself and the paths, bridges, and walls along the Second River. As with most of the Northern Division and the western part of the Extension (Figure 5), the area of the park shown in Figure 6 is largely intact and retains much of its physical and spatial integrity. Highlighted are the open lawns and ballfields of Belleville Park, along with the many paths on the hillside sloping down from Belleville Park to the river.

Belleville Park was designed by the Olmsted firm between 1915 and 1917, and was constructed before the rest of the Extension was developed. Percival Gallagher, an associate of the firm, noted in his initial inspection of the site that the sloping land was “well adapted for park purposes,” with an abandoned redstone quarry, views of the mountains, and sizeable trees. Thirty-two acres of topographically-irregular land was developed to create the pathways and playgrounds of the park, much of which remains intact today. It should be noted, however, that there are several historical pieces missing from Belleville Park (including a linear



Planting plan for Belleville Park, 1917. Source: ONHS, plan #2148-8.



Pedestrian bridge over Second River, date unknown. Source: Newark Public Library.



Present-day view of the Extension's eastern end, with the Second River and cherry trees to the right.

mall along the eastern boundary and several interior pathways); these areas are highlighted in Figure 7. Structures in Belleville Park include the Senior Citizens' Building and the shelter pavilion.

In the Extension, outside of Belleville Park, there are several significant structures including the tall pedestrian bridge that crosses over Branch Brook Drive and the Second River, and the roadway bridges that cross over the river at Mill Street, Mt. Prospect Avenue, and Summit Avenue. The pedestrian bridge, 272 feet in length, was constructed in 1931 to connect Belleville Park and Mill Street with Tiffany Boulevard. The Mill Street Bridge over the Second River (#56 in Figure 6) was constructed the same year.

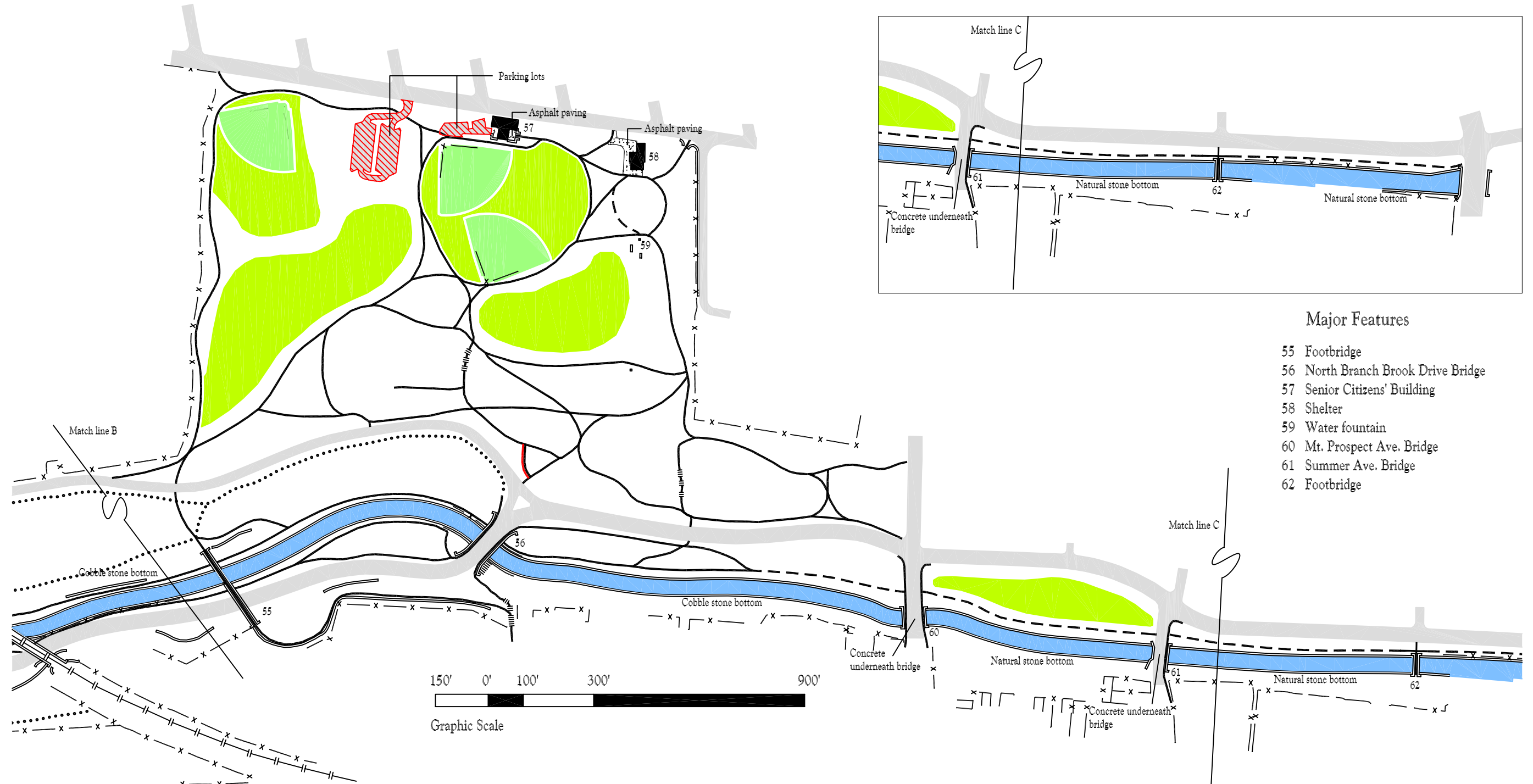
As noted in the previous section, the Second River is channelized with a series of planted terrace walls along the entire length of the Extension. This improvement was part of the original design, and allowed designers the space to create a scenic parkway along the top of the river bank. Figures 5 and 6 also note the type of bottom material along the length of the river in the Extension, as it varies between natural stone, cobble stone, and concrete.

