Bruce Park - Binney Park - Byram Park - Montgomery Pinetum
Historic Parks of Greenwich, Connecticut

Historic Landscape Report

prepared by

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2009
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for

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Historic Parks of Greenwich, Connecticut

prepared for the

Town of Greenwich Department of Parks & Recreation
Division of Parks & Trees
101 Field Point Road
Greenwich, Connecticut
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INTRODUCTION

In the early 20th century, The Town of Greenwich began acquiring land to develop into places where its residents could freely enjoy passive and active recreation. The first acquisition came in the form of a bequest from textile merchant Robert Bruce, a gift of 100 acres near the center of the Town. In 1908, Bruce Park became Greenwich’s first official public park. Ten years later, the Town purchased land along Long Island Sound from the Ritch family of Byram, and created a spot for public bathing, Byram Park. Two other significant donations of parklands came between 1929 and 1952, with the gift of Binney Park in Old Greenwich, and finally, the Montgomery Pinetum in Cos Cob. Today, in addition to these four historic parks, the Town owns dozens of parks, recreation sites and conservation area totaling hundreds of acres, each maintained by the Greenwich Department of Parks and Recreation, Division of Parks and Trees.

Bruce, Byram, and Binney Parks and the Montgomery Pinetum are the town’s most historic parks, and retain much of their original historic character. However, many historic features, including contexts, vehicular circulation routes and drainage patterns, have changed. Other features, such as plant materials and landscape details have deteriorated or have been altogether removed. It is because of these changes, that the Division of Parks & Trees selected the four parks for inclusion in this Historic Landscape Report. The document provides a roadmap for preserving the parks’ historic character, and in so doing, respecting the original visions intended for them by their founders.

Goal
The Historic Landscape Report researches the history of each park, and documents, assesses, and provides recommendations for preserving the parks’ historic features. The report balances the need to retain the parks’ historic character and maintain their historical integrity, with the need to provide for contemporary and future uses.
Process
The Division of Parks and Trees collaborated with Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture, LLC (MLLA) to prepare the Historic Landscape Report. They followed a four-part process which included historic research and documentation, assessment, recommendations, and management. Research, completed in the summer and fall of 2008, involved combing historical material housed at the Greenwich Parks Department Office, office of S. E. Minor, Historical Society of the Town of Greenwich, Greenwich Library, Perrot Library, and Garden Education Center. MLLA also obtained information from the Montgomery Botanic Center (Coral Gables, Florida), and New York Botanic Garden. MLLA then assessed the current conditions of each park’s landscape, comparing them to historical records. From the historical research and assessment, MLLA then prepared a series of preservation recommendations, along with a set of general management guidelines.

To gauge public opinion about each park, the Division and MLLA conducted a two-day series of stakeholder’s meetings. Residents and interested citizens were invited to attend, listen to a short presentation, and then offer comments and suggestions about each park’s future. The Division posted the presentations on the department website and received many comments via e-mail. MLLA folded information retrieved at the meetings into the preservation recommendations. The Division and MLLA concluded the project with an evening public meeting, where residents and interested citizens were able to view the report in its entirety and offer final comments.

Period of Historical Significance
To develop preservation recommendations for each park, MLLA established a Period of Significance for each landscape. The Period of Significance is defined by the National Park Service as the span of time for which an historic landscape attains historical significance. This period, along with the assessment of existing conditions, provides the basis for preservation recommendations.

Recommendations for all Parks
The foregoing report contains separate sections for each park, with specific preservation recommendations for each. However, over the course of the project several recommendations emerged:

- Nominate each of the four parks to the National Register of Historic Places, as a way of honoring their historical significance and making them eligible for future funding opportunities.

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1 The historical collection housed at the Byram Branch of the Greenwich Library was inaccessible throughout the duration the Historic Landscape Report project, due to a library renovation project. Information from that collection was not included.
• Develop a sign program for all of the Greenwich parks that includes welcome signs, way-finding signs, interpretive and commemorative markers, and tags for the arboretum. Work with a graphic designer to develop an overall concept.

• Wherever and whenever possible, utilize organic and/or sustainable measures of when managing the park landscapes, including introducing native plantings and applying organic fertilizers.

• Provide opportunities for Greenwich’s diverse ethnic groups to create individual garden spaces within the parks – spaces that honor and reflect the groups’ cultural traditions.

• Work with interested citizens to establish a Greenwich parks friends’ group, modeled after the Central Park Conservancy (New York) and/or the Friends of Mount Auburn Cemetery (Cambridge, Massachusetts). Such a group can support the efforts of the Division of Parks and Trees in areas of fundraising, public relations, and implementation of the preservation recommendations found in Sections 3 through 6 of this report.
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A BRIEF HISTORY of GREENWICH and its PARKS

The Greenwich landscape has attracted humans for centuries for its fertile soils, tidal-powered waterways, deposits of granite, and perhaps most of all, for the beauty and calm of its open spaces. The earliest humans, the Native American Siwanoy tribe, camped along the waterfront in hut-like tepees, harvesting fish from the waters of Long Island Sound. They remained until 1640, when they deeded land to four English-born settlers from the Massachusetts Bay, farmers who cultivated crops in the floodplains and tidal zones. By the late 1600s, European settlers had built a tide-powered mill on Indian Harbor Inlet (located on the site of Bruce Park), a grist mill that continued to operate for the next 200 years.

Mill and farming operations continued to dominate the Greenwich economy through the 18th century, and by early 1800, maritime and fishing industries had taken hold. Ships, docking and loading at three Greenwich landings, transported agricultural goods 35 miles westward to New York. In the 1830s, steamboats began ferrying both passengers and goods, stopping at both Greenwich Harbor and Byram, and in 1840, the Ritch family opened a granite quarry in Byram (located on the site of Bryam Park), extracting stone for several major New York-based construction projects. Up through the mid 1800s, most agricultural, maritime, industrial and civic activity in Greenwich centered on its long waterfront.

The 1848 opening of the New York and New Haven Railroad to freight and passenger traffic brought significant change to Greenwich – to both profile of its residents, and its residents’ relationship to the land. The rail line allowed businessmen from New York to own homes outside the city, and take a short train ride to work. Businessmen, such textile merchant Robert Bruce (founder of Bruce Park), could purchase sizeable pieces of land, construct comfortable homes, and raise families outside of the crowded city. Vacant land, both within the established part of the Town as well as northward, in the “back country,” was divided into building lots and sold to New York executives for peaceful retreats. Frederick Gotthold, owner of Gotthold & Company makers of straw goods, purchased such a parcel in 1880, and constructed “Wild Acres” (known today as the Montgomery Pinetum).

The Davis Mill, located on Indian Harbor Inlet, was powered by tides and operated at the same location for approximately 200 years. Photo courtesy of the Historical Society of the Town of Greenwich.
The rail line also spurred the growth of another industry, seasonal tourism. Greenwich’s location along the water made it an ideal location for summer homes, boarding houses and guest houses, and several stretches of waterfront held such warm-month operations. In 1894 Robert Bruce constructed a two-story, gambrel-roofed building on the Davis Mill Pond and rented its rooms during the summer months to working women from New York. Sound Beach, located in Old Greenwich, began as a summer community, with the first cottage built by Edwin Binney, a New York manufacturer of “lamp black,” in 1889. Greenwich attracted a large population of immigrants, including Germans, Poles and Italians, to work as laborers in the building trade.

By the 1920s, Greenwich had the highest per capita income in the country, and building of waterfront estates and county retreats continued in earnest. One such waterfront property, known as “The Anchorage,” was constructed in 1925 on the site of the former Ritch family quarry in Byram. Known today as the Rosenwald Estate of Byram Park, this five-acre site contained a sprawling 17-room cliffside mansion, landscaped gardens, a gardener’s cottage, tennis courts, a swimming pool, a one-hole golf course, and a private boat slip for the owner’s yacht. Another such country property, located in Cos Cob, was purchased in 1922 by Robert Montgomery, a New York accountant. Originally owned by Frederick Gotthold, “Wild Acres” was 55 acres with a mansion, several outbuildings, gardens and ponds. Montgomery expanded the land holding to 125 acres, and over the course of 30 years transformed the property into a world-renowned collection of conifers.

The formation of public parks in Greenwich coincided with the growing and diversifying population. While many Greenwich residents owned large, private tracts of land, many others either rented or owned small homes. This latter group had little land for active recreation. The first public park came in 1908 as a bequest of Robert Bruce – a 100-acre parcel located near the center of Greenwich on the Davis Mill Pond. Bruce intended the property to be used to “benefit the public...,” and within a year, the Town had named the property “Bruce Park,” and had begun making necessary improvements for public use. Ten years later, Greenwich purchased 20 acres in the Byram section of Town from the Ritch family, for use as a public park. Byram and neighboring Chickahominy were home to a several immigrant groups, including Italians who had come to work the quarry and assist in the building trade. Byram Park provided active and passive recreation space, along with a beach, to these and other residents of Greenwich.

Binney Park, established in 1927, was the gift of Edwin Binney, who wanted to set aside land in his beloved Old Greenwich for “park and recreation purposes only.” Binney Park’s original
ten acres had been considered for building lots but Binney, at the urging of his conservation-minded daughters, purchased the land and within five years had converted it into what a 1928 newspaper article called “...a marvel of scenic grandeur and beauty unsurpassed anywhere in the United States.”

The next park acquisition came in the 1950s with the addition of the 125-acre Montgomery Pinetum, a gift of Nell Montgomery, Robert Montgomery’s widow. Mrs. Montgomery asked, with her donation, that active recreation at the Pinetum be restricted to walking trails, and that the land be used for cultivation of the arts and horticulture.

Other parks established around this time were the 6.3-acre Roger Sherman Baldwin Park (1952), and 143.7-acre Greenwich Point, the former Tod Estate acquired by the Town in the mid 1950s. Over the last 50 years, Greenwich has acquired and/or established thirteen additional parks, bringing the total number to nineteen. The Town continues to conserve land, largely in the form of open space, maintaining its near-360 year history of connecting to its diverse, seaside landscape.
Bruce Park is Greenwich’s oldest public park, established in 1908 through a bequest of Robert Moffat Bruce. Located on 60 acres along the south side of Interstate 95, the park stretches for about ¾ mile between Steamboat Road to the west and Indian Field Road to the east, with Indian Harbor Drive and its extension, Davis Avenue, forming its southern boundary. The historic Davis Mill Pond bisects the 60 acres, providing a prominent water feature that serves as the centerpiece of the Bruce Park landscape.

The following section details the historical development of the Bruce Park landscape, defines a Period of Historical Significance, assesses the landscape’s existing conditions, and provides preliminary recommendations for preserving the landscape in the future.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Before 1908
Land near the center of Greenwich that would become Bruce Park served, for over two centuries, as the site of mill and farming operations. Between 1709 and 1889, a tide-powered grain mill, known as the Elisha Davis Mill, was the chief source of income for the Town’s first minister, Joseph Morgan. It stood at the southern end of Bruce Lake, and in later years became known as Davis Landing, operating until just before 1900. The Isaac Howe Mead farm stood on land adjacent to the mill.

In 1858, Robert Moffat Bruce (1822-1908), a textile merchant and member of the New York Cotton Exchange, purchased a home near the Davis Mill and Mead farm. The house, which had been built in 1853, stood near the south side of the Boston and Maine Railroad line, and the entry drive led from Steamboat Road eastward to the house. It is possible that Bruce may have constructed stone entry gate posts where the drive met Steamboat Road. An historic photograph shows these posts appearing as early as 1908.
In 1894, Bruce built a two-story, gambrel-roofed structure on what would become part of the I-95 right-of-way. It was used in summer only, providing a vacation spot for working girls from New York City. Later it became known as the Emily Bruce Shelter.

When Robert Bruce died in 1908, he bequeathed his home and nearly 100 acres to the Town of Greenwich for use and benefit of the public as a natural history, historical and art museum (the Bruce Museum). A provision in the deed allowed for part of his gift to be used “for the purpose of a public highway,” an event that did not occur until 1958.

1909 – 1929

In 1909, the Bruce family transferred to mansion and land to the Town, and work on creating a park commenced. The land was marshy and filled with tangled brush and decayed trees. Workers scooped out marshes to create ponds and raised the surrounding land. They dammed the pond to allow for boating and swimming, built a boathouse, constructed bridges and laid out three miles of drives.

Once the Town had established the park’s main features, workers added amenities. They erected a sign, installed benches, and built a tennis court. During World War I (1918), the Town provided space within the park for Victory Gardens, and in 1925 located a dog pound on park land. Despite the growing popularity of the automobile during the early decades of
the 20th century, Greenwich continued to maintain a stable within Bruce Park, housing and caring for horses. By 1928, the Town had organized a formal recreation department, and housed it at the Bruce Park “shelter,” also known as the “clubhouse.”

1930 – 1958

During the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, the Town devoted both physical and monetary resources toward expanding the recreation offerings at Bruce Park. In 1930, Greenwich paid S. E. Minor to prepare a topographical survey of the park, and paid a landscape architect, Armand R. Tibbetts for a “development plan.” While the whereabouts of Tibbetts’s plan is unknown, a copy of the Minor plan remains in the archives of the Greenwich-based surveying company and documents the park’s features in that year. Included were stone bridges, cobble gutters, and lamp posts. A “cottage” and stable building, along with a “machine shop” stood at the park’s eastern end, with a stone wall lining the eastern park boundary line. Significant trees included Oak, Dogwood, Maple, Black Birch, Gum, Pignut, Tulip, Sassafras, Cherry, Ash, Elm, Beech, Ironwood, Locust, Sycamore and Hickory.

After the Minor plan was completed, the Town began adding an array of active and passive recreation features. In the 1930s, Greenwich added a golf driving range, swings, a horseshoe court, handball courts, a lawn bowling green, a basketball backstop, and a skating and hockey rink. By 1939, each of these amenities was up and running, along with sites for archery, handball, paddle tennis, ping pong, volleyball, as well as picnicking. The clubhouse became a locus of major activity, providing space for group meetings (including the Boy Scouts, Sea Scouts, and Negro Club). Facilities for showering and playing games were provided in the clubhouse, as well as living quarters for administrative officers and the custodian. By the end of the 1930s along with Byram Park in South Greenwich, Bruce Park was providing the greatest number and variety of forms of recreational opportunities within the Greenwich park system.
In the 1940s Greenwich’s Division of Parks and Trees established a vision for management of all the town parks, drawing on the natural amenities of the Greenwich landscape as inspiration. In the Town Annual Report from that year, the division noted that the parks “should be made to excel in the art of garden and landscape design which will afford a living example stressing the importance and desirability of preserving and emphasizing rather than transforming the different types of natural scenery.” They proposed making the parks into arboreta, and creating garden centers, or nurseries at each.

At Bruce Park, the Town carried out this vision by re-arranging many existing plants in more natural groupings and making large plantings of Asiatic crabapples, shadblow, beach plum, dogwood, Azalea, and blueberry. The Town Report noted that Mertensia and Narcissi had naturalized in the wooded area west of Indian Field Road, and that a planting of Lilium regale had been made in the vicinity of the rock ledges south west of the bowling green. The Town had established a lilac collection along the sidewalk bordering Davis Avenue, just east of the millpond bridge. Other species planned for planting at Bruce Park included Azalea arborescens, vaseyi, viscose and nudiflora, with the overall effect of creating color.

It is likely, too, that the Town had created a nursery in Bruce Park for growing small and inexpensive plant materials. 4500 such plants were taken out of the nursery that year and planted in various spots. Species included crabapples (20 vars.), Azaleas (12 vars.), shadblow (5 vars.), blueberry (4 vars.), chokeberry (8 vars.), lilacs (16 vars.), as well as laurel, beach plum, dogwood and Vinca minor.

While the Town curtailed work in the park during World War II, crews continued to make minor repairs to buildings, drainage systems, and roads. By 1950, upgrades resumed, including a four-year project to renovate the bowling green. Additional fireplaces were added in the picnic area at Woods Road, along with picnic tables and a water fountain for picnickers. In the fall of 1950, through a gift of McArdle’s Seed Store, thousands of tulip...
bulbs were planted in a newly created “spring garden” in the park. In the spring 1951 it was the largest display of tulip plantings in Greenwich, with a background of azaleas, andromeda, dogwoods and flowering crabs. Other improvements included seasonal plantings of chrysanthemums, an upgraded lighting system, a new footbridge, and a modern playground, the first of its kind built in Greenwich.

1959 – Present
In 1958, a major alteration was made to the size and offerings of Bruce Park, when the Federal Highway Administration began construction on the Connecticut Turnpike (I-95). The route ran along the south side of the Boston and Maine Railroad line, claiming land along the park’s northern edge. In return for this land, the FHA deeded Greenwich acreage on the north side of Town for use as a golf course, known as the Bruce Golf Course. The clubhouse, a ballfield, and a flagpole area all stood in the Turnpike’s path, and were demolished with the construction of the new route. The western park entrance was relocated south of the Bruce Museum, at a newly created roadway, Museum Drive. The historic stone piers marking the former entrance to Bruce Park became part of the entry to the Town’s pistol range.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the Town continued to maintain the park grounds, made minor upgrades, and add some facilities. In 1967, the Town created new picnic areas and developed new horseshoe courts, and in 1968 began adding new family play areas. Construction on the most recent physical improvement to Bruce Park began in 2008, when the Junior League of Greenwich financed a new playground, locating it across Museum Drive from the Bruce Museum.

Between 1999 and 2002, two separate master plans were drafted for Bruce Park. The first appeared to have evaluated the condition of existing recreational features. The second specified a series of physical improvements, such as upgrading lighting, reducing the geese population in and around the ponds, introducing traffic-calming. Neither provided a detailed historical chronology of the physical development of the park on which to base recommendations.

PERIOD of HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE
The Period of Historical Significance for Bruce Park spans the years 1908 to 1958. During this time, the park was established and its major physical features constructed, including the ponds, roadways, passive and active recreational facilities. During this period, Greenwich added many details that contributed to its visual appeal, including granite curbstones, plantings of
deciduous, evergreen and flowering trees, bulbs and shrubs. After the construction of the Connecticut Turnpike in 1958, several park features were removed, and the Town’s growing population gradually increased vehicular traffic into the park. The Town should base future efforts to preserve Bruce Park’s features on the landscape’s look and feel during this Period of Historical Significance.

LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT
The following assessment of the Bruce Park landscape documents its existing natural, built and functional features, and analyzes their condition. Together with the Historical Development, the assessment provides a basis for the preservation recommendations that appear at the end of this section.

Context
As mentioned in the opening of this section, Bruce Park lies on 60 acres along the south side of Interstate 95, extending between Steamboat Road and Indian Field Road. At its widest point from north to south, the park measures 1100 feet. Commercial operations and parking areas stand along Steamboat Road to the west of the park, and private residential neighborhoods rim the west and south sides. Davis Mill Pond cuts through the middle of the parkland, creating one of the most distinctive natural features. The context of Bruce Park has significantly changed since its inception in 1908, and today’s surrounding uses both complement and detract from its historic character, as follows:

- The east and south edges complement the park’s historic character. Single-family residences, set amongst groves of mature trees, quiet the park’s setting. The extension of Davis Mill Pond southward from the park adds serenity to the southern edge.

- The steady sound of vehicular and train traffic on Interstate 95 and the Metro-North Rail line (adjacent to I-95 on the north side), and parking lots across Steamboat Road create a noisy and intrusive northern and western park edge. The slightly higher elevation of the highway adds more volume to the traffic noise. The short length of the park’s western edge (approximately 400’), minimizes the conflict of the parking lots located across Steamboat Road.
Topography & Water
Land across Bruce Park rolls gently downward from the east and west ends toward the Davis Mill Pond and two smaller ponds, all located at the center of the park. While most of the parkland is accessible (5% slope or less), Bruce Park does contain several natural outcroppings and high points making some portions difficult to access, as follows:

- High points are located (1) at the western end and the site of the Bruce Museum, (2) on the east and west sides of Davis Mill Pond, and (3) at the far eastern end. Each of these provides locations for long views across the park (see Views, below).

- Rock outcroppings create additional promontories. Significant outcroppings are located (1) adjacent to the Junior League playground, (2) alongside the gazebo, and (3) in and amongst the wooded areas on the park’s eastern end (near Indian Field Road).

- Low points appear around the edges of Davis Mill Pond and the two smaller ponds. The landform around the ponds provides the most accessible location for park users with all levels of physical ability, and this area appears to be the most heavily used portion of the park.

Views
As discussed under Topography, the gently rolling terrain, punctuated with several rock outcroppings and high points, offers visitors many viewing opportunities. Views are possible from high points looking inward, across the park landscape, as well as outward, over the Town of Greenwich. In addition, the bridges traverse the harbor and ponds, providing excellent spots for gazing across the water.