The only non-contributing elements in Belleville Park and the eastern end of the Extension are the two parking areas adjacent to Belleville Avenue, and one small section of trail near the intersection of Branch Brook Drive and Mill Street.

Notes: (1) For historic fabric no longer in existence (missing) see Figure 7. (2) Vegetation, a crucial element of historic fabric, is to be studied under a separate, future effort.

# BRANCH BROOK PARK

## Cultural Landscape Report Newark, New Jersey



- ### Major Features
- 55 Footbridge
  - 56 North Branch Brook Drive Bridge
  - 57 Senior Citizens' Building
  - 58 Shelter
  - 59 Water fountain
  - 60 Mt. Prospect Ave. Bridge
  - 61 Summer Ave. Bridge
  - 62 Footbridge

Figure 6 : Historic Fabric - Extension (eastern end)

Legend	
	Building
	Fence or Railing
	Wall
	Pedestrian path: asphalt
	Pedestrian path: dirt
	Mowed lawn
	Ballfield
	Bridge
	Stairs
	Water
	Pedestrian path: crushed stone
	Roads and parking areas
	Railroad tracks
	Non-contributing resources

Sources:  
 ° City of Newark Engineering Department  
 Topographical Survey  
 ° Rhodeside & Harwell, Inc. field reconnaissance  
 ° Branch Brook Park Cultural Landscape Report.  
 Volume 2: History of the Park and Critical Periods  
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## CHAPTER 3: RESOURCE AND SPATIAL INTEGRITY

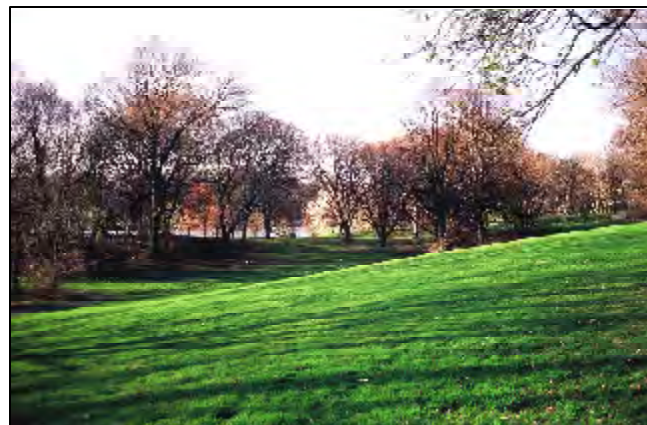
As a natural corollary to an assessment of the physical features, or historic fabric, still existing in the park (Figures 1-6), it is necessary to understand the spatial integrity and resource integrity of the spaces and elements that remain. Spatial integrity may be defined as the way in which the designer meant the space to be perceived. Resource integrity may be defined as the critical mass of designed elements that continue to be visible as an overall design.