- Pleasing inward views include those from the Bruce Museum looking southwestward toward the Junior League playground, from the stone bridges looking outward across the harbor and ponds, from the edges of the water looking across to the opposite sides, and from the walkways looking down the park roadway.

- Pleasing outward views include those possible from the high point on the east side of Davis Mill Pond looking eastward across the smaller ponds, and westward across the Mill Pond.

- Less pleasing views appear from the high points looking northward over I-95 and the Metro North Rail line.
Entrances, Circulation & Parking
While visitors may access and travel through the grounds of Bruce Park at any time, several characteristics of the entrances, circulation routes and parking areas present challenges to park users, as follows:

- The park contains two official vehicular entrances located (1) at the western end of Museum Drive at its intersection with Steamboat Road and (2) at the eastern end of Bruce Park Drive at its intersection with Indian Field Road. These entrances lack detail, making them unclear as gateways.

- Additional vehicular entrances are located at Davis Avenue (at its intersection with Indian Field Road), via the several residential streets intersection Davis Avenue from the south, and via an underpass at I-95, connecting downtown Greenwich with Davis Avenue. While these are not official park entrances, they appear to be heavily used by residents of the adjacent neighborhoods.

- Because Bruce Park lies between two main north-south vehicular routes, Steamboat and Indian Field Roads. Its winding roadway is often used by motorists as a “cut-through,” providing quick and unimpeded access between the two main routes. As a result, motorists speed through the park, creating hazards for park users and their pets.

- The park contains a network of pedestrian paths, paved with bituminous asphalt, that runs alongside but stand apart from, the park roadway. These paths provide walkers with a safe alternative to the roads, which have no visible shoulder.

- The park contains some additional footpaths leading (1) through the woodlands at the park’s eastern end (part of a fitness trail), and (2) to the highpoint and pavilion located on the eastern side of the harbor. The latter path contains stone steps, allowing users to more easily traverse the slope. Both paths are overgrown and difficult to follow and the condition of the steps is poor.

- Six designated parking areas span the park. Three of these are parking lots, located near the Bruce Museum and Junior League playground. Three are parallel parking spaces located around the ponds.

Plant Communities
Bruce Park’s 60 acres contains many mature trees standing in groves and/or forming woodlands, along with open lawns and water’s edges, as well as one designed garden. Each of these plant communities offers users a different park experience as follows:

- Tree Groves & Woodlands. Groves of mature deciduous and coniferous trees over approximately 1/3 of the parkland, with most standing at the far western end (around the Junior League playground) and throughout the eastern end (between the ponds and Indian...
Field Road). The town has managed these woodlands by cutting diseased or dead trees, removing invasive understory and encouraging the growth of sapling non-invasive trees. Rock outcroppings pierce the groves at the eastern end, creating an exciting walking experience for those using the woodland path.

- **Ornamental Plantings & Specimen Trees.** Bruce Park has long been a landscape of handsome ornamental trees and shrubs and specimen trees, and continues to host a diversity of species. Most of these appear in groupings around the ponds and near the harbor, and species include dawn redwood, red maple, paper birch, and Rhododendron.

- **Open Lawns.** The park offers several lawn areas for many forms of passive recreation. These lawns lie adjacent to the edges of the harbor and ponds in the lower-lying areas of the park.

- **Water’s Edges.** While most of the pond edges are lined with boulders to stabilize the banks, some water-loving species continue to grow. These include cattail and willow.

- **Designed Garden.** Bruce Park contains one designed garden, located at the center of the park on the east side of the harbor. It is dedicated to the cultivation of roses.

**Buildings & Recreation Features**

In addition to the Bruce Museum, former home of Robert Bruce, the park contains buildings and active recreation features, several of which date to the earliest years of the park, as follows:

- **Buildings include two gazebos, two restroom buildings, and a maintenance building.** One gazebo, located atop the high point on the east side of the harbor, is supported by mortared stone columns (matching the park’s bridges) likely dates to the earliest years of the park (with repairs, such as a new roof, made during later years). The other, located between the harbor and ponds near the rose garden, has been built recently to replace an old, decayed structure. The concrete block restroom facilities, located on the west and east sides of the ponds, are likely later 20th century additions. The maintenance building, located along Indian Field Road on the east side of the park, may pre-date the park (based on its architectural style and carriage and hayloft doors).

- **Recreation features include one ballfield, one set of three tennis courts, a lawn tennis area, and the Junior League playground (under construction).** In addition, the eastern end of the park contains several picnic tables and outdoor barbecue stands.

**Landscape Details**

- **Bruce Park retains many historic features that contribute to the historic character.** They include the Bruce Museum (former Bruce mansion), Bruce Park Drive and granite edgestones, boulder-lined ponds, mortared stone bridges, pedestrian path network, tennis courts, lawn bowling green, gazebo atop the knoll on the east side of the harbor, picnic
tables and barbecues, maintenance building (former stable), and many historic trees and shrubs.

- Historical research showed that Bruce Park once included several features that have been removed. These include the granite post and iron arched entryway (at Steamboat Road), a fishing pier, club house, another ballfield, and flagpole (all removed for the construction of the Connecticut Turnpike (1958). Town reports indicate that Bruce Park once held a more diverse collection of trees and shrubs.

- Several features have been added including a new gazebo, restroom buildings, parking lots, wood timber fencing, Junior League playground and rose garden.

PRESERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations for measures to be taken by the Town of Greenwich to preserve, restore, reconstruct, and/or rehabilitate Bruce Park:

- Complete a comprehensive tree and shrub inventory of Bruce Park, and compare the inventory with the species shown on the 1930 survey, prepared by S. E. Minor and other species recorded in the Town Reports of 1941 and 1950/52. From this, the Town should create a long-term plant preservation/restoration plan that removes incorrect species and re-introduces historic species that have been removed, and set aside space for accepting donations of trees. Once the inventory has been completed create an arboretum at Bruce Park, by creating a written catalogue of trees and shrubs, labeling the tree and shrub species, and developing public programs around the arboretum concept. Explore the possibility of re-locating the rose garden to an area less-susceptible to flooding. (Note: As of the writing of this report, the inventory project is underway.)

- Reconstruct the existing playground. (Note: As of the writing of this report, the playground project is underway.)

- Establish a set of gateways for Bruce Park, located at the east and west entrances. At the least, these should be marked with signs. Larger scale gateways could include re-building or re-locating the “Bruce Park” stone columns and arched entryway, constructed at Steamboat Road when the park first opened (today marking the entrance to the pistol range).
- Conduct a comprehensive drainage study of Bruce Park to address flooding and sedimentation problems. Include in this study the possibility of planting buffer species to control sedimentation problems, and water-loving trees and shrubs (such as Weeping Willows) to help absorb water. Explore the possibility of maintaining longer-length turf around the pond areas.

- Consider introducing a series of traffic-calming measures on Bruce Park Drive and Davis Avenue to help control the speed of traffic moving through the park. Pedestrian crossings should be more clearly articulated with contrasting materials and/or raised elevations.

- Upgrade the network of sidewalks by connecting segmented walks and completing walkway loops. Upgrade the system of footpaths leading through the woodlands and to the overlooks through clearing, installation of better surfaces, and placement of signs. Consider marking an ADA-compliant route for users of all levels of ability. (Note: As of the writing of this report, the walkways are undergoing improvements.)

- Develop a palette of hardscape materials for Bruce Park, including materials for sidewalks, footpaths, lighting, curbing, fencing, signs, barbecue pits and other park amenities. Once the palette is established, develop a plan for ranking physical improvements, including upgrades to the bridges and railings, and installation of lighting along pathways.

- Explore the possibility of re-building the fishing pier, once located along the banks of the Davis Mill Pond.

- Develop a plan to connect, via a walkway, Bruce Park to Roger Sherman Baldwin Park, located to the west across Steamboat Road.

- Conduct a needs assessment and develop plan for re-use of the historic barn/stable, located on the eastern end of the park along Indian Field Road, and consider, as one of the uses, a visitor center and/or office for a Greenwich Parks friends' group.
NOTES
Information for this drawing was obtained from the following sources:

- "Topography - Bruce Memorial Park, Greenwich, Connecticut" prepared by S. E. Minor, surveyor, 1930
- Historic photographs from the collections of the Greenwich Library and the Historical Society of the Town of Greenwich

PERIOD of SIGNIFICANCE
1908 - 1958
Byram Park, established in 1919, was the second public park developed in Greenwich, following Bruce Park by just ten years. Located in the southwesternmost part of Greenwich, at the edge of the Bryam neighborhood, it stretches across 30 acres fronting Long Island Sound. The site of the former Ritch family quarry, Byram Park retains several steep granite cavities which create focal points in the landscape. Ten of its acres comprise land owned by the Rosenwald family and once held a large, private seaside residence, known as “The Anchorage.”

The following section details the historical development of the Byram Park landscape, defines a Period of Historical Significance, assesses the landscape’s existing conditions, and provides preliminary recommendations for preserving the landscape in the future.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Before 1919
In the 1840s, the Ritch family opened a quarry along Long Island Sound in the southwestern most portion of Greenwich. The areas was rich in a granite that was commonly referred to as Byram Blue Point, and legend holds that the stone was used in the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge, the Statue of Liberty, as well as many other buildings and structures in New York. The quarry attracted a population of Italian stone workers, many of whom settled in the adjacent enclave of Chickahominy.

In 1918, Silas D. and Willis M. Ritch sold 20 acres of land to the Town of Greenwich, a wedgeshaped parcel situated between Byram Shore Road and the Long Island Sound. The Town intended to create a park that would provided a bathing beach.

1919 – 1929
Work in the new park began in 1919, with laborers transporting sand across Long Island Sound during high tides in order to construct a beach. Workers quickly shoveled the sand off the boats so that the vessels would not become beached. The park opened in 1919, with amenities including a bathhouse. Local tradition holds that bathing a Byram Beach could be dangerous, as rough, ragged pieces of stone from the Ritch quarries remained

deposited on the beach.

During the 1920s, Greenwich invested in Byram Park by hiring staff to maintain its landscape and take tickets from visitors. By 1922, the Town employed seven attendants and one ticket taker, and laborers spread and graded the sand, built stone retaining walls, and made repairs to the bathhouses (which now numbered more than one). In the few years that followed, workers built a float, installed playground equipment and a backstop, erected benches, purchased bleachers, installed lights, paved the roadway. By 1929, ticket sales for visits to Byram Park and its beach totaled $2,500 annually.

Also in 1925, construction began on the 17-room estate, located on the 5-acre parcel to the east of Byram Park, known as “The Anchorage.” In an advertisement for the sale of the property, re-printed from Country Life, the sprawling home was described as “clambering up one end of a precipitous rocky rise and stretching itself luxuriously along the crest.” The landscape was depicted being “charmingly planted, [with] picturesque winding steps lead[ing] down the abrupt declivity through a lovely rock garden to the level terrace edged by a sea-wall.” On the sea-level, the property included a clay tennis court, concrete salt-water swimming pool (electrically heated), bath house, boat slip and sand beach.

Adjacent to The Anchorage stood a 4.6 acre piece of waterfront property, owned by Mrs. Imre deJosi-Herczeg of New York City. In an advertisement for the sale of this parcel, asking a price of $50,000, the property was described as

“There is a stone and concrete sea wall, erected by the owner at a cost of $15,000. 7 ft. stone wall extends along the road frontage, with stone gateway and macadam driveway through the property. There is a suitable site for a tennis court. Shady glens and natural rock formations, excellent lawns, flower gardens and shrubbery form an ideal setting for the construction of a residence. Stone stairway from sea wall to large float has also been erected. Expansive and unobstructed view of the South and the Long Island shore opposite.”
1930 - 1975
In 1930, the Town hired S. E. Minor, surveyor of Greenwich to prepare a topographical survey of the park and landscape architect Armand R. Tibbetts to prepare a development plan. While the whereabouts of the survey and plan are not known, Town Annual Reports from the 1930s suggest that the two documents called for several improvements to be made to Byram Park. In 1936, Greenwich added a handball court, swings, and a basketball backstop, and by 1939, the Annual Report noted that the park’s facilities and activities included spring, summer, fall playgrounds; basketball; baseball; softball; archery; handball; tennis; paddle tennis; horseshoes; football; rollerskating; swimming; ping pong; volleyball; picnicking.

In the 1940s Greenwich’s Division of Parks and Trees established a vision for management of all the Town parks, drawing on the natural amenities of the Greenwich landscape as inspiration. In the Town Annual Report from that year, the Division noted that the parks “should be made to excel in the art of garden and landscape design which will afford a living example stressing the importance and desirability of preserving and emphasizing rather than transforming the different types of natural scenery.” They proposed making the parks into arboreta, and creating garden centers, or nurseries at each. This vision was executed at Byram through the transplanting of plant material and arrangement of it in natural groupings.

The Town continued to make improvements to Byram in the 1940s, despite the diversion of the war effort. A new locker house was constructed, new walks were built, and tennis courts were resurfaced. By 1943, the concentration of use at Byram exceeded any other park in the Town, with bathing, boating, athletic activities, and picnic areas very popular. A series of harsh weather events, including a major hurricane through coastal Connecticut in 1944, impacted the park and contributed to flooding problems along the beach. The Town installed a drainage system to manage the water.

By the 1950s, Byram Park was receiving a heavy influx of visitors, drawing from both the local population as well as what the Town Report referred to as “New York migrants.” Heavy use of the park continued, with beach-going and boating among the most popular activities. The Town made many upgrades and repairs, including resurfacing tennis courts, re-building the seawall, renovating the ballfields, and planting tulips. In 1951, the Town removed the badly deteriorated bathhouses and made repairs to several remaining bathhouse units, and in 1952 installed picnic facilities and showers at the beach area. Also in this year, floodlights were
added to the parking lot and beach, and the roads and parking areas were repaired and resurfaced. In 1959, the Town made improvements to the boating area, including building new floats, pontoons, and gangways. Physical improvements continued on a yearly basis through the 1960s and early 1970s, including the addition of a picnic shelter and family play area, and resurfacing of walks and tennis courts.

Beginning in 1937, The Anchorage went through changes in ownership. In that year, it was sold to Paul Plunkett, an architect from New York. In 1939, William Rosenwald, an executive at Sears-Roebuck, purchased the property. The land extended from the Long Island Sound inland and included eight acres. Rosenwald also purchased an adjacent parcel (to the east), also consisting of eight acres, which had once held Quarry Close, a farm. The portions of the two parcels that stood between Byram Shore Road and the Sound totaled 10 acres, and here

Rosenwald maintained a private bathhouse, pool, tennis court, and one-hole golf course. He also may have been responsible for further development of The Anchorage’s ornamental landscape, in particular the slopes surrounding the mansion which were filled with many ornamental trees and shrubs. Rosenwald retained the property until the 1970s.

1975 - Present
The former 10-acre Rosenwald property was added to the east side of the park. The addition of this property doubled the size of the beachfront, and gave the park an overall atmosphere of a “millionaire’s estate.” It included a one-hole golf course and large lawn, a tennis court, a boat slip, a small pool and bathhouse, a caretaker’s cottage and garage.

The Town gradually altered the Rosenwald property in attempt to transform it from a private estate into a public park. Workers renovated and renewed the one-hole golf course for chipping and putting practice, and restored the lawn. The tennis court, located below the mansion at the base of a cliff, was removed in the 1990s and replaced by a garden. The “Garden of the Four Seasons” was planned and laid out in a parterre style, featuring trees, shrubs and perennials offering color and texture throughout the year. After 1978, the Town demolished the mansion. In 2004, the Byram-Cos Cob chapters of Rotary International broke ground on a pavilion in Byram Park, located atop the highest point and overlooking the Sound.

Between 1999 and 2001, two master plans were drafted for Byram Park. The first consisted of an inventory of the park facilities and an assessment of their condition. The second provided
very general recommendations for physical improvements. Neither master planning effort included a detailed study of physical development of the park through history.

PERIOD of HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE
The Period of Historical Significance spans 1918 to 1975, from the earliest years of the development of Byram Park, to the acquisition of the Rosenwald Estate. During these six decades, Greenwich purchased the original ten acres, shaped the old quarry into a series of spaces suitable for many types of passive and active recreation. Connecting these spaces was a series of walks and roadways, leading visitors to all reaches of the park. The period also includes the time of occupation of The Anchorage by the Herzeg, Plunkett and Rosenwald families and the development of a seaside estate with planned gardens and personal recreation facilities. Attempts by the Town of Greenwich to preserve Byram Park should adhere to and respect this Period of Historical Significance.

BRYAM PARK LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT
The following assessment of the Byram Park landscape documents its existing natural, built and functional features, and analyzes their condition. Together with the Historical Development, the assessment provides a basis for the preservation recommendations that appear at the end of this section.

Context
Byram Park lies on a long sliver of land in the southernmost part of the Town of Greenwich, at the edge of the Bryam neighborhood. While its width from east to west is less than 1,000, its length extends north to south approximately one-half mile. On its north side is a residential neighborhood, to the south are residences and a marina, and to the west is Byram Shore Road. To the east is the Long Island Sound. While the context of the park has changed since its inception in 1918, the surrounding land uses and edges compliment the park, as follows:

- The north, south and east edges complement the historic character of Byram Park. Older homes stand on the north and south, creating a quiet setting for the park. A mix of historic mortared stone sea walls and beaches lines the east park edge, adding further to the historic character.
- The constant flow of traffic along Byram Shore Road, coupled with that traveling along Interstate 95 (paralleling Byram Shore Road to the west), results in a noisy western park
Landscape Assessment
CONTEXT

Stronger Edge  Weaker Edge

BYRAM PARK
HISTORIC LANDSCAPE REPORT
Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture, LLC
edge. However, stone walls stand between the park and the road, creating a strong, historically complimentary border on the western side.

**Topography & Water**

Land across Byram Park’s 30 acres ranges from extremely steep to relatively flat. The most inaccessible slopes appear nearer the park’s western edge, with the land leveling off as it slopes toward the Sound, as follows:

- A long granite ridge extends the length of the park near its western edge. At several spots along the ridge – two within the original 20-acre park parcel and at least two within the 10-acre Rosenwald addition – remnants of Ritch Family Quarry stand in the form of sheered vertical granite walls. These walls are inaccessible to users, and could be considered dangerous.

- Between the sheered walls, slopes roll upward from Byram Shore Road and then downward toward the Sound. Among these slopes are several high points excellent for taking in long views of the water. These slopes are largely inaccessible to persons with disabilities.

- Along the water’s edge, slopes level off, providing a easily-navigable area for users of all abilities. At several locations along the waterfront, tidal inlets extend into the park. Bridges allow visitors to traverse these depressed areas.

**Views**

As discussed under Topography, the steep and rolling slopes of Bryam Park offers visitors many opportunities for views, making vistas some of the Park’s most appealing features. These views include internal ones (shorter views from points within the park to other points in the park), as well as external ones (long views from points within the park outside the park).

- Pleasing internal views include glimpses down the main entry drive; views from the southern edge of the Rosenwald property northward across the long beach front; views from the highest point looking eastward over the Anne Kristoff Playground; views through the Rosenwald property’s former moon-gated garden, and view of and across the Garden of the Four Seasons.

- Pleasing long views from the park outward include many high and low spots along the length of the park of Long Island Sound.
Less pleasing views include those of the north side of the Rosenwald property bathhouse; views of the Byram Shore Boat Club parking lot; and views of the overgrown former quarry sites, located at the northern end of the Rosenwald property.

Entrances, Circulation & Parking
While Byram Park’s topography offers visitors many opportunities for views across Long Island Sound, it also challenges many visitors entering and circulating through the park, as follows:

- Visitors to Byram Park may enter through a gate along Bryam Shore Road. This gate is marked by a break in the perimeter stone wall flanked by mortared granite posts bearing BYRAM (left) PARK (right) on the road-facing sides. This entry stood at the center of the western edge of park’s original 20 acres. Visitors arrive immediately at a ticket booth, where they pay a seasonal admission fee.

- Visitors exit via another gate located at the far southern end of the Park along the Byram Shore Road. While less prominently detailed, this exit is clearly marked.

- Once visitors pass the ticket booth, they wind along the one-way park road eastward though groves of mature deciduous trees and around rock outcroppings, until they reach the water’s edge. The roadway then makes a turn northward to a parking area, or southward towards the exit. The entire length of this roadway, and the parking area (below) are lined with granite blocks, creating a neat pavement edge.

- Parking is available in a designated paved area near the beach and bathhouses. Additional parking stands near the Byram Shore Boat Club, Dockmaster house and park maintenance building, including parking for boat trailers.

- A system of 4’-wide bituminous pathways winds throughout the original 20 acres of Byram Park. These paths, separated from the park road, provide a safe and for the partially-accessible route through much of the 20 acres. Several stretches of path wind among rock outcroppings. Some slopes along the paths are inaccessible to persons with disabilities because of their high degree of pitch and/or because they contain steps.

- The 10-acre Rosenwald property has not, for the most part, been made accessible to the public. A vehicular gate located along Byram Shore Road allows vehicles to enter the property and continue either (1) southeastward up a steep slope to the site of the former mansion, or (2) northeastward down a gentle slope past a caretaker’s house toward the beach. Parking at the terminus of each route is limited. A second access point to the property lies to the north of the first, but a barricade prohibits entry via vehicle or on foot. Pedestrians may access the property either via this old entry road or through a break in an old stone wall lining the south edge of property.
Historic Parks of Greenwich, Connecticut

Historic Landscape Report

BYRAM PARK
HISTORIC LANDSCAPE REPORT
Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture, LLC
Plant Communities
Both the original 20 acres and the additional 10 (Rosenwald property) contain many outstanding species of mature trees and shrubs. Some appear singly on lawns, while others grow in unmanaged woodlands, as follows:

- **Mature Coniferous and Deciduous Trees** – many nearing their maximum size – appear in several areas of the park’s original 20-acre section. Concentrations of ashes, tulip trees, sugar maples, and oaks stand near the entry gate, along the ridge to the south of the entry gate, and on the lawn adjacent to the Anne Kristoff Memorial Playground. Newer plantings of trees appear along the Byram Shore Road edge of the Park, and along the edge of the parking area (near the northern ballfield). The tall trees add to the Park’s historic character, and give the grounds a comfortable sense of scale.

- **Mature Designed Areas.** The Rosenwald property contains several historically designed planted areas, which have matured. The slopes inside the entrance to the former estate and surrounding the former mansion site feature Rhododendron, Laurel, American Holly, White Fringe Tree, and many other mature species of shrubs and small trees. English Ivy covers much of the ground.

- **Garden of the Four Seasons.** The Rosenwald property’s former tennis court (located to the east of the former mansion site, at the base of a steep slope) was converted in the 1990s to a parterre-style garden. Surrounded by rich layers of evergreen shrubs and taller layers of deciduous trees, the garden features many small shrub species and perennials. The garden produces color throughout the year.

- **Open Lawns.** The park offers several lawn areas for many forms of passive recreation. These lawns lie along the waterfront in the Rosenwald property area and are edged, on the west side, by unmanaged woodlands.

- **Unmanaged Woodlands.** Much of the Rosenwald property has been left untended since the Town acquired the 10-acre parcel in the 1970s. This area has become home of several invasive species of plants, intermingled with mature trees and understory. English Ivy and Wisteria flourish on the ground of these areas. One small piece of unmanaged woodland also stands at the southern end of the park, on the slope falling down eastward from the southern ballfield.
Buildings & Recreation Features
From its earliest days as a public recreation site, Byram Park has contained buildings and features to support recreation activities. Several remain:

- Buildings include a ticket booth, two restroom facilities, pavilion, a bathhouse, the Byram Shore Boat Club house, the dock master’s house, a park maintenance building. On the Rosenwald property, the mansion is gone but the caretaker’s house, the mansion’s garage, and a bathhouse still remain.

- Recreation features include two ballfields, one set of tennis courts, and the Anne Kristoff playground. The Rosenwald property contains an additional playground and small swimming pool.

Landscape Details
- Byram Park retains many historic features that contribute to the historic character. They include the surrounding stone walls, sea walls, entry gates, park roadway (lined with granite blocks), pedestrian paths, mature trees, mature designed planting areas, remnants of the Ritch Family quarry, and the historic pavilion atop the highest point. The Rosenwald property contains additional historic details, including mature designed planted areas, stone walls, sea walls, the caretaker’s house and a garage.

- Historical research showed that Byram Park and the Rosenwald property once included several features that have been removed. These include historic pole lighting, plots of bedding plants, drifts of tulips along the roadways, drinking fountains, fencing around the boat storage area, a one-hole golf course, and “The Anchorage” (Rosenwald) mansion.

- Several features have been added including 10’ high chain link fencing surrounding the ballfields, poled flood lights in the parking areas, and modern bathing facilities and playgrounds and a contemporary picnic pavilion (added in 2005).

RECOMMENDATIONS
The following are recommendations for measures to be taken by the Town of Greenwich to preserve, restore, reconstruct, and/or rehabilitate Byram Park:

The granite seawalls lining Byram Park’s waterfront are some of the landscape’s most distinctive features.
The Town should compile a comprehensive inventory of the trees and shrubs at Byram Park, and assess their condition. A long term plan should be developed for diversifying the species, marking them, and creating an arboretum. *This recommendation was underway as of the writing of this report.*

The former Rosenwald Estate is currently underutilized. A study should be undertaken that assesses the property’s potential as a long-term historic site and passive recreation space. Include in this study, proposals for improved circulation between the park and estate, re-use of the historic entryways, re-use of the old quarry sites as interpretive sites, and possibilities for connecting the two beaches.

Assess the current use of the pool, and the appropriateness, feasibility and cost of constructing a larger pool and accompanying amenities within Byram Park.

Create a stronger western and southern edge of the park, screening the large parking area that services the Byram Shore Boat Club, Dock Master, and Parks Office and accommodates boat storage. Explore the possibility of re-locating (or moving off-site) the parking and boat storage to free up space for expanded park use.

Maintain the long views possible from the park’s many high points, and direct visitors to these points. The most spectacular view is from the site of the former Rosenwald estate, which is not easy to find.

Because most of the high points in the park are inaccessible to persons with disabilities, consider constructing an accessible route to at least one high point.

*Walkways throughout Byram Park should be constructed of a consistent material, and should be linked with one another, providing a series of walking loops for visitors.*

Upgrade the aesthetics of the existing roadways and parking areas, by improving curbing, resurfacing walkways, dredging the boat slip, installing period lighting, and maintaining seasonal plantings along the routes.

When undertaking future improvements, the Town should attempt, as much as possible, to reconstruct features (such as pole lighting and walkways) in a design consistent with the park’s early 20th century significance.
NOTES
Information for this drawing was obtained from the following sources:
• Historic photographs from the collection of the Historical Society of the Town of Greenwich
Established in 1927, Binney Park was the invention of Edwin Binney and his two daughters, Mary Binney Davey and Helen Binney Kitchel. Located on 20 acres in Old Greenwich, the park emerged from a swampy, low-lying parcel of land, adjacent to the north side of the Boston and Maine Railroad. Two other parcels of land, the Hillside Annex and the Helen Binney Kitchel Natural Park, were added to the original 20 acres, creating a ribbon of open space in the heart of Old Greenwich.

The following section details the historical development of the Binney Park, Hillside Annex, and Kitchel Natural Park landscapes, defines a *Period of Historical Significance*, assesses the landscapes’ existing conditions, and provides preliminary recommendations for preserving the landscapes in the future.

**HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Before 1927**

Land that would become Binney Park covered 20 acres in Old Greenwich, just north of the Boston and Maine Railroad. The marshy flood-plained area contained two tidal streams that converged and wound their way to Greenwich Cove, filled with native water-loving species of plants. Mrs. L. V. Lockwood, a resident of nearby Riverside, recalled that many species of plants flourished in the marshy area, including wood anemone, rue anemone, adders tongue lily, Deutaria, meadowrue, violets, buttercups, wild clematis, woodbine, all growing along an old stone wall. Along the brook edges grew Iris, pickerel weed, water plantain, cardinal flower, and loosestrife. In the meadow grew eupatorium, meadowrue, Turk’s cap lily, daisies, Osmunda fern, sensitive fern, hayscented fern, and Cimicifuga. The park land contained a sandy upland area, where foxglove, Gerardia, Campion, meadow sweet, sunflower, snakeroot and wood lily grew.

The area had been slated for house lots. Mary Binney Davey and Helen Binney Kitchel, daughters of Edwin Binney, had the idea of converting it to a park and convinced their father
to purchase the land, and then donate it to the town. The Binney family had come to the Sound Beach area as summer dwellers in 1889 and Edwin Binney built a small cottage along the beach for his family to use as an alternative to their New York residence. Binney, a member of the firm Binney & Smith, manufacturers of “lamp black,” had retired to Indio, Florida by 1927, but retained an interest in the natural resources of the Sound Beach area. The land for the park was owned by George Boles and Binney paid $30,000 for the 10 acres. The deed stated that the land was to be used “for park and recreation purposes only.”

1928 - 1937
Design and construction of Binney Park commenced in 1928, with Edwin Binney supervising, and design advice and construction oversight provided by Binney’s son-in-law, James A. G. Davey of the Davey Tree Company. The contractor was John Hansen, and construction took over four years.

Binney planned for the streams to be dammed to create two small “lakes,” and for many trees to be planted. He insisted that the pond be dug to a shallow depth to assure safety of its users, and the dredge material used to create higher turfed areas. The edges of the pond were to be planted with flowering shrubs and visitors would traverse the landscape via a series of meandering walkways. Landscape details were to include foot bridges and road bridges, and a stone shelter near the lake to “tame” life. A January 1928 newspaper article claimed that “when the landscaping is finished, the new park will present a marvel of scenic grandeur and beauty unsurpassed anywhere in the United States.” The total cost of development was thought to be approximately $100,000, paid by Mr. Binney.

Work continued into 1930 and 1931. The Town built a road to connect Arch Street (on the west side) to Sound Beach Avenue (on the east side), along the then southern edge of the park, and the Town installed a fountain. In 1931, C. K. and J. C. Plume, nurserymen of New Canaan, provided a tree and shrub list for planting at Binney Park. Species included pin oak, sourgum, red maple, paper birch, silver olive, Clethera, winterberry, bayberry, spicebush, dogwood, hawthorn, American ash, Forsythia, holly, Hydrangea, witch hazel and many other species. Also in that year, the Town appropriated $12,000 for additional fill for the park, and twelve ornamental lights were installed, each extending from an arm attached to a cedar pole. The Town also erected the large flag pole, set in a circular seat of Quincy granite. Swimming at the newly established lakes
was forbidden that year because the water was found to be highly polluted from manufacturing plants upstream in Stamford.

Binney Park was officially dedicated on September 25, 1933. The Town Report noted that it was a “model of landscape architecture...a source of the greatest pride and happiness to the people in Old Greenwich. It will endure forever as the memorial to a man beloved in the community and town in which he lived.”

The next year, Greenwich acquired an additional acres abutting Binney Park to the south from Cyrus Miller to add an active recreation area (bringing the total land to 20 acres). Funds to purchase this land had been set aside in 1928 because it was viewed as a “wasteland between the park and railroad tracks.” The Boys’ Club was meeting in the Binney Memorial Parish House. The Town installed new swing frames, one junior baseball diamond, and one senior baseball diamond. The Town also graded and surfaced the cross-road, completed the summerhouse, and built a stone wall from the railroad to the dam. At the end of 1934, Edwin Binney died.

Greenwich continued to enhance the park throughout the 1930s, building on Edwin Binney’s vision. Between 1935 and 1938, the Town added two new tennis courts, laid out and fenced a football field, added swings, constructed a basketball backstop, and established a softball diamond. In 1937, a skating and hockey rink was installed.

1938 - 1950

In 1938, at the notion of Helen Kitchel Binney and her mother, Alice Stead Binney, the Town acquired 1.89 acres in the west side of Sound Beach Avenue as an annex to Binney Park. It was known as the “Arch Street Annex” or “Hillside Annex.” Hillside Annex was described in the Town Report as a sliver of land on the western side Sound Beach Avenue from the northern end of the park. On it, the Town had created a series of woodland paths, constructed steps, and planted Rhododendron, mountain laurel and dogwood. Look-out points and vistas were created and future plans included facilities for picnicking.
The next year, Helen and her mother, along with Dan Everett Waid (architect and designer of the Perrot Library) purchased a 10-acre parcel on Harding Road (part of the former Laddin’s Rock Farm) near Binney Park, to be used as a “Natural Park.” The Parks Department noted that the Natural Park would serve as a sanctuary for birds and plants and for the use and enjoyment of the public. Apple trees, wildflowers and other native New England flora would be allowed to grow freely. Initial work in the park consisted of a general clean-up, establishment of trails, and planting of large native plant materials. With these additions, the parkland in this area of Old Greenwich exceeded 30 acres.

In the 1940s Greenwich’s Division of Parks and Trees established a vision for management of all the town parks, drawing on the natural amenities of the Greenwich landscape as inspiration. In the Town Annual Report from that year, the Division noted that the parks “should be made to excel in the art of garden and landscape design which will afford a living example stressing the importance and desirability of preserving and emphasizing rather than transforming the different types of natural scenery.” They proposed making the parks into arboreta, and creating garden centers, or nurseries at each. This vision was executed at Binney Park by setting out numerous small native plants, shrubs and trees in naturalistic groups.

The Town continued to maintain and improve Binney Park throughout the 1940s. Tennis courts were re-surfaced and footbridges repaired and repainted. Town crews thinned plant material, removing dead or weak species, and replacing them. The Town reached completion of an equipment storage building, installed drainage in the ballfield area, and dredged the pond in the water inlet area. The Town also completed work on the dam at the
water inlet area of the pond, its purpose to collect water-borne pond silt by settlement in the still-water basin, delaying silting up in the main lake. By 1950, invasive plant species had begun to infiltrate the Natural Park, requiring Town crews to remove scrub trees and vines that were choking out desirable plant material.

1950 – Present
Over the last 60 years, the Town has continued to make additions to an upgrade the condition of facilities at Binney Park. Some of the efforts have included the dedication of Memorial Rock (1955), installation of a new backstop (1958), construction of a drinking fountain (1960), resurfacing of tennis courts (1963), and improving the play area (1971).

Erosion of the pond banks had proved to be a problem from the earliest days of the park. In 1952, Town crews worked to line the lake banks to prevent erosion, placing large stones as rip-rap and removing shoreline debris. Three years later, the Town cleaned and dredged the ponds. Flooding continued, particularly during coastal storms and high tides. In 1975, a footbridge was washed out in a flood and soon replaced.

Between 1996 and 2008, several attempts were made to create long-range plans and mobilize volunteer efforts to improve Binney Park. In 1996, the Friends of Binney Park prepared a draft Master Plan for Binney Park. The plan divided the park into 9 zones, and prepared an outline (incomplete for each) that included uses and activities; current condition; recommended maintenance; preservation plan; and planting plan. In 2000, the Garden Club of Old Greenwich volunteered to work with the Town to re-plant trees and shrubs and repair some of the hardscape. In 2005, the Old Greenwich Association began a master planning process for Binney Park, which included a poll of users, referred to as the Survey on Binney Park.

PERIOD of HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE
Binney Park’s Period of Historical Significance spans the years 1933 to the present. During these eight decades, the park was established and developed, according to the vision of its donor, Edwin Binney. The Town has taken great care to preserve the park’s historic features, most of which still remain. Future efforts to preserve the landscape should continue this tradition of respect for Binney Park’s founder.
LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT

The following assessment of the Binney Park landscape documents its existing natural, built and functional features, and analyzes their condition. Together with the Historical Development, the assessment provides a basis for the preservation recommendations that appear at the end of this section.

Context

Binney Park lies on a 32-acre l-shaped piece of land in the easternmost part of Greenwich – Old Greenwich. Its land divides into five sections: a 10-acre active recreation area, a 10-acre passive recreation area, a 1.89 acre “Hillside Annex (located in the northwest corner),” a 1/3-acre “Reading Room (located in the northeast corner),” and a 10-acre “Natural Park” extending eastward from its northeast corner. Its boundaries include Sound Beach Avenue to the east and Arch Street to the west, with the Metro North Rail tracks spanning the south side. The 10-acre Natural Park is bounded by Laddins Rock Road on the west, Brown House Road on the east, and Harding Road on the south. Wesskum Wood Road runs east to west through the park, bisecting the passive and active recreation sections. The character of the park edges is as follows:

- Residential neighborhoods line the east and west sides of the park’s main 20-acre section, and surround all sides of the Hillside Annex and Natural Park. An historic cemetery lies across Sound Beach Avenue on the park’s east side. These neighborhoods feature one-family homes nestled into wooded lots and complement the park’s historic character. Binney Park retains several large coniferous trees along its west side, screening the park from adjacent streets. However, several of these trees have died, leaving holes in the screen.

- The Perrot Library stands on the north side. Its lush front lawn is shaded by mature trees, and both complement the quiet park setting.

- Lining the south side are the Metro North Rail tracks. Elevated above the grade of the park, noise and bustle of this busy transportation line detracts from the park’s otherwise serene setting.

Topography & Water

Originally a swamp, Binney Park was constructed largely from fill, and the resulting topography across most of the landscape is nearly flat. The Hillside Annex contrasts with the park’s main
sections, Natural Park and Reading Room by providing steep and physically challenging terrain. The differing landforms are as follows:

- The 20-acre main sections consist of nearly flat slopes surrounding a pond and abutting the stream flowing southward out from the pond. These areas, along with a small island located in the middle of the pond, are easily navigable by users with all levels of physical abilities.

- The slope of the Reading Room, abutting the main sections on the northeast corner, is also nearly flat. Laddins Brook, one of the streams that feeds the park’s pond flows along the east and south sides of the Reading Room, creating depressed topography on these edges.

- The Natural Park, forming an “I” with the main sections’ northeast corner, features more undulating topography, although it is, for the most part, level. Similar to the park’s main sections, the terrain of this area presents few obstacles to users will many levels of physical abilities. Laddins Brook flows north to south through the western end of the Natural Park, creating a natural depression.

- The Hillside Annex, abutting the main sections’ northwest corner, contains extremely steep topography, making navigation for even the most fit of users, difficult. The Town installed a series of wood timber steps in this area in the 1940s, and they have since deteriorated. Their condition, combined with the challenging grades, make this area of the park inaccessible to nearly all users.

**Views**

As mentioned under Topography, Binney Park is nearly flat, and as a result few long vistas are possible from either the outside looking inward, or the inside looking out. Despite the lack of promontories, Binney Park does provide several opportunities for mid-range and more intimate views, as follows:

- Mid-range views are possible from the pond edges and island, looking across the water. Many wedding parties visit the island and pose for photographs against the backdrop of water and flowering trees and shrubs.

- The Hillside Annex offers the possibility of long views, but the poor condition of the steps and trails makes the viewing spots difficult to access.
Landscape Assessment

CONTEXT

- Stronger Edge
- Weaker Edge

BINNEY PARK
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Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture, LLC
Entrances, Circulation & Parking

Visitors to the park arriving by car typically enter via Wesskum Wood Road, while pedestrians enter the park on foot via one of its several gateways, as follows:

- Drivers turn southward off Wesskum Wood Road onto the park road that lines the eastern edge. Binney Park does not have a formal “vehicular gate,” and this short roadway is the only vehicular route within the park.

- Parking is allowed along the sides of the park roadway, and the number of spaces is limited. The pavement does not contain striping for organized parking stalls.

- Many drivers use the park roadway as a cut-through, connecting Sound Beach Avenue (leading northward from the park) to Arch Street (leading southward from the park and passing under the Metro North Rail tracks). Drivers speed along this roadway, conflicting with the many pedestrians who use the route as a walking loop.

- While the formal entrance to Binney Park lies along Sound Beach Avenue (across from the island and cemetery entrance), pedestrians may also enter via gateways location at the northwest, northeast, southeast and southwest corners of the pond area (north half of the main section). From here they can stroll on the network of bituminous walkways that loop the pond and connect to the island, crossing over stone and wooden bridges.

- The walkway network leads from the park’s northeast corner across Sound Beach Avenue to the Reading Room. Here, the walk rims the edge of the park, allowing pedestrians access from two sides (north and west).

- The southern half of the main section does not contain formal entrances and pedestrian ways, although wooden bridges traverse the stream at two points, suggesting that a walkway may have edged the stream’s east side.

- Circulation through the Natural Park and Hillside Annex is unclear. A formal entrance to the Natural Park, marked with a carved wooden sign and boulders, stands along Harding Road. Invasive plants have obscured the trails, posing difficulties to hikers and bird-watchers. Hillside Annex has no clear point of entry or exit, and its path system is in a state of disrepair.

Vegetation

Binney Park is known throughout Greenwich for its spectacular flowering trees and shrubs, and towering mature specimens. Because the area suffers from regular flooding, water-loving plants have thrived, while others have struggled. The five park sections contain four general plant communities:
BINNEY PARK
HISTORIC LANDSCAPE REPORT
Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture, LLC
- **Mature Coniferous and Deciduous Trees.** These stand largely at the main sections’ edges, giving the landscape an intimate sense of scale. Species include white pine, oak, blue spruce, and tulip trees.