While the examination of historic fabric in Figures 1-6 shows which built elements still remain in the park, the analysis of Resource Integrity in Figure 7 shows which areas are missing. By showing which areas are missing a significant element or series of elements from the original design (those areas highlighted in purple), it becomes clear which areas have lost part or all of their original spatial integrity. Consequently, through this analysis it is also possible to see those areas that still retain most or all of their original spatial integrity (those areas not highlighted in purple).

As can be seen in Figure 7 and the accompanying diagrams, most of Branch Brook Park still retains its original spatial qualities, aside from those areas that are highlighted and called out on the map. Most of the areas where the spatial integrity has been compromised are in the Southern Division, including loss of much of the intricate system of pathways, walls, and gardens that were part of the

original design. On the west side of the lake in the Southern Division, the “Music Court” is missing its main concourse, bandstand, radial system of paths, and many of its formal tree plantings, while on the east side of the lake almost all of the original paths and gardens are missing. One entire block of this area (between Parker Street and Highland Street) was, in fact, destroyed when the existing Barringer High School was built in 1961 on [what was then] park land. Other areas in the Southern Division that have been severely compromised include the Statuary Garden, the area around the Dutch Garden, the pathways and arbor between the Reservoir and Clifton Avenue, and the Reservoir itself. Also missing are the original boathouse and many of the features of the “Boys’ Park” located south of Interstate 280 and Orange Street.

In the Middle and Northern Divisions, a number of pools and channels that were part of the original watercourse design are missing. Consequently, the physical and spatial integrity of these spaces has been compromised or destroyed. Included are the Wading Pool and the northern end of the lake in the Middle Division, and the Abeona Pool and the channel separating Clark’s Pond Island in the Northern Division.



Present-day view of the east side of Branch Brook Lake in the Southern Division, an area where numerous formal gardens once existed.



Existing remains of the “Dutch Garden” in the Southern Division.



Postcard showing the Wading Pool in the Middle Division, with the Playfield visible in the background, 1905. Source: Newark Public Library.



Looking northwest across Abeona Pool to Clark’s Pond in the Northern Division, 1901. Source: 1901 Annual Report.

In the meadow area of the Northern Division and in the Extension, there are only a few areas that are missing a significant number of resources. First is the Knollfield Shelter, which was completely destroyed in a fire and where only the foundation remains. The next is Belleville Park, where two areas of original interior pathways no longer remain.

Figure 7 also shows, in green, the large open lawns that are critical to the design of the park. The highlighted areas are the largest of the designed green spaces in the park, and are those that are most important to conveying the spatial qualities and design intent of the Olmsted firm. Included in this list are the Lawn Bank (Southern Division), the Middle Playfield (Middle Division), the entire North Meadow (Northern Division), and the open expanse in Belleville Park. Because they are so critical to the maintaining the spatial integrity of the park and its spaces, these open areas are essential candidates for preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, or reconstruction in the future.

Present day view east across the Music Court (toward the lake) in the Southern Division.





# BRANCH BROOK PARK

## Cultural Landscape Report Newark, New Jersey

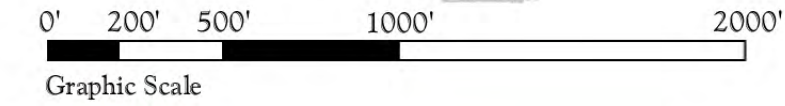
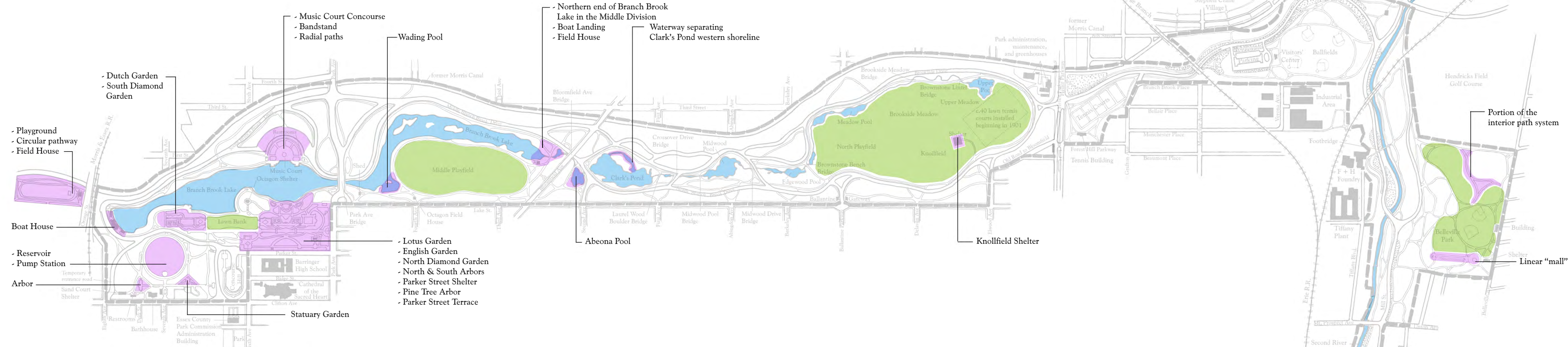