- **Ornamental Trees & Shrubs.** The interior of the park’s main sections feature many species of flowering trees and shrubs and some specimen trees. Most are concentrated around the pond, but several stand along the stream flowing through the southern section. Species include willows, spruces, junipers, paper birches.

- **Pond and Stream Edges.** The Town has introduced boulders along the sides of the pond and stream edges to help prevent collapse during flooding. In and amongst these boulders and along the banks are water-loving herbaceous perennials, including Iris. A colony of Phragmites has emerged at the far southern end of the park along the stream edge, and Polygonum cuspidata has invaded the stream edge in the Reading Room.

- **Unmanaged & Overgrown Woodlands.** As mentioned under Topography and Circulation, the Hillside Annex and Natural Park have become overgrown from years of neglect. Both areas originally contained native and non-native shrubs, and while some can be spotted among the woodlands, most have perished. Characteristics of both areas include mature deciduous trees, thick understory, and brambly shrubs and ground covers.

**Buildings & Recreation Features**

Planned as a public recreation site, Binney Park has always provided buildings and features to support active recreation activities. Several remain and others have been added:

- Buildings include a restroom building, two pavilions (one at the far southwest corner and the other on the island) and a park maintenance building.

- Recreation features include three baseball diamonds, four tennis courts, a playground, and a soccer field. Skating is permitted on the pond during the winter, and a regatta of miniature boats takes place each fall.

**Landscape Details**

- Binney Park retains many of its historic features that contribute to its historic character. They include the stone bridges, stone stream edges, granite edgestones along the park roadway, boulders lining Arch Street, wooden bridges, gateways to the park, flagpole,
BINNEY PARK
HISTORIC LANDSCAPE REPORT
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monuments to several prominent Old Greenwich citizens, pavilions, mature trees, ornamental trees, and system of pedestrian pathways.

- Historical research showed that nearly all of Binney Park’s original features remain, with the exception of the walkway along the southeast edge of the park property, and tree and shrub species that have died, largely because of the seasonally wet and saline ground conditions.

- New features in Binney Park include the park maintenance building, playground and concrete walkways surrounding the restroom building.

RECOMMENDATIONS
The following are preliminary recommendations for measures to be taken by the Town of Greenwich to preserve, restore, reconstruct, and/or rehabilitate Binney Park:

- Compile a comprehensive drainage assessment of the park, with the aim of improving flood control.

- Establish a palette of materials to be used for the park landscape including walkway surfaces, roadway edging, bridges and railings, benches, lighting and other amenities. Once this palette has been established, develop a list of priorities for physical improvements.

- Complete a comprehensive inventory, assessment and management guidelines for the existing trees, shrubs, bulbs and seasonal plantings at Binney Park, and compare the inventory with those species recorded by Helen Binney Kitchel in her scrapbook (Historical Society of Greenwich). From this inventory, the Town should develop a long-term plan for restoring the original plantings. Consideration should be made for the ability of the plants to withstand periodic wet and saline conditions. Include recommendations for coordinating colors for seasonal plantings, and approaches to proper pruning of trees and shrubs. (Implementation of this recommendation was underway as of the writing of this report.)

- Consider creating an arboretum at Binney Park, marking the tree and shrub species, developing an inventory and guidebook, and sponsoring education programs around the arboretum theme. Consider establishing a rose garden as part of the arboretum, to be located away from a flood-prone area (such as the tennis court area).

- Develop a long range plan for the Natural Area, based on the original vision of Helen Binney Kitchel to see this spot as a location for native plant species and a haven for a diversity of wildlife, especially birds. Connect the Natural Area to Laddins Rock Sanctuary and Rosa Hartman Park through a system of marked trails.
- Work with the Binney Park community to develop a “collections policy” for donations of plants and/or placement of monuments.

- Consider introducing walkways in the southern half of the “main section,” provide a safe surface and route for pedestrians separated from vehicular traffic.

- Consider introducing traffic-calming techniques for the roadway, encouraging drivers to travel slowly through and around the park.

- Create a long term plan for the rehabilitation of the Hillside Annex – one that restores the viewing spots, native plant materials, and system of trails.

- Develop a long term plan for rehabilitating the Reading Room, including control of invasive plant species.
NOTES

Information for this drawing was obtained from the following sources:

- "Property of Town of Greenwich, Old Greenwich, Conn.," prepared by S. E. Minor, surveyor, 1938
- Historic photographs from the collections of the Greenwich Library, the Historical Society of the Town of Greenwich, and the Perrot Memorial Library

PERIOD of SIGNIFICANCE
1933 - PRESENT

BINNEY PARK
HISTORIC LANDSCAPE REPORT
Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture, LLC
MONTGOMERY PINETUM

The Montgomery Pinetum lies along Bible Street in the Cos Cob section of Greenwich, and its entire land holdings, including a portion of the original Montgomery property, the Pomerance property and the Tuchman property equals 91 acres. This report focuses on 10 acres at the core of the Montgomery property, the area included in the design for “Wild Acres” for Frederick Gotthold, and later enhanced by Colonel Robert Montgomery.

The following section details the historical development of the Montgomery Pinetum landscape, defines a Period of Historical Significance, assesses the landscape’s existing conditions, and provides preliminary recommendations for preserving the landscape in the future.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

Before 1922
In 1880, Frederick Gotthold and his wife, Florence, purchased 55 acres in the Cos Cob section of Greenwich, and built “Wildacres” or “Wild Acres.” Gotthold was president of Gotthold & Company, New York, makers of straw goods. Wild Acres consisted of an 18-room Mansard-roofed mansion, guest cottage, laundry building, ice house, water tower, wood shed, cow barn, garage (with space for three cars, four horses and with four rooms), gardener’s cottage, chicken houses and a small barn. Landscape elements included a two-acre vegetable garden, a one-third-acre perennial garden, two acres of lawns, flower gardens, an orchard, walled garden, brooks, ponds, and “magnificent” hemlock groves. While Frederick Gotthold lived until 1928, and Florence until 1930, the couple put Wild Acres up for sale in the early 1920s.

1922 - 1952
In 1922, Colonel Robert Montgomery and his wife Nell purchased Wild Acres, and began a 30-year relationship with the landscape. Nell was an artist, and had a field studio built in the “lower valley,” and designed and had constructed a primrose garden. The garden spanned a brook, and the primroses were interspersed with other ground cover plantings (including

“Lotus Pond at Wild Acres, Home of Frederick Gotthold,” from Greenwich Beautiful, 1913.
By the end of the 1920s, the Montgomerys had begun to add buildings and detail to the landscape. Around 1928, they constructed a greenhouse adjacent to the mansion. Robert Montgomery’s interest in fruit tree propagation spurred the designers of the greenhouse, Lord and Burnham, to specify an unusually tall roof. The 125-acres extended to Stanwich Road, and he created a formal entrance to the property here, marked by stone columns. In the early 1930s, Montgomery enlisted the labor of unemployed local masons to build the rock retaining walls along the entry drive and elsewhere on the property.

In 1930, Montgomery established the Pinetum, a collection of conifers, and went on to acquire 850 species for the property. He favored displays of conifers over open lawns, and therefore planted aggressively throughout the property. Images of the Pinetum from the 1930s and 1940s show a heavily-planted landscape, with little open space and or open lawns. In 1934, horticulturist E. Dexter Davis began work on an inventory of the conifers. Over a 2-1/2 year period, he photographed and made hand-written notes about each species.
By the mid 1940s, Montgomery was donating plants from the Pinetum to other institutions. In 1945, he gifted 200 of his most choice specimens to the New York Botanic Garden for a new conifer garden, to be designed by Marian Coffin. Robert and Nell Montgomery continued to reside at Wild Acres, spending winters at their estate in Coral Gables, Florida.

1952 - 1960
Robert Montgomery died in 1952 and shortly thereafter, Nell approached the Greenwich Parks Superintendent about donating the 125-acre Pinetum property to the Town, asking that active recreation on the property be restricted to walking trails, and that it be used for cultivation of the arts and horticulture. Montgomery’s will contained a provision that would allow the Town to sell off portions of the 125 acres.
Initially, Town Meeting rejected the proposal, objecting to the cost of its upkeep. When the Superintendent made a second pitch to Town Meeting, he enlisted Helen Binney Kitchell to make the case. Town Meeting unanimously accepted the donation, but made immediate plans to demolish all but one wing of the mansion.

Between 1955 and 1960, the Town altered the property to make it more suitable for use as a public park. Town crews cleared a vista from the mansion toward the larger pond. In 1955, a parking lot was installed at the northern end to accommodate skaters using the pond. In 1956, the town constructed the lavatory building. The mansion’s west wing was repaired for public use in 1958, and a professor of landscape design at the University of Connecticut, H. O. Perkins, created planting plans for the wing’s exterior. In 1959, with the input of landscape architect Armand Tibbitts, a rock garden was planted on the south lawn of the mansion.

In 1957, shortly after the official acceptance of the Pinetum by the Town, the Garden Education Center (initially named the Garden Center) formed, an effort spearheaded by gardening enthusiast Jane Duff. The Center’s mission was “to inspire and foster interest in better gardening and horticulture in all phases and related aspects of nature.”

1961 - Present
Greenwich demolished all but the west wing of the mansion in 1960. The following year, the Town built a new flagstone terrace overlooking the smaller pond, with an adjoining grass terrace enclosed with plantings and a stone retaining wall. Town crews were propagating and growing annual bedding plants for all the Town parks in the Pinetum greenhouse. By 1967, a new natural rock garden, located near the primrose garden, was installed, and a picnic area constructed.

Also in the 1960s the Town received a donation of a small greenhouse and constructed the facility on the site of a former garage, which had been destroyed by fire. Benjamin Dietrich was appointed gardener, and he set up a propagation program for the evergreen collection, and trained residents in gardening methods. The parks superintendent established a two-season flower display (tulips and chrysanthemums) in the vista and lake area, including Rhododendrons, azaleas, and evergreen plants in the background. The superintendent oversaw the construction of woodland trails.

By the 1990s, the public launched an effort the gain State recognition of the Lord and Burnham greenhouse, and in 1993, the building achieved a listing on the State Register of Historic Places. Activity of the Garden Education Center grew, and in 1993 planning began.
for construction of a new horticultural building. Greenwich architects Kaehler/Moore created a design that included a 2,000 sf classroom and workroom space, and an expanded greenhouse. The building was completed in the late 1990s.

Long-range planning for the Pinetum has been limited to a master plan, created in 1999, that included an inventory of existing park features, but no historical research on the Pinetum landscape or assessment of its existing conditions. Brainstorming about landscape improvements took place in the early 2000s before the Garden Education Center’s 50th anniversary, with a two-person committee identifying improved handicapped access, enlarged parking and upgraded circulation to and around the main building as three specific needs.

**PERIOD of HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

The *Period of Historical Significance* for the Montgomery Pinetum spans the thirty years between 1922 and 1952. During this time, Robert and Nell Montgomery purchased Wild Acres and transformed the property into a collection of 850 conifer species. They also maintained garden spaces throughout property, adding interest to the landscape. Future preservation efforts at the Pinetum should reflect this period.

**LANDSCAPE ASSESSMENT**

The following assessment of the Montgomery Pinetum landscape documents its existing natural, built and functional features, and analyzes their condition. Together with the Historical Development, the assessment provides a basis for the preservation recommendations that appear at the end of this section.

**Context**

The Pinetum is bounded on the east side by Bible Street, a narrow residential route leading from Cos Cob and winding its way northward through heavy woodlands. One-family residences stretch along Bible Street to the south, east and north of the Pinetum, and dense woodlands surround the residences. Despite its close proximity to Cos Cob and the center of Greenwich, the Pinetum’s setting feels rural.

**Topography & Water**

Topography across the 10 acres undulates up over knolls and rock outcroppings and down into low spots containing streams and ponds. Beginning on the east side, the land rolls downward from Bible Street to a depression with two ponds (a small “hemlock pond” to the north and a larger “reflection pond” to the south). It then proceeds upward to a ridge that holds portions of the former Montgomery mansion, a greenhouse, the

The Pinetum’s ponds are among its most popular features.
Garden Education Center, and a park maintenance building. The land then falls steeply to another stream-filled depression, and quickly rises to a rocky ridge. The property’s lowest points are at the pond edges and along the stream bank, and the high points sit near the former mansion and at the top of the rocky ridge. The water elevation of the ponds fluctuates with precipitation amounts, but the two bodies do contain water throughout the year. The stream only seasonally contains water.

Views

As mentioned under Topography, the 10 acres contain several high points along ridges and these offer visitors opportunities for long vistas across the property. From the terrace on the east side of the former mansion, long views are possible southward, to the reflection pond. From the rocky ridge, visitors can enjoy glimpses eastward to the former mansion. Some of the trees and understory have become overgrown over the last several decades, minimizing the effect of these long views.

The property also offers opportunities for many superb shorter views. Significant among these are the views along the entry drive of the two ponds and the mansion; the views from the pond edges across the ponds; and the view from the pond back toward the former mansion and its environs. Colonel Montgomery carefully placed his conifers and other trees and shrubs in the landscape to create visual effects, and many of these are still visible in these shorter views.

Entrances, Circulation & Parking

Visitors enter the Pinetum via a narrow driveway leading westward from Bible Street. They pass between the two ponds and arrive at a fork. A left turn takes motorists northwestward, along a road – the former estate entry drive – eventually leading past a skating pond to an exit onto Stanwich Road. A right turn leads visitors to the former mansion, greenhouse, Garden Education Center, and parking areas.

Parking is possible in one of two lots, both located in the vicinity of the Garden Education Center (GEC). The first extends eastward from the GEC building, and includes spaces near the door for handicapped persons. The second lies east of the GEC, at the northern end of the “fountain” pond. To reach the GEC and other buildings from this lot, visitors must walk a short distance up a moderate slope.

The entire Pinetum grounds are open to pedestrians, and a network of two trails – the Hemlock Trail and the Rock Garden Trail – strings through much of the property’s wooded areas.
TOPOGRAPHY, WATER & VIEWS

- Accessible Slope
- Inaccessible Slope
- + LP Low Point
- + HP High Point

Long View to Preserve & Enhance
Short View to Preserve & Enhance

MONTGOMERY PINETUM
HISTORIC LANDSCAPE REPORT
Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture, LLC
areas. The uneven and steep terrain along these trails makes navigation challenging, particularly for persons with disabilities. While the trails are marked on a map and have been blazed, their condition is poor, making them difficult to follow. Many portions of the trails have been obstructed by fallen trees and overgrown underbrush.

Plant Communities
The Pinetum was created, in part, to display Colonel Montgomery’s collection of conifers, and many of these remain on the property. Along with the conifers, the site contains the following communities of plants:

- **Unmanaged Woodlands.** Much of the Pinetum property has become overgrown in recent decades, with the concentration of unmanaged woodlands lying to the north and west of the former mansion, greenhouse and Garden Education Center. Hemlocks and a mix of hardwoods fill these woodlands, and invasive plants, including Aralia (Devil’s Walking Stick) have infiltrated the understory below. Unmanaged woodlands cover approximately more than 50% of the 10-acre mansion environs, and a majority of the entire 91-acre property.

- **Plant Collection Area.** The approximately 5-acre area extending southward and eastward from the former mansion contains the remaining collection of conifers, planted under the direction of Colonel Montgomery. This area contains the two ponds and approximately 80 conifer specimens, including the Sargent Weeping Hemlock, the R. H. Montgomery Spruce, as well as many species of ornamental trees and shrubs, planted to offset the conifers. The ponds contain water-loving species, including pond lilies, and the lawn leading to the duck pond features seasonal bulb displays.

- **Designed Gardens.** Punctuating the Pinetum’s woodlands and conifer collection are several individually-designed gardens, each featuring a different genus of plants. Along the mansion’s terrace is a collection of peonies, and to the north of the park maintenance building is a Viburnum garden. At a low spot along the old entry drive (located to the south and west of the former mansion) is a primrose collection. The Pinetum contains two rock gardens, one on the south lawn below the former mansion, and the other deep in the woodlands, atop the craggy ridge to the west of the former mansion.

Buildings
Historical records indicate that Wild Acres once held the mansion with 18 rooms, a guest cottage, laundry building, ice house, water tower, wood shed, cow barn, large garage, gardener’s cottage, chicken houses and a small barn. Today, only the west wing of the former mansion (c. 1880), and the Lord and Burnham greenhouse (c. 1928) remain. Several other buildings have been added as the former private estate has evolved into a public garden. These include the smaller greenhouse (1968), restroom building (c. 1960s), and Garden Education Center (1990s), and parks department maintenance building.
Landscape Details

- The extent of the managed landscape at the Pinetum has diminished since the Town assumed ownership in the 1950s, but the landscape retains several historic features dating to time of the Mongomerys’ ownership. These include the west wing of the former mansion, Lord and Burnham greenhouse, gardener’s cottage, steps leading from the mansion down to the hemlock pond, hemlock pond shelter, reflection pond and overlook, stone walls surrounding former nursery and plant propagation sites, designed gardens (discussed in Plant Communities), cobble roadway gutters, and stone walls supporting the former entry drive. The dozens of remaining species of trees, shrubs, herbaceous perennials and groundcovers provide historical landscape detail.

- Several historic landscape details have been removed. These include much of the mansion, several outbuildings, four nursery areas and some of the original Montgomery-era plant materials.

- Contemporary features include the restroom building, Garden Education Center building, parks department maintenance building, flagstone terrace of the former mansion and parking lots.

PRESERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are recommendations for measures to be taken by the Town of Greenwich to preserve, restore, reconstruct, and/or rehabilitate the Montgomery Pinetum:

- Define the boundary of the approximately 10-acre historic core of the Pinetum, as distinguished from the outlying conservation land.

- Compile a comprehensive inventory of trees, shrubs, herbaceous perennials and groundcovers on the 10-acre section of the property, and compare that list with those prepared by Dexter Davis. From this inventory, the Town should develop a long-term restoration plan (including control of invasive species and management of all species) for plants at the Pinetum, and a plan to create an arboretum. (Implementation of this recommendation was underway at the time of the writing of this report.)
- Complete individual preservation plans for the several garden spaces, including the Peony Garden, Primrose Garden, Viburnum Garden, and both Rock Gardens. The plans should include recommendations for managing the gardens over the long term, and should assign a cost to each of the recommendations and organize them according to priority.

- Explore the possibility of developing new garden spaces, such as a Japanese garden near one of the ponds, a butterfly garden, a bird-friendly garden, a vegetable garden, and a community garden site.

- Expand and improve the existing trail system to include the following elements:
  - A connection to Central Middle School and the school parking lot;
  - A connection to and from the community center;
  - Interpretation stations at feature areas, such as geological or botanical features, along the existing and new trails;
  - An ADA-compliant route touring users through a limited part of the site, on grades of 5% or less, with wood-chipped surfaces;
  - A designated route for cycling;
  - A designated route for cross-country training;
  - Lighting along some of the walks/paths.

- Connect the Pinetum trails to the Connecticut-wide Blue Trail system, allowing a link between Cos Cob and the Merritt Parkway edge.

- Develop and implement a trail maintenance program – one that ensures regular upkeep of the trail routes (clearing, re-blazing, step and bridge repair), and organize a crew of volunteers to routinely tend the trail network.

- Develop a long-term plan for parking at the Pinetum, including an improved handicapped parking site, as well as a new parking area, to be located at one or more of the following locations:
  - the southeast corner of the property, or
  - across Bible Street in the current compost storage area or existing gravel area.

- Develop a sign program that includes welcome signs at entrances; directional signs, and interpretive signs at feature areas.

The woodland trail system leads visitors to more remote parts of the site, including a rock garden atop one of the property's steep ridges.
• Seek an alternate location for the existing picnic area, such as the grassy area, located to the east of the Pinetum Drive (site of former nursery/orchard).

• Develop a plan for the re-use of the former Wagner House site as a nursery, demonstration garden, or vegetable plot.

• Commission an engineering study of the two ponds with the goal of controlling sediment over the long term. Include plans for restoring the pond edges in this study.

• As an outgrowth of the physical improvements, listed above, expand programming at the Pinetum, such as “Know Your Parks” walks through the grounds to educate visitors about the Pinetum’s history, and broader use of the mansion and greenhouses.
This section of the plan will help the Town of Greenwich care for the Bruce, Byram, and Binney Parks and Montgomery Pinetum landscapes. It includes strategies for the care of plants (trees, shrubs and turf), structures (steps and buildings), and pavement. By following these strategies, Town employees will help ensure the long term health and beauty of some of Greenwich’s most prominent historic landscapes.

Management Log
Before the Town begins management of the parks’ landscapes, staff should set up a “management log,” or ongoing written record of inspections, repairs, and introductions of new features listed by date. The log should include methods and materials employed, as well as names and contact information for any specialists employed in each park’s care. The log should be stored, in both electronic and manual format, in a secure location within the Division of Parks and Trees.

EXISTING PLANTS

Trees
As noted in several places in this report, trees greatly impact each park’s appearance, with mature trees and tree stands playing dominant roles. To maintain the trees’ health the Town should adhere to the measures that follow. For treatment of individual trees, the Town should consult a Connecticut Certified Arborist.

General Tree Management Guidelines
1. Test the park soil for quality in relationship to the mature tree population. The test will detect any soil deficiencies, and determine a remedy for correcting them.

2. Provide and install cables. These will help stabilize any weakly-joined tree limbs.

3. Treat trees with a systemic insecticide to minimize stress caused by leaf-feeding pests.

4. Prune trees, removing all dead wood greater than ½” in diameter.

5. Create rings of mulch around the base of each tree, as wide as possible and up to the diameter of the tree crown.

6. Where soil has built up at the base of trees, remove enough to expose the root collar.
7. Remove any dead trees.

**Turf**
The following fertilizing and mowing guidelines will help maintain the turf areas, promoting a lush, green appearance and healthier, longer living plants.

1. Fertilize sparingly, as too much fertilizer can cause grass to grow too rapidly, requiring more mowing and making the plants more susceptible to disease. Not enough fertilizer can result in weaker plants that are more susceptible to disease or stress brought on by drought.

2. Apply fertilizer three times per year – around Memorial Day and Labor Day, and finally, around Halloween.

3. Do NOT fertilize in mid-summer. At this time of year, roots have become dormant. Fertilizer will cause the leaves to grow, making the plants less tolerant of drought, heat and disease.

4. Follow these fertilizing instructions:
   - **Memorial Day** - apply 1 pound of Nitrogen per 1,000 sf (with 50% of Nitrogen slow-release). Use an N:P:K Ratio of 14-14-14.
   - **Labor Day** - apply 2 pounds of Nitrogen per 1,000 sf (with 50% of Nitrogen slow-release). Use an N:P:K Ratio of 14-14-14.
   - **Halloween** - apply 1 pound of Nitrogen per 1,000 sf (with 75% of Nitrogen slow-release). Use an N:P:K Ratio of 28-3-9.

5. When mowing, remove no more than one-third of the height of the turf at one time, always leaving twice as much leaf height as is cut.

6. The best level for mown grass is 2 ½ inches, with 2 to 3 ½ inches the range.

7. It is best to mow lawns on an as-needed basis, not on a regular schedule, such as once per week.

8. When mowing around historic features, such as stone walls and bridges, the Town should avoid contact between the equipment and stones. Weed-whackers should be used sparingly, and preferably not at all.

**Exotic Invasive Plants**
Invasive plants are non-native species that were introduced to the United States by horticulturists as ornamental or exotic plants. They quickly adapted to the growing conditions of U.S. climates, and spread, overtaking and crowding out native species. Invasive plants are difficult to control and must be monitored closely to prevent them from eliminating other more desirable plant species. The four historic parks contain several invasive species, including
Norway maple (Acer platanoides), tree of heaven (Ailanthus altissima), Asian bittersweet (Celastrus orbiculatus), Purple Loosestrife (Lythrum salicaria), and Japanese Knotweed (Polygonum cuspidata). The following are general measures for controlling these species.

**Norway Maple (Acer platanoides)**
Norway maple is native to Europe and Western Asia, and was introduced in the United States as an ornamental landscape plant. It reproduces prolifically in forests, fields, and other natural habitats, forming dense, shady stands and displacing native trees and shrubs. The tree has smooth, grey bark that becomes furrowed with age, and its leaves are dark green. The leaves have little or no fall color, which is one of the easiest ways of distinguishing it from the brilliant orange-colored sugar maple.

Norway maples spread by sending their mature fruits, or “samaras” through the wind. Small seedlings may be uprooted from the ground by hand, and small and large trees can be cut to the ground level. An application of glyphosate (Roundup) or triclopyr (Garlon 3A or Garlon 4) herbicide can also help control. The best means of control, however, is simply not planting them.

**Tree of Heaven (Ailanthus altissima)**
The tree of heaven is a rapidly growing deciduous tree native to Central China. A Philadelphia gardener mistakenly introduced the tree of heaven to the U.S. in 1784, believing its seeds to be those of the lacquer tree. During the California gold rush, Chinese miners brought seeds with them for uses in traditional medicines. The tree has smooth stems with pale gray bark and light chestnut brown-colored twigs. The leaves range from one to four feet in length and are compound, containing 11-25 smaller leaflets. The tree produces clusters of small, yellowish green flowers in the spring and twisted seed pods (“samaras”) in the late summer and early fall. Each tree can produce as many as 325,000 seeds per year, and the seeds are easily dispersed by the wind.

The tree of heaven grows very rapidly and can take over an entire site, forming an impenetrable thicket and crowding out other less aggressive species. Its roots can also damage sewers and foundations. The most effective way to control tree of heaven is to pull seedlings by hand before the tap root develops. Systemic herbicides, including glyphosate (Roundup) and
triclopyr (Garlon 3A or Garlon 4) may also be used when the trees are in full leaf.* The chemicals should be applied to leaves and green stems, basal bark and/or cut stumps. Finally, research suggests that fungal pathogens may control the plants.

Asian Bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*)
Asian Bittersweet is a deciduous, woody, perennial vine native to Eastern Asia. It was introduced in the U.S. as an ornamental plant and is still widely planted and maintained as an ornamental vine. Its leaves are rounded and glossy and it produces clusters of small greenish flowers. Mature plants produce green to yellow fruits which split open to show red-orange seed sacs (“arils”). Many people cut the vines containing the fruits to make floral arrangements and wreaths. While attractive, the cuttings promote further spread of the vines.

Bittersweet invades the groundcover, shrub, understory and canopy layers of both wooded and open areas. In addition to blocking light and starving other plants, it girdles and chokes the trunks of trees. Two methods of control are possible for the plant. In areas of small investment, the vines may be uprooted before fruiting. Herbicides such as glyphosate (Roundup) or triclopyr (Garlon) may be applied after the vines have been hand-cut or mown.¹

Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*)
Purple Loosestrife is an erect, perennial herb, introduced in the United State in the 1800s for medicinal and ornamental purposes. Its stem is square and its lance-shaped, stalkless leaves are opposite or whorled. It produces deep magenta-colored flower spikes through much of the summer. It infiltrates both fresh water wetlands as well as tidal and non-tidal marshes.

Control of Purple Loosestrife may be implemented by hand pulling small plants before seeds set, or treating with glyphosate (Rodeo for wetlands). Herbicides should be applied late in the season when plants are preparing for dormancy. Biological control, using inspect species approved by the US Department of Agriculture – the root-mining weevil, leaf-feeding beetles, and flower-feeding beetles. For more information about use of biological control measures, contact the Connecticut Department of Agriculture.

¹ The Town should use pesticides wisely by reading the entire pesticide label carefully, following all mixing and application instructions and wearing all recommended personal protective gear and clothing. The Connecticut Department of Agriculture should also be contacted prior to any chemical applications, as the agency may dictate pesticide use requirements, restrictions or regulations.
Japanese Knotweed (Polygonum cuspidata)
Native to eastern Asia, Japanese Knotweed grows along the stream bank in the Reading Room (between Binney Park and the Helen Binney Kitchel Natural Area. The plant arrived in North America late in the 19th century and was used for ornamental purposes. It spreads aggressively by seed and rhizome – runners that can extend up to fifteen to eighteen feet underground. To date, no definitive means of control exists, except for complete removal of the plants and their rhizome network.

The key to managing Japanese Knotweed is persistent and continual treatment. If the Town finds that the plant colony and its rhizome network are too large to remove, staff should control it through cutting and application of an herbicide. Staff should cut the stalks at least three times per season, before the plants mature and produce flowers. Staff should also apply an herbicide, such as glyphosate, immediately after the stalks have been cut, and preferably in the fall, when the plant is fueling growth of the rhizomes.

NEW PLANTS
Historical research conducted for each of the parks revealed some of the historic plant species originally installed in each. When introducing new trees and shrubs, the Town should consult this research and draw from it as much is possible.

New Trees & Shrubs
Specifications for planting new trees and shrubs should be included in all relevant landscape preservation projects, conducted in the future at the parks. All planting should adhere to these specifications unless otherwise approved by the landscape architect. In summary, newly planted trees are unlikely to survive if they do not receive special care and attention, particularly in the first few years after planting. In general, adhere to the following care guidelines:

- Plant in the spring or fall, and never during the heat of summer.

- Hire a landscape contracting company to plant trees and shrubs. Trees and shrubs that are planted correctly will be far more likely to survive and thrive. The contractor should guarantee all trees and shrubs for one year after planting. However, the guarantee is valid only if the plants have been properly cared for.

- If staking new trees is necessary, be sure to remove stakes and guy-wires within one year of planting. If the trees appear to need some kind of individual protection because of
their location, build a simple fence rather than leaving the guy-wires on. Wires can damage and will eventually kill the tree if left in place too long.

- Provide the trees and shrubs with at least one inch of water each week. This water can be supplied by rainfall or by supplemental watering. Spreading one inch of water using a hose attached to an exterior water spigot takes approximately two-three hours. Water must soak deep into the soil to encourage good root growth and overall plant health. Adjust the flow of water so it has time to sink into the ground, reducing the pressure if small “rivers” develop. The water should sink into the ground around the tree or shrub, rather than flowing away.

- If drought dominates the fall, be sure to water trees and shrubs well before the ground freezes, protecting the plants from entering winter in dry soil.

- Mulch plants to help control weeds and keep moisture in the soil (and maintain a neat appearance in the landscape). Use composted pine bark mulch that has been aged a minimum of three months. Apply the mulch to a depth no greater than three inches. Each spring, fluff the existing mulch and add more, as needed. Keep mulch away from the stems or trunks of trees and shrubs, and off shrub branches (to minimize decay and prevent insect infestations).

- Prune trees and shrubs to enhance their natural form and appearance, and to help maintain their health. Enlist the expertise of a professional or person trained in proper pruning practices. Prune only by hand (never use electric pruners). Prune broken branches immediately to prevent disease.

New Turf Areas
When patching turf outside of athletic field areas, the Town should adhere to the following measures to help insure long-lived, healthy lawn areas:

1. A seed mixture, consisting of Kentucky bluegrasses, fine fescues and perennial ryes is best, as it minimizes the amount of mowing (each grows at a different rate) and provides a consistent green appearance. Using a mix will avoid the problems arising from monocultural plantings. A local seed market will offer mixes appropriate for the Greenwich area.

2. Once applied, seed should be covered with straw mulch. Hay should be avoided as it encourages weed growth.

3. The seeded area should be watered as frequently as possible to encourage germination (approximately once inch of rainwater per week).

4. Do not use herbicides to control weeds when the turf is becoming established.
5. Once the turf is established, remove the straw mulch and follow the instructions listed above for ongoing management.

Planting Methods
When introducing new trees to each of the existing communities, the Town should adhere to industry standards for planting. At a minimum, the Town should follow the recommendations included following planting detail.

Tree Planting Detail. Source: University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension Service.
ROADWAYS & PATHS

The Town should inspect the paved roadways and paths yearly, looking for damage from frost heaves or vehicle tires. If the routes require patching, they should be followed to maintain an even, unblemished appearance.

STRUCTURES

The Town should inspect the park’s structures (steps, walls, bridges and buildings) yearly, looking for dislodged stones, cracked mortar, dirt and graffiti. Major repairs should be made by qualified professionals only.

Yearly Cleaning
To prevent build up of dirt and grime on the granite and puddingstone steps, the Town should wash the surface yearly with a low-pressure application of water (less than 250 psi).

Graffiti Removal
Graffiti should be removed with solutions approved by the National Park Service Preservation Brief 38, Removing Graffiti from Historic Masonry. In particular, the Town should adhere to the following guidelines:

- Identify the material used to make the graffiti. Most often, vandals employ spray paint (polyurethane, lacquer, enamel), brush-applied paints (oil and synthetic resins including vinyl, acrylic, acetate, methacrylate, or alkyd), permanent and water-soluble felt markers, ballpoint pens, chalk, graphic and colored pencils, pastels, wax and oil crayons, liquid shoe polish, and lipstick.
- Identify the substrate material of the object containing the graffiti. Masonries are porous materials, making them sensitive to abrasion.
- Consult a historic masonry specialist before attempting to remove the graffiti. Specialists should maintain membership in the American Institute for Conservation (AIC), and perform all work in accordance with the AIC Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice. These individuals will assess the porosity of the substrate material and propose the best removal method. Methods include employing poultice (an absorbent material mixed with a cleaning solution and applied in the form of a paste), water and detergent, organic solvents, alkaline compounds, bleaches, mechanical treatment, and laser cleaning. The method should be tested on a small, obscure area of the graffiti-ed object prior to proceeding with removal.*
- Where appropriate, apply an anti-graffiti coating to the vandalized object. Such coatings can help facilitate easier removal of graffiti, but they do not prevent graffiti from occurring. Some are permanent, and others must be re-applied once the graffiti has been removed. Because the coatings can seal the object, they can lead to water build-up and eventual water-related deterioration.
In addition, the Town can take the following measures to minimize the occurrence of graffiti:

- Remove graffiti immediately after it occurs. Studies have shown that graffiti that remains on objects attracts more graffiti, complicating the problem. Graffitiists gravitate and return to sites where their work will remain for longer periods of time.
- Perform regular maintenance throughout the park, including tree care, brush and understory removal, mowing and road maintenance. Well-maintained landscapes draw far fewer vandals than do poorly maintained ones.
- Install improved lighting and motion sensitive lighting in areas where graffiti has occurred in the past.
- Implement programs and activities that draw people in large numbers to the park at all times of year. Vandals are less likely to attack landscapes that are being watched.
HISTORICAL CHRONOLOGY

Bruce Park

1709-1889. A tide-powered mill and farm were located on land that would become Bruce Park. The grain mill, known as the Elisha Davis Mill, was the chief source of income for the Town’s first minister, Joseph Morgan. It stood at the southern end of Bruce Lake, and in later years became known as Davis Landing, operating until just before 1900. The farm was known as the Isaac Howe Mead farm.

1858. Robert Moffat Bruce (1822-1908), a textile merchant and member of the New York Cotton Exchange, purchased a home near the Davis Mill and Mead farm (the house had been constructed in 1853).

1894. Robert Bruce built the two-story, gambrel-roofed structure on what would be part of the I-95 right-of-way. The purpose of the building was to provide a vacation spot for working girls from New York City. It was used in summer only. Later it became known as the Emily Bruce Shelter.

1908. Bruce died and bequeathed his home and nearly 100 acres to the Town of Greenwich for use and benefit of the public as a natural history, historical and art museum. A provision in the deed allowed for part of his gift to be used “for the purpose of a public highway,” an event that did not occur until 1958.

1909. The Bruce family transferred the mansion and land to the Town. The land was marshy and filled with tangled brush and decayed trees. Workers scooped out marshes to create ponds and raise the surrounding land. The mill was removed and the pond dammed to allow for boating and swimming. A boathouse was built on the millpond, and three miles of drives constructed.

1910. The Town Report recorded funds appropriated and spent for the Bruce Park sign (painting), Bruce Park lakes (plans and specifications for tide gates), and general maintenance, including park benches, tree pruning, horse-shoeing and feeding, and plumbing repairs to “building.”

1918. The Town expended funds for stable expenses (horse-shoeing, feed, wagon repair, harness repair) and tree care. The Town made the park land available for Victory Gardens.

1919. The Town Report listed Bruce Park expenses to include maintenance of the grounds and stable, salary for a caretaker, and purchase of asphalt.

1921. Expenses for Bruce Park included a tennis fence, road oil, seats and traprock.
1922. The park’s bridges were painted and repaired, and the buildings maintained, and drains were installed for sewerage.

1923-1927. The Town performed general maintenance on the park, expending as much as $6,000 in 1926. A dog pound was located in the park in 1925.

1928. Despite the popularity of the automobile, the Town was still maintaining a horse or horses in Bruce Park in 1928. Maintenance was also performed on the “cottage” in the same year. The Town organized a formal recreation department, and the office moved into the old shelter (after a renovation).

1929. The Town Report noted that the Bruce Park dam was raised in 1929, and an athletic field was built. Maintenance continued on the “cottage.”

1930. The Town added sprinklers, water mains, concrete dams and bleachers, worked on the building, barn and benches, and built the “Junior Athletic Field.” Also during this year, Greenwich paid S. E. Minor to prepare a topographical survey of the park, and paid Armand R. Tibbetts for a “development plan.” The S. E. Minor survey showed the stone bridges, cobble gutters, and lamp posts. It also located the cottage and stable building, along with a “machine shop” at the eastern end of the park, with a stone wall lining the park’s eastern edge. It showed the northern most section of the park (removed for the construction of I-95) to contain a ballfield, drinking fountain and flagpole area. The survey also listed many tree species: Oak, Dogwood, Maple, Black Birch, Gum, Pignut, Tulip, Sassafras, Cherry, Ash, Elm, Beech, Ironwood, Locust, Sycamore, Hickory.

1932. The Town remodeled the “clubhouse.”

1933. Sometime prior to 1933, the Town installed a golf driving range at Bruce Park (recreation statistics for 1933 listed the driving range as one of the park’s holdings).

1934. The Town installed new swings.

1935. In this year, the State of Connecticut’s horseshoe tournament was held at Bruce Park.

1936. The Town added handball courts, and lawn bowling green, swing frames, and a basketball backstop. It was a busy year for activity at the clubhouse, with meetings of the Boy Scouts and Sea Scouts.

1937. The Town installed a skating and hockey rink.
1938. The Stamford Symphonic Band performed at the park in the summer, and fireworks were held on the grounds on the Fourth of July. The golf driving range continued to operate. The clubhouse continued to provide space for group meetings, including a “Negro Club.” The clubhouse was reported to have had public shower baths, game rooms, and living quarters for administrative officers and the custodian.

1939. By this year, Bruce Park was providing space for many forms of active recreation including baseball, softball, basketball, archery, handball, tennis, paddle tennis, skating, lawn bowling, ping pong, volleyball, as well as passive forms, including picnicking. Along with Byram Park, Bruce provided the greatest number and variety of forms of recreational opportunities in the Greenwich parks system.

1940. The report of the Division of Parks and Trees in the Town Report stated,

“Greenwich parks should afford a tangible example of scientific maintenance. They should be made to excel in the art of garden and landscape design which will afford a living example stressing the importance and desirability of preserving and emphasizing rather than transforming the different types of natural scenery. To a degree at least they might gradually be made to become natural arboretums affording a haven for native vegetation exemplifying the desirability and landscape values of arranging plant material according to their natural associations and is their natural habitat. In many cases plantings could be arranged not only for their scenic value but could be made to be accessible for observation and study by those who might be interested. In certain convenient areas, properly screened so they will not interfere with and confuse the general landscape picture, collections of plants could be arranged for the definite purpose of trial and study. In like manner there are innumerable way in which the parks of Greenwich could be made to become the true garden centers of our community.

“It is to be desired that such a basic policy shall always remain in force as it will insure the continuance of an uninterrupted plan of development which will carry on from one administration to another and thus bring about the ultimate realization of the desired goal.”
At Bruce Park, the Town launched a significant effort. The Report noted that many existing plants were re-arranged in more natural groupings and large plantings of Asiatic Crabapples, Shadblow, Beach Plum, Dogwood, Azalea, and Blueberry were made. It also reported that Mertensia and Narcissi had naturalized in the wooded area west of Indian Field Road, and that a planting of Lilium regale had been made in the vicinity of the rock ledges south west of the bowling green. The Town had established a Lilac collection along the sidewalk bordering Davis Avenue, just east of the millpond bridge. Other species planned for planting at Bruce Park included Azalea arborescens, vaseyi, viscose and nudiflora. The Report described the Bruce Park landscape as “colorful.”

It is likely, too, that the Town had created a nursery in Bruce Park for growing small and inexpensive plant materials. 4500 such plants were taken out of the nursery that year and planted in various spots. Species included Crabapples (20 vars.), Azaleas (12 vars.), Shadblow (5 vars.), Blueberry (4 vars.), Chokeberry (8 vars.), Lilacs (16 vars.), as well as Laurel, Beach Plum, Dogwood and Vinca minor.