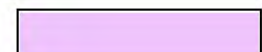






Figure 7 : Resource Integrity

Legend

-   
 Intact designed water bodies
-   
 Areas of significant missing resources
-   
 Open lawns critical to the design
-   
 Boundary of present-day park
-   
 Railroad tracks
-   
 Cherry tree areas

Notes: For specific extant resources, contributing and non-contributing, see sheets 1 through 6.  
Vegetation study pending. Data to be added when available.

Sources:  
 - Rhodeside & Harwell, Inc. field reconnaissance  
 - Branch Brook Park Cultural Landscape Report, Volume 2: History of the Park and Critical Periods of Development. Rhodeside & Harwell, Inc., et. al.  
 - Branch Brook Park CLR Archive



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## CHAPTER 4: STATEMENT OF TREATMENT AND MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY

As the premier park in the Essex County park system, the first such system in the United States, Branch Brook Park represents a cultural landscape significant not only to the County and the City of Newark, but to the entire Nation. The park, listed on both the New Jersey and the National Register of Historic Places, is a hallmark of the renowned Olmsted landscape design firm. Of vital importance as a historic landscape, Branch Brook Park is also a modern-day park, a recreation area, and a significant piece of the urban fabric of downtown Newark and the neighborhoods that surround the site. As described above, the park's four divisions - the Southern Division, Middle Division, Northern Division, and the Extension - contain elements that are original to the park's design and construction, as well as structures, materials, and facilities that have been added since the end of the period of significance.

With its long period of significance from 1896 to 1937, which incorporates the design and construction of the park first under John Bogart and N.F. Barrett, and then the Olmsted firm, Branch Brook Park, almost 100 years after the completion of the Southern, Middle, and Northern Divisions, still retains much of its original integrity and character. Added to this historic integrity



Historic postcard showing the Midwood Pool Bridge in the Northern Division, date unknown. Source: James Lecky.



The Midwood Pool Bridge today. Source: James Lecky.

and the resulting cultural significance of the park beyond just the City and County, Branch Brook Park represents an enormous future potential for tourism and economic revitalization in the communities surrounding it and in the entire City of Newark.

### Treatment and Management

Overall, much of the design intent of Branch Brook Park remains clear and the remaining historic features are largely intact. However, some elements that are not consistent with the Period of Significance exist.

The approach for the treatment of the site, therefore, is to restore the historic, contributing elements of the Period of Significance to the maximum extent possible, while providing for modern day needs and minimizing the impact of non-contributing elements that must remain. More specifically, this approach toward treatment and management has been broken down into guiding principles for each of the major design elements specified below:

#### Spatial Character

- The character of the spaces designed during the period of significance, in all four divisions of the park, should be restored and protected from future encroachment and compromise. Where spaces have been compromised, or original design intent is lost or unclear, rehabilitation should be undertaken to restore, to the maximum, the historic spatial quality.
- The critical linkages of the park's design are the circulation system, the waterways, and the character of the spaces that connect them. These elements, and the individual areas and components that comprise them, should be restored/rehabilitated to the original design intent.
- Visitors should be educated about the original design of the park and the value of the existing historic fabric.
- Appropriate contemporary needs should be accommodated and designed so that they fit in appropriately with the historic context and character of the site.