1941. The Town Report relayed the opinion of the National Recreation Association, National Physical Education Service Bureau that “the lack of parks and recreational areas for the old and play space for the young has helped to turn the population of our cities from physical exercise to the automobile, movies and other commercial forms of recreation. Important as are these types of relaxation, they cannot take the place of physical exercise. On the physical, mental and moral fitness of our men and women depend the strength and future progress of the community and of the Nation.”

The Town Report noted that accumulation of equipment for use at Bruce Park had increased the need for a storage building of some sort, and that the parks department had sought an appropriation for such for 1942. Included in the equipment were two new power mowers. The nursery contained 19 species of trees and shrubs, with several varieties of some of the species.

1942. In this year the Town Report described Bruce Park as Greenwich’s largest, standing at the heart of the park system.

1943. While many of the park system’s resources were diverted to the war effort in 1943, the Town did make an extension to the Bruce Park utility shed (a utility structure of concrete block with asphalt shingle roof and three bay garage for storing equipment), and resurfaced the tennis courts.

1944. A major hurricane swept across Connecticut’s coast in the Fall of 1944, destroying many trees.
1945. Repairs were made to the “recreation barn,” cottage and shed. Surface water had been collecting along the entrance drive near the shed, and new catch basins and drainage lines were installed to handle the ponding of water.

1946. The Town Report quoted the former Secretary of the Interior, “the proper use of leisure time is a fundamental problem of modern society...[I]t contributes to what might properly be referred to as a preventative medicine which tends to lessen the ills with which mankind is afflicted.” The Report continued to advocate for the planning for and creation of parks, as a way to provide recreation space for the “boys returning” whose future includes a home and wife and family.

The roads and paths at Bruce Park were resurfaced. The Town Report recorded 55 square yards of “Armor Coating,” and the work involved patching, oiling and coating.

1947. Bruce Park was listed in the Town Report as having 20 acres of turf.

1948. The Bruce Park storage building was upgraded to include lavatories.

1949. In 1949, the Greenwich Parks Department assumed responsibility for the maintenance of the town’s school grounds – a total of 100 acres.

1950. The Town completed a four-year project to renovate the bowling green. The surface had been infiltrated with bluegrass, which prevented the close mowing required for a bowling green. The green was cut into furrows with discs, and was top-dressed with fescues and bent grasses. The tennis courts were said to be in need of upgrading. Additional fireplaces were added in the picnic area at Woods Road, along with picnic tables and a water fountain for picnickers. In the fall, through a gift of McArdle’s Seed Store, thousands of tulip bulbs were planted in a newly created “spring garden” in the park – in 1951 it would have been the largest display of tulip plantings in Greenwich. In the background of the garden were plantings of azaleas, andromeda, dogwoods and flowering crabs.

1951. The Town resurfaced the park roadways and installed water fountains at the picnic areas. Extensive tree planting took place throughout the park with seedlings supplied by the Town nursery. The Town repaired and painted the picket fence surrounding the lawn bowling green (with funds donated by the Lawn Bowling Club).

1952. Spring blooming of tulips continued and became a very popular attraction. The Town augmented the garden by planting chrysanthemums in the fall,
which bloomed against floribunda roses and dogwood foliage. The ducks at the Bruce Park ponds suffered from an outbreak of Botulism, which had to be eradicated through cleaning out of the ponds and spraying the shorelines.

Work began on replacing the deteriorated lighting system – modern appurtenances were installed and the lighting standards painted. The Town also replaced the footbridge leading to the small island near the bowling green (the old one had deteriorated to a dangerous condition).

1955. The shoreline areas of the center lake were cleaned and new gravel was installed (location unknown). The first modern playground in Greenwich was constructed at the park.

1958. Work begun on the Connecticut Turnpike, which took land on the northern side of Bruce Park. In return, the FHA deeded the town several acres in the north part of Greenwich for use as a golf course, known as the Bruce Golf Course. Today the park covers 60 acres. The “clubhouse” at Bruce Park, formerly known as the Emily Bruce Shelter and later the headquarters of the parks department, was torn down to make way for I-95.

1961. The Town installed a new playground with a family picnic area nearby. The Town also began investigating the possibility of expanding Bruce Park by 68 acres along the waterfront (across Indian Field Road from the park).

1966. The lavatory building was improved.

1967. The Town created a display of floribunda and climbing roses, and labeled them for public education purposes. The Town also created new horseshoe courts and picnic areas.

1968. The Town focused their attention on development of family play areas throughout Bruce and the other parks.

1971. A new department was created under the Department of Parks and Recreation – the Division of Parks and Trees – to oversee the park’s care and improvements. The Town improved the Bruce Park play area.

1975. The Town Reports referred to a “nursery” in association with Bruce Park, and mentioned that it had been re-graded and planted with tree seedlings.

1999-2002. Two separate master plans were drafted for Bruce Park. The first appeared to have evaluated the condition of existing recreational features. The second specified a series of physical improvements, such as upgrading lighting, reducing the geese population, introducing traffic-calming. Neither provided a detailed (only general) historical chronology of the physical development of the park on which to base recommendations.

2009. The Junior League of Greenwich financed a new playground for Bruce Park, the first “Boundless” playground to be built in Greenwich. It was under construction across Museum Drive from the Bruce Museum at the time of the writing of this report.
HISTORICAL CHRONOLOGY

Byram Park

1840s. The Ritch Family opened a quarry along Long Island Sound in the southwestern most portion of Greenwich. The area was rich in a granite that was commonly referred to as Byram Blue Point (the granite walls around the softball diamond were once part of the quarry), and legend holds that the stone was used in the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge, the Statue of Liberty, as well as many other buildings and structures in New York. The quarry attracted a population of Italian stone workers, many of whom settled in the adjacent enclave of Chickahominy.

1918. The Town acquired 20 acres from Silas D. and Willis M. Ritch to create a park, and transported sand across the Sound from Long Island during high tides. Workers quickly shoveled the sand off the boat so that it would not become beached.

1919. The first mention of Byram Park appeared in the Town Report this year, listing repairs to the lettering on the bathhouse doors. Bathing at the Byram Beach was known to be dangerous, as rough, ragged pieces of stone from the Ritch quarries had been deposited onto the beach.

1921. In 1921, the Town was supporting two persons serving as caretakers of Byram Park. It also appropriate funds for painting, decorating and repairing the “cottage,” and grading.

1922. By 1922, the Park employed 7 attendants and 1 ticket taker. Maintenance included spreading sand, grading the sand, and building a retaining wall, as well as repairing the bathhouses.

1925. The Town Report noted that workers had engaged in blasting and grading and Byram Park, as well as building a new float, installing playground equipment, and erecting benches.

Also in 1925, construction began on the 17-room estate, located on the 5-acre parcel to the east of Byram Park, known as “The Anchorage.” In an advertisement for the sale of the property, re-printed from Country Life, the sprawling home was described as “clambering up one end of a precipitous rocky rise and stretching itself luxuriously along the crest.” The landscape was depicted being “charmingly planted, and picturesque winding steps lead down the abrupt declivity through a lovely rock garden to the level terrace edged by a sea-wall.” On the sea-level, the property included a clay tennis court, concrete salt-water swimming pool (electrically heated), bath house and sand beach.
Adjacent to The Anchorage stood a 4.6 acre piece of waterfront property, owned by Mrs. Imre deJosika-Herczeg of New York City. In an advertisement for the sale of this parcel, the parcel was described as follows:

“There is a stone and concrete sea wall, erected by the owner at a cost of $15,000. 7 ft. stone wall extends along the road frontage, with stone gateway and macadam driveway through the property. There is a suitable site for a tennis court. Shady glens and natural rock formations, excellent lawns, flower gardens and shrubbery form an ideal setting for the construction of a residence. Stone stairway from sea wall to large float had also been erected. Expansive and unobstructed view of the South and the Long Island shore opposite.”

The price was listed at $50,000.

1926. The Town purchased bleachers for the park, installed lights, and paved the roadway.

1928. The Town purchased a backstop for Byram, and installed more park lights.

1929. By 1929, Byram Park was earning $2,500 per year from tickets sold to users as entrance fees.

1930. The Town performed general maintenance and installed fountains. They also paid S. E. Minor to prepare a topographical survey and Armand R. Tibbetts for a development plan of the park.

1936. The Town added a handball court, swing frames, and a basketball backstop.

1938. During the summer, the Stamford Symphonic Band performed concerts at the park.

1939. The Town Report listed the following facilities and activities at Byram Park: spring, summer, fall playgrounds; basketball; baseball; softball; archery; handball; tennis; paddle tennis; horseshoes; football; rollerskating; swimming; ping pong; volleyball; picnicking.

1940. The report of the Division of Parks and Trees in the Town Report stated,

“Greenwich parks should afford a tangible example of scientific maintenance. They should be made to excel in the art of garden and landscape design which will afford a living example stressing the importance and desirability of preserving and emphasizing rather than transforming
the different types of natural scenery. To a degree at least they might gradually be made to become natural arboretums affording a haven for native vegetation exemplifying the desirability and landscape values of arranging plant material according to their natural associations and in their natural habitat. In many cases plantings could be arranged not only for their scenic value but could be made to be accessible for observation and study by those who might be interested. In certain convenient areas, properly screened so they will not interfere with and confuse the general landscape picture, collections of plants could be arranged for the definite purpose of trial and study. In like manner there are innumerable way in which the parks of Greenwich could be made to become the true garden centers of our community.

“It is to be desired that such a basic policy shall always remain in force as it will insure the continuance of an uninterrupted plan of development which will carry on from one administration to another and thus bring about the ultimate realization of the desired goal.”

At Byram Park, the Town transplanted plant material and arrange it in natural groupings; graded the area around the “new locker house;” seeded lawns; constructed new walks.

1941. The Town Report relayed the opinion of the National Recreation Association, National Physical Education Service Bureau, “the lack of parks and recreational areas for the old and play space for the young has helped to turn the population of our cities from physical exercise to the automobile, movies and other commercial forms of recreation. Important as are these types of relaxation, they cannot take the place of physical exercise. On the physical, mental and moral fitness of our men and women depend the strength and future progress of the community and of the Nation.”

1942. The Town re-surfaced the tennis courts.

1943. The Town Report noted that of all Greenwich’s parks, Byram got the most concentrated use, with bathing, boating, athletic activities and picnic areas very popular. The park required a lot of maintenance.
1944. In September, a major hurricane swept through Coastal Connecticut, damaging many trees. The Town engaged in minor maintenance operations and did some planting.

1945. To correct a problem created by ponding water, the Town installed several feet of drainage pipes. Crowded plant material was removed and re-set in other areas.

1946. The Town Report quoted the former Secretary of the Interior, “the proper use of leisure time is a fundamental problem of modern society...[I]t contributes to what might properly be referred to as a preventative medicine which tends to lessen the ills with which mankind is afflicted.” The Report continued to advocate for the planning for and creation of parks, as a way to provide recreation space for the “boys returning” whose future included a home and wife and family.

At Byram Park, several areas were planted with seasonal bedding plants, and much thinning of crowded shrub and tree planting areas took place. Armor coating took place on the entrance drive, beach parking areas, and sidewalks along the seawall (a total of 2,400 square yards).

1947. The Town repaired and resurfaced the tennis courts and reconstructed the handball court. Additional picnic facilities were built and landscaped.

1948. The Town completed a fence enclosing the boat storage area and removed more ledge from the park near the main ball diamond area. New drains were installed in the parking areas.

1949. The Town continued fencing and drainage work.

1950. The Town Report noted that the park had received a heavy influx of both the local population as well as an overflow of “New York migrants.” The beach and boating were the most popular activities. The town coated the tennis court surfaces, hoping to protect them for many years. In the fall of 1950, a storm battered the Byram Park shore, destroying some of the seawall.

1951. The Town removed badly deteriorated bathhouses and made repairs to several remaining bathhouse units, and the ballfields were renovated with new grass infields. Tulips had been donated by a local florist, and provided a beautiful early spring display.

1952. Picnic facilities and showers were installed at the beach area. More tulips (taken from plantings at Bruce Park) were installed along the roadway leading to the beach. Floodlights were added to the parking lot and beach, and roads
and parking areas were repaired and re-surfaced. The park and its facilities were heavily used.

1958. The Town resurfaced the tennis courts.

1959. A new heating plant was installed at the park building and improvements were made to the boating area, including new floats, pontoons, and gangways.

1960s. Two photographs appeared in Greenwich Time, depicting different areas of the park. The first showed the entrance, marked by stone gate posts and shaded by weeping willow trees. The other showed workers placing boat mooring floats off the park edge, and mentioned that 1961 would be the second “boat season” for the new Town-operated facilities (the marina opened in 1960).

1965. A picnic shelter was built.

1966. The tennis courts were once again re-surfaced.

1968. Attention was given, town-wide, to family play areas within the parks, including Byram.

1971. 230’ of blacktop was laid for walks and the tennis courts were once again re-surfaced.

1975. The former 10-acre Rosenwald property was added to the park system and referred to as Byram Beach Park. It gave the park an overall atmosphere of a “millionaire’s estate.” It included a one-hole golf course and large lawn. The Town renovated and renewed the course (for chipping and putting practice), and restored the lawn. The addition of this property doubled the size of the beachfront.

1990s. A “Garden of the Four Seasons” was planned and laid out on the former Rosenwald property. This parterre style garden featured perennials offering color and texture throughout the year.

1999-2001. Two master plans were drafted for Byram Park. The first consisted of an inventory of the park facilities and an assessment of their condition. The second provided very general recommendations for physical improvements. Neither master planning effort included a detailed study of physical development of the park through history.

2005. The Byram-Cos Cob chapters of Rotary International broke ground on a pavilion in Byram Park, located atop the highest point and overlooking the Sound.
1927-1928. Old Greenwich resident Edwin Binney purchased 10 acres on Sound Beach Avenue at the urging of his two daughters, Mary Davey and Helen Kitchel. Binney, a member of the firm Binney & Smith (manufacturers of “lamp black”), retired to Indio, Florida, had owned a summer cottage in Sound Beach and was interested in its natural resources (the Binney family came to the Sound Beach area as summer dwellers in 1889 and Mr. Binney built the small cottage along the beach for his family to use as an alternative to their New York residence). The land for the park was owned by George Boles and Binney paid $30,000 for the 10 acres.

The marshy flood-plained area contained two tidal streams that converged and wound their way to Greenwich Cove, filled with native water-loving species of plants. It had been slated for house lots. The sisters had the idea of converting it to a park and convinced their father to purchase the land, and then donate it to the town (which he did in January of 1928). The deed stated that the land was to be used “for park and recreation purposes only.”

Many years after Binney Park was established, Mrs. L. V. Lockwood (resident of Riverside) wrote a two-page memoir at the request of Helen Binney Kitchel, of the plants that once flourished in the marshy area. They included wood anemone, rue anemone, adders tongue lily, Deutaria, meadowrue, violets, buttercups, wild clematis, woodbine, all growing along an old stone wall. Along the brook edges grew iris, pickerel weed, water plantain, cardinal flower, and loosestrife. In the meadow grew eupatorium, meadowrue, Turk’s cap lily, daisies, Osmunda fern, sensitive fern, hay-scented fern, and Cimicifuga. The park land contained a sandy upland area, where foxglove, gerardia, campion, meadow sweet, sunflower, snakeroot and wood lily grew.

1928-1932. Design and construction of Binney Park commenced, with Edwin Binney supervising, and design advice and construction oversight provided by James A. G. Davey (of the Davey Tree Company, Binney’s son-in-law). The contractor was John Hansen. Binney planned for the streams to be dammed to create two small “lakes,” and for many trees to be planted. Mr. Binney insisted that the pond be dug to a shallow depth to assure safety of its users, and the dredge material used to create higher turfed areas. The edges of the pond were to be planted with flowering shrubs and visitors would traverse the landscape via a series of meandering walkways. Landscape details were to include foot bridges and road bridges, and a stone shelter near the lake for “tame” life. A January 1928 newspaper article claimed that “when the landscaping is finished, the new park will present a marvel of scenic grandeur and beauty unsurpassed anywhere in the United
The total cost of development was thought to be approximately $100,000 (paid by Mr. Binney).

In 1930, a road was built to connect Arch Street (on the west side) to Sound Beach Avenue (on the east side), along the then southern edge of the park. The Town installed a fountain.

In 1931, C. K. and J. C. Plume, nurserymen of New Canaan, provided a tree and shrub list for planting at Binney Park. Species included Pin Oak, Sourgum, Red Maple, Paper Birch, Silver Olive, Clethera, Winterberry, Bayberry, Spicebush, Dogwood, Hawthorn, American Ash, Forsythia, Holly, Hydrangea, Witch Hazel and many other species. Also in that year, the Town appropriated $12,000 for additional fill for the park, and twelve ornamental lights were installed – each extended from an arm attached to a cedar pole (similar to those used in the Conde Nast plant). The Town also erected the large flag pole, set in a circular seat of Quincy granite. Swimming at the newly established lakes was forbidden that year because the water was found to be highly polluted (from manufacturing plants upstream in Stamford).

1933. Binney Park was officially dedicated on September 25, 1933. The Town Report noted that it was a “model of landscape architecture...[I]t is a source of the greatest pride and happiness to the people in Old Greenwich. It will endure forever as the memorial to a man beloved in the community and town in which he lived.”

1934. The Town acquired additional acres abutting Binney Park to the south from Cyrus Miller to add an active recreation area (bringing the total land to 20 acres). Funds to purchase this land had been set aside in 1928 because it was viewed as a “wasteland between the park and railroad tracks.” The Boys’ Club was meeting in the Binney Memorial Parish House. The Town installed new swing frames, one junior baseball diamond, and one senior baseball diamond. The Town also graded and surfaced the cross-road, completed the summerhouse, and built a stone wall from the railroad to the dam.

Edwin Binney died on December 17, 1934.

1935. Two new tennis courts were completed and a football field laid out and fenced.

1936. The Town added swing frames, a basketball backstop, softball diamond.

1937. The Town installed a skating and hockey rink.

1938. At the notion of Helen Kitchel Binney and her mother, the Town acquired 1.89 acres on the west side of Sound Beach Avenue as an annex to Binney Park.
It was known as the “Arch Street Annex” or “Hillside Annex.” Band concerts were held at the existing part of Binney Park in the summer.

1939. Mrs. Edwin Binney, her daughter, Mrs. A. F. Kitchel, and architect Dan Everett Waid purchased a 10-acre parcel on Harding Road (part of the former Laddin’s Rock Farm) near Binney Park, to be used as a “Natural Park.”

1940. The report of the Division of Parks and Trees in the Town Report stated,

“Greenwich parks should afford a tangible example of scientific maintenance. They should be made to excel in the art of garden and landscape design which will afford a living example stressing the importance and desirability of preserving and emphasizing rather than transforming the different types of natural scenery. To a degree at least they might gradually be made to become natural arboretums affording a haven for native vegetation exemplifying the desirability and landscape values of arranging plant material according to their natural associations and in their natural habitat. In many cases plantings could be arranged not only for their scenic value but could be made to be accessible for observation and study by those who might be interested. In certain convenient areas, properly screened so they will not interfere with and confuse the general landscape picture, collections of plants could be arranged for the definite purpose of trial and study. In like manner there are innumerable way in which the parks of Greenwich could be made to become the true garden centers of our community.

“It is to be desired that such a basic policy shall always remain in force as it will insure the continuance of an uninterrupted plan of development which will carry on from one administration to another and thus bring about the ultimate realization of the desired goal.”

The report also noted that “Natural Park” received its initiation into the family of Greenwich parks – a parcel totaling 10 acres. The park was the gift of Mrs. Alice Stead Binney, Mrs. Helen Binney Kitchel and the late D. Everett Wait (architect and designer of the Perrot Library). The parks department noted that it would serve as a sanctuary for birds and plants and for the use and enjoyment of the public. Apple trees, wildflowers and other native New England flora
would be allow to grow freely. Initial work in the park consisted of a general clean-up, establishment of trails, and planting of large native plant materials.

1941. The Town Report relayed the opinion of the National Recreation Association, National Physical Education Service Bureau, “the lack of parks and recreational areas for the old and play space for the young has helped to turn the population of our cities from physical exercise to the automobile, movies and other commercial forms of recreation. Important as are these types of relaxation, they cannot take the place of physical exercise. On the physical, mental and moral fitness of our men and women depend the strength and future progress of the community and of the Nation.”

The town report also noted that numerous small native plants, shrubs and trees were set out in appropriate groups in Natural Park, and that larger and better equipment had been accumulated at Binney Park, necessitating the need for increased storage space.

1942. The tennis courts at Binney Park were re-surfaced. The Town Report described Binney and Natural Park as excellent examples of the “practical value of beauty,” noting that Binney was formerly a swamp and a dump, and that now this area is attractive, and a place of recreation for the residents of the easterly section of town.

1944. A major hurricane swept through coastal Connecticut in September, destroying many trees. Minor alterations were made to the park, including some planting.

1945. The footbridges were repaired and repainted, and planted material thinned, with dead and weak plant material removed and replaced.

1946. The Town Report quoted the former Secretary of the Interior, “the proper use of leisure time is a fundamental problem of modern society...[I]t contributes to what might properly be referred to as a preventative medicine which tends to lessen the ills with which mankind is afflicted.” The Report continued to advocate for the planning for and creation of parks, as a way to provide recreation space for the “boys returning” whose future includes a home and wife and family.

“Hillside Annex” was described in the Town Report as a sliver of land on the western side Sound Beach Avenue from the northern end of the park (acquired in 1938). On it, the Town had created a series of woodland paths, constructed steps, and planted Rhododendron, Mountain Laurel and Dogwood. Look-out points and vistas were created and future plans included facilities for picnicking. Natural Park’s nursery was cleaned out and the plant material used in the Hillside Annex planting plan.
Overgrown plantings were renovated at the main part of Binney Park, and the tennis courts were re-surfaced. The courts were to be considered the finest of the Town’s park courts at the time.

1947. Nine acres of turf covered Binney Park. The Town reached completion of an equipment and storage building (discussions about the building had begun in 1941), installed drainage in the ballfield area, and dredged the pond in the water inlet area. The Town also planned work on the dam.

1948. The Town completed the equipment and storage building and completed the dam at the water inlet area of the pond. The purpose of the dam was to collect water-borne pond silt by settlement in the still-water basin, delaying silting up in the main lake. DDT was used on all town parks to control Japanese Beetle grub, which had attacked the turf.

1949. The parks department assumed responsibility, for the first time, for maintaining the school grounds throughout Greenwich, adding 100 acres to their workload.

1950. The Town worked to clean out Natural Park, including removal of scrub trees and honeysuckle vines which had been choking out the desirable plant materials. The courts and fields at Binney were heavily used.

1951. The Town Report noted that the park had been heavily used during the year. The Town constructed a public works shed to house materials and equipment, and provide space for painting of benches and bleachers.

1952. The Town worked to line the lake banks to prevent erosion, placing large stones as rip-rap and removing shoreline debris.

1955. The Town constructed new sidewalks at Binney Park, and cleaned and dredged the ponds. Memorial Rock was dedicated to the memory of service personnel from Old Greenwich.

1958. The Town installed a new backstop, and relocated the playground swings.

1960. A drinking fountain was installed at Binney Park.

1963. The Town resurfaced the tennis courts.

1970. In October, the Old Greenwich-Riverside Community Center Model Sailboat Regatta was held at Binney, where dozens of miniature-sized sailboats were launched in the pond.
1971. The Town improved the play area and repaired the backstop.

1975. A footbridge that had been washed out by floods was replaced.

1996. The Friends of Binney Park prepared a draft *Master Plan for Binney Park*. The plan divided the park into 9 zones, and prepared an outline (incomplete for each) that included uses and activities; current condition; recommended maintenance; preservation plan; and planting plan.

2000-2008. Around the time of the Binney Park Millennium Celebration, several planning efforts were launched by various groups to revitalize Binney Park. The Garden Club of Old Greenwich volunteered, in 2000, to work with the town to re-plant trees and shrubs and repair some of the hardscape. In 2005, the Old Greenwich Association began a master planning process for Binney Park, which included a *Survey on Binney Park* (polling of users).
c. 1880. Frederick Gotthold, president of Gotthold & Company, New York, makers of straw goods, purchased 55 acres in the Cos Cob section of Greenwich, and built “Wildacres” or “Wild Acres.” The property consisted of an 18-room Mansard-roofed mansion, guest cottage, laundry building, ice house, water tower, wood shed, cow barn, garage (with space for three cars, four horses and with four rooms), gardener’s cottage, chicken houses and a small barn. Landscape elements included a 2-acre vegetable garden, .33 acre perennial garden, two acres of lawns, flower gardens, an orchard, walled garden, brooks, ponds, and “magnificent” hemlock groves. Gotthold died in 1928, and his wife, Florence, in 1930. Florence Gotthold was the godmother of Anya Seton.

1922. Colonel Robert Montgomery and his wife Nell purchased Wild Acres, and began a 30-year relationship with the landscape. Nell was an artist, and had a field studio built in the “lower valley,” and designed and had constructed a primrose garden. The garden spanned a brook, and the primroses were interspersed with other ground cover plantings (including forget-me-nots, grape hyacinths, and barberry). The Montgomerys enlarged the property to 125 acres.

c. 1928 The Montgomerys had the Lord and Burnham greenhouse built adjacent to the mansion. Montgomery was interested in fruit tree propagation, and to undertake this task inside, he had the greenhouse roof built unusually high. He also enlisted the labor of unemployed local masons to build the rock retaining walls along the entry drive and elsewhere on the property.

1930. Montgomery established the Pinetum, a collection of conifers, and went on to acquire 850 species for his property. He favored displays of conifers over open lawns, and therefore planted aggressively throughout the property.

1934. Horticulturist E. Dexter Davis created an inventory of the conifers at the Pinetum, working for 2-1/2 years. He was located in Dansville, New York.

1945. Montgomery donated 200 of his most choice specimens to the New York Botanical Garden. (Note: Nancy Fleming’s Money, Manure & Maintenance, ingredients for successful gardens of Marian Coffin indicates that Coffin designed Montgomery’s Greenwich property in 1945, although no other evidence of Coffin’s design work (drawings, letters, etc.) has been located).

1952-53. Montgomery died at his estate in Coral Gables, Florida. The Pinetum was noted in the Town Report as a recent gift to the Town, and described in a newspaper article as having three lakes, brooks, ravines and hills. Mrs. Montgomery had approached the Parks Superintendent about making the 125-
acre gift, and the Superintendent presented it to the Town Meeting, who initially rejected (citing loss of revenue). The Superintendent made a second attempt, and this time had Helen Binney Kitchel make the pitch. It was accepted unanimously. Mrs. Montgomery asked that active recreation be restricted on the property (only walking on trails), and that it be used for cultivation of the arts and horticulture. (Today, the Pinetum covers 61 acres of the original 125 acre gift – Montgomery allowed, in his will, for the Town to sell off portions of the gift, which Greenwich began to do in 1954.)

The Town Report indicated that the existing residence was to be demolished except for one wing, and that a study should be made in regard to the use of the wing (and noted that the wing provided an opportunity as a meeting space for many town activities).

1955. The Town installed a new parking lot for skaters.

1956. A new lavatory building was completed, and the parking facilities for skaters were complete.

1957. On April 23, the Town officially accepted the Pinetum at a brief ceremony. On June 20th, the Garden Center (later known as the Garden Education Center) was formed and incorporated, an effort spearheaded by gardening enthusiast Jane Duff. Its mission was “to inspire and foster interest in better gardening and horticulture in all phases and related aspects of nature. Early efforts at the Pinetum included opening up vistas (from the mansion to the ponds).

1958. The west wing of the house was repaired for garden center use. H. O. Perkins, associate professor of landscape design at the University of Connecticut developed two planting plans for the exterior of the Garden Center space. The plan on file at the GEC shows “foundation” style plantings of Ilex, Pieris, Taxus and Vinca.

1959. As early as 1959, a Rock Garden Group planted and tended a rock garden. Armand Tibbetts, landscape architect provided input.

1960. The mansion was demolished and the greenhouse repaired. The Town installed a new water line and fountains.

1961. The Town built a new flagstone terrace overlooking the lake, with a grass terrace adjoining, enclosed with plantings and a retaining wall (and an iron railing installed on the retaining wall). The site was to be used by the public for flower shows and other horticultural purposes. The Town Report noted that all annual bedding plants for the town parks were propagated and grown in the Pinetum greenhouse.
1967. Plant cultivation continued at the Pinetum greenhouse. The Pinetum also hosted flower exhibits, with early daffodils followed by tulips. The Town also installed a natural rock garden, adjacent to the Primrose planting, and built a new picnic area.

1969. The Town installed a new heating system in the “cottage.”

1960s. A small greenhouse was donated and constructed (1968) on the site of a former garage (destroyed by fire). Benjamin Dietrich was appointed gardener, and he set up a propagation program for the evergreen collection, and trained residents in gardening methods. The parks superintendent established a two-season flower display (tulips and chrysanthemums) in the vista and lake area, including Rhododendrons, azaleas, and evergreen plants in the background. The superintendent oversaw the construction of woodland trails.

1971. The Town repaired the circulator and worked on the lavatory building.

Early 1990s. A Garden Education Center supporter donated a well to serve as a focal point for the “Montgomery Garden.”

1993. Efforts began to list the Lord and Burnham greenhouse on the State Register of Historic Places, and the listing happened the same year. Plans began to construct a horticultural building for the Garden Education Center. The design was created by Kaehler/Moore Architects of Greenwich, and included a 2,000 sf classroom and workroom space and an updated 25’ by 48’ greenhouse. Estimates (undated) for restoring the greenhouse were made and totaled $844,000 (based on similar work done at the Edith Wharton estate’s Lord and Burnham greenhouse).

1996. Many plant materials were frozen in a loss of heat in the greenhouse in January.

1999. A master plan was drafted for the Pinetum, that included an inventory of existing park features (no research or assessment).

2006. An Eagle Scout candidate selected for a project the construction of a wildflower trail at the Pinetum, including planting of ten flower beds and placing small metal signs, and lining the path with fallen logs. He also proposed placing a bench at the entrance to the trail.

In brainstorming about improvements needed at the GEC on its 50th anniversary, a two-person committee listed improved handicapped access, improved and enlarged parking, and upgraded circulation to and around the Main Building.
What is an “Historic Landscape Report?”

A tool for preserving historically and culturally significant landscapes.
Developed by the National Park Service.

Researches and documents a landscape’s historical development through time.
Establishes a period of significance.

The National Park Service defines four approaches to preservation treatment:
- Stabilization
- Restoration
- Reconstruction
- Rehabilitation
In the 18th and 19th centuries, land that would become Bruce Park held a tide-powered grain mill (Elisha Dawes mill) and farm (Isaac Howe Mead farm).
In 1858, textile merchant Robert Moffat Bruce purchased a property near the mill and farm. The property consisted of land and a house (built in 1853).

In 1894, Bruce built a two-story, gambrel-roofed structure near his home to provide a vacation spot for working girls from New York City.

Bruce died in 1908 and bequeathed his home and 100 acres to the Town, to be used as a natural history, historical and art museum.

Immediately following the transfer, work on Bruce Park began.

Original park features included:
- An arched entryway (at Steamboat Road)
- Ponds
- Bridges
- Boathouse

Original park features included:
- Three miles of drives lined with stone curbs
- Pathways and benches
- Many species of deciduous and ornamental trees
In 1928, the Town organized a formal recreation department, and interest in active recreation intensified. Over the next ten years, the Town began adding new features, including athletic fields, tennis courts, a golf driving range, handball courts, and a lawn bowling green.

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- Greenwich Division of Parks and Trees, 1940

The Town fulfilled its commitment to this aesthetic through a large planting program at Bruce Park. By 1940, a nursery located within the park produced 13 tree and shrub species.

After World War II, the population began to rise along the southern Connecticut coast, and demand increased for faster commutes to New York.

Construction on the Connecticut Turnpike began in the late 1950s, and as part of this effort, Bruce Park was reduced to 60 acres and the clubhouse was demolished.

The Town continued to be Greenwich’s largest park with the widest variety of recreational offerings.

In 1968, the Town made an effort to improve family play areas within the park.

The Town continues to accept gifts and make additions to Bruce Park to enhance its offerings to the Greenwich community.
Period of Significance
1908-1958

Bruce Park Today

Bruce Park’s context has significantly changed since its inception as a park in 1908. The Connecticut Turnpike creates a harsh northern park edge.

Topography across much of Bruce Park is relatively flat and accessible to most users. A series of rock promontories, located along the northern edge, provide excellent spots for views.

Bruce Park’s ponds have historically been, and continue to be, among the most treasured features. Control of sediment and tidal erosion present ongoing maintenance challenges.

A series of meandering pathways provide pedestrians with safe routes through the park. In places where these paths cross the park roadway, conflicts occur.
Bruce contains five general plant communities, including open lawns, water’s edges, and groves of mature trees.

The Park’s gazebos, stone bridges, granite edgestones, pedestrian pathways, and historic trees and shrubs are all remnants of its earliest history. Several historic features have been removed, and other more contemporary ones have been added.

Bruce Park Tomorrow
Preliminary Master Plan
Recommendations

- Pursue National Register Listing
- Establish gateways at the east and west ends, re-establish the stone gate at the west end
- Introducing traffic-calming features at spots where vehicles and pedestrians cross
- Upgrade the system of footpaths

- Complete a comprehensive drainage study
- Complete a tree and shrub inventory and develop a harrying
- Develop a palette of landscape materials to be used on a consistent basis throughout the park

What are your thoughts?
Stakeholders' Recommendations

- Rebuild the fishing pier
- Conduct a comprehensive drainage study/address flooding issues
- Avoid lawn clippings in ponds
- Reduce traffic calming measures to control vehicular speed through the park
- Create better entrances by clarifying signage and building gateways
- Upgrade footpaths
- Increase the amount ADA compliant access
- Create a "Friends of Bruce Park" group
- Develop a ranking system for prioritizing park projects
- Begin boat house preparation, the bathrooms and bridge rail
- Mow less frequently near the ponds
- Add "buffer" plantings to control sediment
- Add riparian buffer to control some of the flooding
- Relocate the rose garden to a spot above the flood zone
- Develop plans for donations
- Hold concerts in the gazebo
- Upgrade the baseball fields
- Allocate space for donated trees
- Create an arboretum
- Create focused community based groups for each park ("Friends of Bruce Park") OR create a "Friends of Greenwich Parks" or "Greenwich Parks Association" to provide community support to all the parks
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where landscape features should be sustained

Rehabilitation
where landscape features should be repaired or altered to make their use compatible with the park's historical value

Restoration
where landscape features should be returned to their original form

Reconstruction
where landscape features no longer extant should be recreated

Byram Park in History

In the 1840s, the Ritch Family opened a quarry along Long Island Sound at the southern end of the Town of Greenwich.
The town purchased 20 acres from Cyrus and Willis Ritch in 1918 to create a park.

Physical development of the park took place between 1918 and 1930. Features included bathhouses, swimming piers, tennis courts, playgrounds, ball fields, and bleachers.


In 1943, the Town Report noted that of all the parks in Greenwich, Byram was the most heavily used. In particular, visitors enjoyed bathing, boating, athletics, and picnicking at one of the pavilions.

"[The parks] should be made to excel in the art of garden and landscape design which will afford a living example stressing the importance and desirability of preserving and emphasizing, rather than transforming, the different types of natural scenery."

- Greenwich Division of Parks and Trees, 1940

In 1975, the Town acquired the 10-acre property adjacent to Byram Park, known as "The Anchorage" or Rosenwald Estate.
With the 10 acres came a mansion, one-hole golf course, swimming pool, tennis courts and large lawn. The size of the beach doubled.

The Rosenwald mansion and its grounds had been elegantly designed, and the landscape contained many species of plants.

The Town demolished the mansion, but retained the bones of the landscape. In the 1990s, the tennis court became setting for a “Garden of the Four Seasons.”

The most recent addition to Byram Park came in 2005, when the Byram-Cos Cob chapters of Rotary International broke ground on replacing an old, decayed structure, and allowing visitors long views over Long Island Sound.

Period of Significance 1918-1975

Byram Park Today
Byram Park’s location below Byram Shore Road at the side of the Long Island Sound is one of its many physical assets.

Topography of Byram Park ranges from steep to relatively flat, with the lower-lying areas near the water’s edge most accessible to the greatest number of users.

Views from Byram’s high points are spectacular.

Vehicular and pedestrian circulation throughout the park follows the topography. The condition of these routes is fair. The park does not connect in a clear way to the former Rosenwald property.

Byram contains five general plant communities, including designed landscapes, mature trees, and unmanaged woodlands.

The Park’s seawalls, stone walls, meandering roadways, stone pavilion, and mature trees contribute to its historic character. Some contemporary park features conflict with this character.
Byram Park Tomorrow
Preliminary Master Plan
Recommendations

• Pursue National Register Listing (including former Rosenwald Estate).
• Enhance the large parking area at the park’s western end.
• Maintain long views over Long Island Sound.
• Create an ADA-compliant route.

What are your thoughts?

Stakeholders’ Recommendations

• Pursue listing on the National Register of Historic Places
• Move the tennis courts
• Utilize the quarry as an educational site, industrial education
• Remove the parking lot (boats & trailers)
• Enhance the parking lot (boats & trailers)
• Relocate boat storage
• Connect the two beaches
• Lower the stone walls along Ritch Avenue to enhance water views
• Create an arboretum
• Create focused community-based groups for each park (e.g., Friends of Byram Park) OR create a “Friends of Greenwich Parks” or “Greenwich Parks Association” to provide community support to all the parks.

Thank You
Greenwich Department of Parks & Recreation
The Historical Society of the Town of Greenwich
The Greenwich Library
Garden Education Center
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where landscape features should be returned to their original form

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where landscape features no longer extant should be recreated

Binney Park in History

In 1927, Edwin Binney purchased 10 acres on Sound Beach Avenue at the urging of his two daughters, Mary and Helen.
In 1928, Binney donated the land to the Town of Greenwich for “park and recreation uses only.” Binney supervised the design and construction himself.

Two streams fed the park area, and Binney called for these to be dammed, creating two small lakes. The depth of the lakes was to be shallow, to ensure the safety of the lakes’ users.

Binney included many landscape details, such as the foot bridges and road bridges. He designed a stone shelter near the lake that was intended to “tame” life.

In 1931, the Plumes, nurserymen of New Canaan, provided a plant list for the park with many species of trees and shrubs. The town allocated $12,000 that year for the installation of lights.

At the time of its dedication in 1933, Binney Park contained:

- 10 acres in Old Greenwich
- Two ponds
- Meandering walkways
- Footbridges and shelters
- A fountain
- A flagpole
- A diversity of shade, evergreen and flowering trees and shrubs

The following year (1934) the town acquired 10 additional acres to the south of the original 10, bringing the parkland total to 20 acres.

Here, the town added active recreation facilities.
The town added the baseball diamonds to the new 10-acre section in 1934, and added the tennis courts in 1935.

Two other parcels of land were added to the park in 1938 and 1939:

- 1.89-acre Hillside Annex
- 10-acre Natural Park

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- Greenwich Division of Parks and Trees, 1940

Additions to and changes in Binney Park Since 1940:

- Design and construction of paths, plantings and overlooks in the Hillside Annex (1946)
- Construction of the equipment and storage building (1946)
- Addition of rip-rap to the lake edges (1952)
- Multiple dredgings and repairs to footbridges, as the result of continual sedimentation
Period of Significance
1933-Present

Binney Park Today

Most of Binney Park lies in a nearly level, low-lying, accessible area. Steep slopes cover Hillside Annex, and navigation over them is more difficult.

Views across the lakes, especially during the spring bloom, are some of the park’s most stunning features.

The lakes and brooks are among the most appealing features. They also have been responsible for many years of flooding within the park, and damage to loss of built (bridges) and natural (plants) features.
The park's circulation routes lend themselves to pedestrian traffic. Vehicular traffic, including parking, is accommodated awkwardly.

Binney Park is known for its spectacular array of flowering trees, shrubs and towering mature specimens.

The park's pavilions, bridges, meandering paths, stream edges, along with its collection of plant materials, add significantly to the historic character.

Binney Park Tomorrow
Preliminary Master Plan
Recommendations

- Pursue National Register Listing
- Compile a comprehensive drainage assessment
- Complete an inventory of existing plant materials
- Develop an arboretum
- Develop a palette of hardscape materials

- Develop a design for pedestrian bridges that will withstand forces of periodic flooding
- Develop a collections policy
- Develop a method of calming traffic
- Develop long-range plans for the Hillside Annex, Natural Area and Reading Room
What are your thoughts?