#### Vegetation

- Maintain vegetation throughout the site to preserve the spatial qualities and original design intent of the four divisions that make up the park, as well as the smaller landscape components that make up each of the four divisions. Carefully prune and manage existing vegetation to retain historic character and historic plantings while maintaining visibility for security.
- Wherever possible, retain, enhance, and replant/restore historic plantings, including trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants, so that vegetation throughout the park reflects the original design intent and the period of significance for the site.
- Utilize vegetation to screen non-historic, non-contributing elements in the park, as well as those features (located both inside and outside the park) that are visually intrusive or that detract from the spatial integrity of the site. Carefully design and prune plantings to provide screening, but maintain visibility for security and safety, where required.

#### Structures

- Eliminate non-historic, non-contributing resources that can reasonably be removed. Necessary functions being performed or accommodated in structures to be removed should be transferred to new buildings that are more appropriate to the historic setting, or should be accommodated in existing historic structures.
- Memorials and other objects should either be considered for location in other parks, or sited and constructed in such a way as not to intrude on the historic spatial quality of Branch Brook Park.



- Non-contributing structures that must remain in the park should be rehabilitated, screened, or otherwise architecturally upgraded to harmonize with the historic elements and the original design intent of the park.
- Missing historic structures should be reconstructed wherever and whenever they would be safe, maintainable, and useable, and would contribute to the overall design intent, function, and amenity of the park.
- New structures that could reasonably contribute to the amenity and function of the park should be located carefully to avoid compromising the park's vegetation, spatial quality, or design intent. These structures should also be designed in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*.
- Temporary facilities to fulfill needed functions, or provide recreation, during the longer term process of park rehabilitation should be simply treated and developed, and should not compete visually with historic resources in the park.

#### Waterways

- Rehabilitate waterways throughout the park so that they are functional as both design features and ecological systems, and so that they operate as originally intended: as a coherent system of connected individual features providing linkages and continuity along the length of the park.
- To the greatest extent possible, reconstruct historic water features that have been altered or eliminated since the period of significance.
- Utilize the park's waterways as part of overall stormwater management for the site to the extent feasible.
- Reconstruct appropriate edges of the lakes and waterways as places of visual and physical access for park users, in accordance with the Olmsted design plans. Re-establish the recreational use of lakes and ponds in areas that are appropriate and historically accurate, and, over time, as water quality allows.
- Rehabilitation of the waterways should include dredging of accumulated sediments and reconstruction and re-vegetation of eroded waterway banks.

#### Roads and Paths

- Wherever feasible, reconstruct the historic alignment of pedestrian paths so that they further enhance the intended spatial qualities of the various areas of the park, and so that they create the contiguous series of spaces that existed during the period of significance.
- Restore paths, to the greatest practical extent possible, to their original historic surfaces and materials.
- Remove double, or parallel paths that are underutilized or confusing in order to clarify the historic design intent and to recapture compromised open spaces.

- Consider adjustments to road alignments only for the following purposes: to clarify existing circulation, to alleviate traffic and congestion, or to enhance vehicular, cyclist, or pedestrian safety.

#### Signage, Lighting, Furniture, and Interpretive Material

- Develop appropriate signage that helps the mission of Essex County and the Branch Brook Park Alliance in promoting public understanding of the park as a coherent, designed historic landscape, and as an ecological system. Keep signage quantities and sizes to the minimum required for effective communication.
- Develop consistent but appropriate signage for the entire park, including entrance and interpretive signage at both vehicular and pedestrian gateways to the park. Graphic design should be coordinated with other signage in the Essex County Park System. Signposts, frames, and infrastructure should be specific to Branch Brook Park and appropriate to its historic character and available historic documentation.
- Park lighting and furniture should be specific to Branch Brook Park and should be designed based on available historic photographs and other documentation from the period of significance.

#### Park Management

Detailed management for each division of the park will be developed in conjunction with the development of treatment plans for the park. An outline of a broad management strategy follows.

- Utilize the Essex County Parks Master Plan as a basis for developing an improved park management structure, including additional superintendent and maintenance personnel, and park rangers.
- Establish a memorandum of agreement and a close working relationship between the Essex County Department of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs and the Branch Brook Park Alliance. Memorandum of agreement should clearly define roles and relationships.
- Develop a management approach that includes procedures and staff for fundraising, design of rehabilitation, setting of capital budgets, and management of construction for the various projects needed to fully rehabilitate the park.
- Establish a maintenance/management endowment so that funding is available for adequate maintenance of new projects undertaken by the partnership between the Alliance and the County, and for providing adequate park maintenance and management staff.