Stakeholder Recommendations

- Pursue listing on the National Register of Historic Places
- Install alternative plantings near the water
- Utilize stakeholders to maintain areas of the park
- Color coordinate annual and perennial plants & flowers
- Create a collections policy
- Develop a comprehensive list of original plantings
- Conduct a drainage study/improve usability
- Introduce traffic calming measures to control vehicular speed
- Train groundkeepers on pruning to avoid over pruning
- Add a rose garden by the tennis courts
- Balance serving interests of the community with the manpower required to maintain the park
- Solve drainage issues prior to any other planning
- Create an adoration
- Revitalize the “Friends of Binney Park” OR create a “Friends of Greenwich Parks” or “Greenwich Parks Association” to provide community support to all the parks

Thank You

Greenwich Department of Parks & Recreation
Perrot Library
The Historical Society of the Town of Greenwich
The Greenwich Library
Garden Education Center
Montgomery Pinetum
Historic Landscape Report
and
Preliminary Master Plan
Stakeholders’ Meeting

Martha Lyon Landscape Architecture, LLC
Northampton, Massachusetts
February 2009

What is an “Historic Landscape Report?”

A tool for preserving historically and culturally significant landscapes

Developed by the National Park Service

Researches and documents a landscape’s historical development through time

Establishes a period of significance

The National Park Service defines four approaches to preservation treatment:

Stabilization
Rehabilitation
Restoration
Reconstruction
Stabilization
where landscape features should be sustained

Rehabilitation
where landscape features should be repaired or altered to make their use compatible with the park’s historical value

Restoration
where landscape features should be returned to their original form

Reconstruction
where landscape features no longer extant should be recreated

The Pinetum in History
First established on 55 acres by Frederick
Gotthold in the 1880s.
Colonel Robert H. Montgomery and his wife, Nell, purchased Wild Acres in 1920 and enlarged the property to 125 acres.

Colonel Robert H. Montgomery and
his wife, Nell, purchased Wild Acres in
1920 and enlarged the property to 125
acres.

In 1930, Montgomery established
the “Pinetum.”  

Entrance at Stanwich Road
Entry drive edged with stone walls

Montgomery cultivated 850 species of conifers and donated 200 of his most choice specimens to the New York Botanical Garden in 1945.

Montgomery died in 1952.

In 1953, the Town of Greenwich accepted the Pinetum property as a gift. The gift was made official in 1957.

In April 1957, the Garden Center (known today as the Garden Education Center) was formed and incorporated.

The Pinetum became the Garden Center’s home.
Additions to and Changes in the property over the last 50 years:

- Demolition of most of the mansion (1960) and construction of the flagstone terrace (1961)
- Construction of two rockeries (rock gardens)
- Creation of the lawn and Tulip display leading from the GEC to the reflecting pond
- Construction of the Garden Education Center horticultural building

Period of Significance

1922-1952

The Pinetum Today

The Pinetum has retained its rural setting.

The property's topography, including many high points and water bodies, contributes to its historic character.
The Pinetum’s narrow, stone-lined drives also contribute to the historic character, and several trails lead visitors through the more remote parts of the property. Parking is limited, and often cramped.

In addition to the remaining conifer collection, the Pinetum contains woodlands, and several designed garden sites.

While many of the original historic features remain, several—including four nurseries, several orchards, vegetable gardens, and several plant species—have been removed.

The Pinetum Tomorrow
Preliminary Master Plan
Recommendations

• Pursue National Register Listing
• Complete a plant inventory and develop a restoration plan
• Complete a historic preservation plan for the several garden spaces
• Develop and implement a trail maintenance program
• Consider creating an ADA-compliant route
• Develop a long-term plan for parking
• Seek an alternate location for the existing picnic area
• Commission an engineering study of the two ponds
What are your thoughts?

Stakeholder Recommendations

- Consider all three parks (Tuchman, Pinetum, and Pomerance) as one for better access and use
- Relocate the picnic area
- Connect the Pinetum to the Central Middle School parking lot
- Create a trail from the community center
- Develop a more efficient and accessible parking area. Possible locations include the Wagner House lot, compost area across Bible Street, and gravel area across Bible Street
- Create an overflow parking area to be used for special events
- Establish a dog park across Bible Street
- Create a Japanese pond
- Develop interpretive trails
- Explore opportunities for private/public funding
- Create gardens—butterfly, bird, or vegetable for educational purposes
- Establish community gardens
- Build nature trails
- Revive the woodland rock garden
- Develop interpretive trails
- Explore opportunities for private/public funding
- Create focused community-based "friends" groups for the Pinetum or create a "Friends of Greenwich Parks" or "Greenwich Parks Association" to provide community support for all the parks

Thank You

Greenwich Parks Department
Garden Education Center
Montgomery Botanic Center
The Historical Society of the Town of Greenwich
Residents weigh master plan for parks

The report gives planners a sense of what structures are still located at the park, as well as plantings that have existed. Her conclusion?

"Binney Park has retained much of its historic landscape," she said.

With its stone bridges, two ponds and separate recreational fields, the park has generally looked the same over the years.

The report also provides a guide for future planners to decide whether an area needs to be renovated, rehabilitated, reconstructed or stabilized, she said. In this regard, Lyon said the park needs an upgrade, she said.

The nearly 30 residents who attended the meeting agreed, citing issues with flowers and trees, continual flooding and traffic around the park.

Jennifer Boone, a Riverside Association member, said she worries about crossing the street with her children when she goes to the park. She also hopes frequent flooding of the field would be addressed, she said.

The Garden Club of Old Greenwich has sought to plant bright-colored flowers or a rose garden at the park for many years, according to Barbara Norrgard, an ex-president of the organization.

All concerns about the park raised by residents Thursday should be considered, Spaman said.

Lyon made suggestions to the group about the park, such as placing it on the National Register of Historic Places. He said, it eligible for federal funding through the Calming report, compiling a complete drainage report, and developing a return, a tree and plant manuscript.

But mostly, Lyon and Spaman are looking for feedback, they said.

"We're taking a precaution for the future of these parks," Spaman said. "And we need your input.

"I think this is a good starting point," said Norrgard. "There is a lot that needs to be done."

Earlier in the day, Spaman and Lyon met with more than a dozen people to discuss the 55-acre Montgomery Pinetum Park on Bible Street.

"It was a very interesting and lively discussion," said Lyon.

The group discussed ways to make the park more recognizable and restore its historic past, she said.

The two remaining park meetings are scheduled for today at the Garden Education Center, 130 Bible St. The Byram Park meeting is slat ed for 9:30 a.m., and Bruce Park is 1 p.m. Interested residents are encouraged to attend, Spaman said.
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Reconstruction
where landscape features no longer extant should be recreated

History of Greenwich and its Parks

The Greenwich landscape has attracted humans for centuries. The earliest inhabitants were members of the Native American Siwanoy tribe.
Europeans came in 1640. They farmed and operated mills, some powered by the tides. By the early 1800s, maritime and fishing industries had emerged.

In 1848, the New York and New Haven Railroad opened, improving access to New York City. The easy commute allowed New York businessmen to purchase land in Greenwich, build comfortable homes, and ride the train to the city for work.

The train gave rise to a seasonal tourism industry. By the 1920s, Greenwich was one of America's most prosperous communities, with many country resorts and waterfront estates.
Construction of private homes required skilled laborers, and as a result, Greenwich attracted a new population of workers, many of German, Polish, and Italian heritage.

Public parks provided all residents of Greenwich – particularly those without private recreation space – places for active and passive sport.

Greenwich’s first parks were the result of bequests and gifts.

Today, Greenwich maintains 19 public parks. Other recreation-related holdings include marinas, golf courses, playgrounds, and conservation lands.

General Recommendations

Nominate the parks to the National Register of Historic places

Use sustainable measures when managing the parks, such as application of organic fertilizers and installation of native plants.

Allow Greenwich’s many different cultural groups to cultivate garden spaces within the parks – spaces that reflect the groups’ heritage.
Complete a long-range, comprehensive master plan for each park.

Work to establish a friends group that can help support efforts of the Division of Parks and Trees.

Bruce Park

In 1858, textile merchant Robert Moffat Bruce purchased a property near Elisha Davis mill. The property consisted of 100 acres of land and a house built in 1853.

In 1894, Bruce built a two-story, gambrel-roofed structure near his home to provide a vacation spot for working girls from New York City.

Bruce died in 1908 and bequeathed his home and 100 acres to the Town, to be used as a natural history, historical and art museum.

Immediately following the transfer, work on Bruce Park began.
Original park features included:
- An arched entryway at Steamboat Road
- Ponds
- Bridges
- Boat house
- Three miles of drives lined with stone curbs
- Pathways and benches
- Many species of deciduous and ornamental trees

In 1928, the Town organized a formal recreation department, and interest in active recreation intensified. Over the next ten years, the Town began adding new features, including athletic fields, tennis courts, a golf driving range, handball courts and a lawn bowling green.

After World War II, the population began to rise along the southern Connecticut coast, and demand increased for faster commutes to New York.

Construction on the Connecticut Turnpike began in the late 1950s, and as part of this effort, Bruce Park was reduced to 60 acres and the clubhouse was demolished.

In 1968, the Town made an effort in improve family play areas within the park.

The Town continues to accept gifts and make additions to Bruce Park to enhance its offerings to the Greenwich community.

Period of Significance
1908-1958
Bruce Park Today

Bruce Park’s context has significantly changed since its inception as a park in 1908. The Connecticut Turnpike creates a harsh northern park edge.

Bruce Park’s ponds have historically been, and continue to be, among the most treasured features. Control of sediment and tidal erosion present ongoing maintenance challenges.

A series of meandering pathways provide pedestrians with safe routes through the park. In places where these paths cross the park roadway, conflicts occur.

The Park’s gazebos, stone bridges, granite edgestones, pedestrian pathways, and historic trees and shrubs are all remnants of its earliest history. Several historic features have been removed, and other more contemporary ones have been added.

Recommendations For Preserving Bruce Park
- Establish gateways at the east and west ends and re-establish the stone gate at the west end.
- Conduct a comprehensive drainage study.
- Introducing traffic-calming features in spots where vehicles and pedestrians cross.
- Upgrade the system of sidewalks and benches.
- Develop a palette of hardscape materials to be used in a consistent basis throughout the park.
- Re-built a fishing pier, once located along the banks of the Davis Mill Pond.
- Connect Bruce Park to Roger Sherman Baldwin Park via a walkway.
- Conduct a needs assessment and plan for re-use of the historic barn/stable.

Byram Park

In the 1840s, the Ritch Family opened a quarry along Long Island Sound at the southern end of the Town of Greenwich.

Physical development of the park took place between 1918 and 1930. Features include basketball courts, playgrounds, and baseball fields. The town purchased 20 acres from Cyrus and Willis Ritch in 1918 to create a park.

In 1975, the Town acquired the 10-acre property adjacent to Byram Park, known as “The Anchorage,” or Rosenwald Estate. With the 10 acres came a mansion, one-hole golf course, swimming pool, tennis courts and large lawn. The size of the beach doubled.

The Rosenwald mansion and its grounds had been elegantly designed, and the landscape contained many species of plants. The Town demolished the mansion, but retained the bones of the landscape. In the 1990s, the tennis court became setting for a “Garden of the Four Seasons.”

The most recent addition to Byram Park came in 2005, when the Byram-Cos Cob chapters of Rotary International broke ground on a pavilion, replacing an old, decayed structure and allowing visitors long views over Long Island Sound.

Period of Significance
1918-1975
Byram Park Today

Byram Park's location below Byram Shore Road at the edge of the Long Island Sound is one of its many physical assets.

Topography of Byram Park ranges from steep to relatively flat, with the lower-lying areas near the water's edge most accessible to the greatest number of users.

Views from Byram's high points are spectacular.

Vehicular and pedestrian circulation throughout the park follows the topography. The condition of these routes is fair. The park does not connect in a clear way to the former Rosenwald property.

The Park's seawalls, stone walls, meandering roadways, stone pavilion and mature trees contribute to its historic character. Some contemporary park features conflict with this character.
Recommendations For Preserving Byram Park

- Develop a plan to integrate the former Rosenwald Estate with the Park. Include in this plan an assessment of the existing pool and the feasibility of constructing a larger pool in the Park.
- Enhance the large parking area at the park’s western end.
- Maintain and improve long views over Long Island Sound.
- Create an ADA-compliant route.
- Upgrade existing roads, paths and parking.
- Reconstruct features (lighting, paths, etc.) in a manner consistent with the Park’s Period of Significance.

Binney Park

In 1927, Edwin Binney purchased 10 acres on Sound Beach Avenue at the urging of his two daughters, Mary and Helen.

In 1928, Binney donated the land to the Town of Greenwich for "park and recreation uses only." Binney supervised the design and construction himself.
Two streams fed the park area, and Binney called for these to be damned, creating two small lakes. The depth of the lakes was to be shallow, to ensure the safety of the lakes' users.

Binney included many landscape details, such as the foot bridges and road bridges. He designed a stone shelter near the lake that was intended to "tame" life.

In 1931, the Plumes, nurserymen of New Canaan, provided a plant list for the park with many species of trees and shrubs. The town allocated $12,000 that year for the installation of lights.

At the time of its dedication in 1933, Binney Park contained:
• 10 acres in Old Greenwich
• Two ponds
• Meandering walkways
• Footbridges and shelters
• A fountain
• A flagpole
• A diversity of shade, evergreen and flowering trees and shrubs

The following year (1934) the town acquired 10 additional acres to the south of the original 10, bringing the parkland total to 20 acres.

Here, the town added active recreation facilities.

The town added the baseball diamonds to the new 10-acre section in 1934, and added the tennis courts in 1935.
Two other parcels of land were added to the park in 1938 and 1939:

- 1.89-acre Hillside Annex
- 10-acre Natural Park

Additions to and changes in Binney Park Since 1940:
- Design and construction of paths, plantings and overlooks in the Hillside Annex (1946)
- Construction of the equipment and storage building (1948)
- Addition of rip-rap to the lake edges (1952)
- Multiple dredgings and repairs to footbridges, as the result of continual sedimentation

Period of Significance
1933-Present

Binney Park Today
The lakes and brooks of Binney Park are among the most appealing features. They also have been responsible for many years of flooding within the park, and damage (loss of built bridges) and natural features.

The park’s circulation routes lend themselves to pedestrian traffic. Vehicular traffic, including parking, is accommodated awkwardly.

The park's pavilions, bridges, meandering paths, stream edges, along with its collection of plant materials, add significantly to the historic character.

Recommendations for Preserving Binney Park

• Compile a comprehensive drainage assessment.
• Develop a palette of hardscape materials, including footbridges that will withstand periodic flooding.
• Develop long-range plans for restoring the Hillside Annex, Natural Area and Reading Room.
• Develop a collection policy for donation of plant materials and memorials.
• Develop a method of calming traffic and reducing conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles.
Montgomery Pinetum

First established on 55 acres by Frederick Gotthold in the 1880s.

Buildings:
- 18-room mansion
- Guest cottage
- Laundry building
- Ice house
- Water tower
- Woodshed
- Cow barn
- Garage
- Gardener’s cottage
- Small barn

Colonel Robert H. Montgomery and his wife, Nell, purchased Wild Acres in 1920 and enlarged the property to 125 acres.
In 1930, Montgomery established the “Pinetum.”

Entrance at Stanwich Road

Entry drive edged with stone walls

Log shelter aside the small pond

Circular reflecting pool

Montgomery cultivated 850 species of conifers and donated 200 of his most choice specimens to the New York Botanical Garden in 1945.
Montgomery died in 1952.

In 1953, the Town of Greenwich accepted the Pinetum property as a gift. The gift was made official in 1957.

In April 1957, the Garden Center (known today as the Garden Education Center) was formed and incorporated.

The Pinetum became the Garden Center's home.

Additions to and Changes in the property over the last 50 years:
- Demolition of most of the mansion (1960) and construction of the flagstone terrace (1961)
- Construction of two rockeries (rock gardens)
- Creation of the lawn and tulip display leading from the GEC to the reflecting pond
- Construction of the Garden Education Center horticultural building

Period of Significance
1922-1952

The Pinetum Today

The Pinetum's narrow, stone-lined drives also contribute to the historic character, and several trails lead visitors through the more remote parts of the property. Parking is limited, and often cramped.
While most of the original historic features remain, several – including four nursery areas, orchards, vegetable gardens, and several plant species – have been removed.

Recommendations for Preserving the Pinetum

- Define the boundary between the 10-acre “historic core” and outlying conservation lands.
- Complete individual preservation plans for the several garden spaces.
- Develop and implement a trail maintenance program. Connect the Pinetum trail system to Connecticut’s Blue Trail system.
- Consider creating an ADA-compliant route.
- Develop a long-term planting plan.
- Seek an alternate location for the existing picnic area.
- Commission an engineering study of the two ponds.
- Explore the possibility of using the former Wagner House site as an interpretive area or nursery site.
- Expand interpretive programming at the Pinetum.

Thank You

Greenwich Department of Parks & Recreation
The Historical Society of the Town of Greenwich
The Greenwich Library
The Bruce Museum
The Perrot Library
Garden Education Center
Montgomery Botanic Center
New York Botanical Garden

…and the people of the Town of Greenwich
APPENDIX C: Preservation Resources

The following organizations and agencies offer educational, technological and financial resources for preservation efforts in historic landscapes.

**Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation.** The Alliance is an organization of professionals dedicated to the preservation and conservation of historic landscapes in all their variety from formal gardens to public parks and rural expanses. The organization provides a forum for communication and exchange among its members.

Alliance for Historic Landscape Preservation  
www.ahlp.org

**American Association for State and Local History.** This national organization provides leadership, service and support for preservation and interpretation of state and local history, making the past more meaningful in American society. The organization’s bookstore offers dozens of titles pertaining to historic preservation.

American Association for State and Local History  
1717 Church Street  
Nashville, TN  37203-2991  
(615) 320-3203  
www.aaslh.org

**American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works.** The American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC) is the national membership organization of conservation professionals. Its members include conservators, educators, scientists, students, archivists, art historians, and other conservation enthusiasts and it is dedicated to establishing and upholding professional standards, promoting research and publications, providing educational opportunities, and fostering the exchange of knowledge among conservators, allied professionals, and the public.

The American Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works  
1156 15th Street NW, Suite 320  
Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 452-9545  
www.conservation-us.org

**City Parks Alliance.** The City Parks Alliance is a national organization of city parks leaders throughout the country working together to strengthen America’s city parks. Its mission is to create vibrant and healthy parks and green spaces that contribute to sustainable cities by
organizing, facilitation and nurturing a broad-based movement. Activities include forums, a yearly conference, and joint programming with other national parks organizations, including The Trust for Public Land and National Association for Olmsted Parks.

City Parks Alliance
1111 16th Street, NW
Suite 310
Washington, DC   20036
(202) 223-9111
www.cityparksalliance.org

Connecticut Commission on Cultural & Tourism, Historic Preservation & Museum Division. This state agency provides financial support for preservation activities through its Historic Restoration Fund and Cultural Capital Grant Program. It also serves as the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and manages the National Register of Historic Places on the state level.

Connecticut Commission on Cultural & Tourism
Historic Preservation and Museum Division
One Constitution Plaza, Second Floor
Hartford, CT   06103
(860) 256-2800
www.cultureandtourism.org/cct

Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection. This agency of Connecticut state government offers grants and financial assistance for open space acquisition and the advancement of urban forestry.

Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection
79 Elm Street
Hartford, CT   06106-5127
(860) 424-3000
www.ct.gov/dep

Connecticut Forest and Park Association. This private, non-profit organization protects forests, parks, walking trails and open spaces for future generations by connecting people to the land. Activities include trail development and maintenance and environmental education programs, as well as publication of a quarterly journal, Connecticut Woodlands.

Connecticut Forest and Park Association
16 Meriden Road
Rockfall, CT   06481
(860) 346-2372
www.ctwoodlands.org
Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation. This private, non-profit organization provides grants and technical assistance to preserve historic resources throughout Connecticut. It also advocates before the state legislature for community planning and historic districts.

Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation
940 Whitney Avenue
Hamden, CT 06517-4002
(203) 562-6312
www.cttrust.org

Cultural Landscape Foundation. The Cultural Landscape Foundation seeks grants, donations and gifts from corporations, individuals, private foundations and government agencies to increase awareness and public benefit for cultural landscapes listed on, or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Project support emphasizes interpretation, education, outreach, and public awareness.

Cultural Landscape Foundation
1909 Q Street, NW
Second Floor
Washington, DC 20009
(202) 483-0553
www.tclf.org

National Association of Olmsted Parks. This national member-based organization is dedicated to preserving, maintaining, and restoring historic parks and landscapes throughout North America, focusing primarily on those created by Frederick Law Olmsted and his sons. Activities include advocacy, research, education, and communications.

National Association of Olmsted Parks
1111 16th Street NW, Suite 310
Washington, DC 20036
(202) 223-9113
www.olmsted.org

National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT). This arm of the National Park Service awards grants for information management, training and research on technical issues in preservation, with an emphasis on archaeology, historic architecture, historic landscapes, objects and materials conservation, and interpretation.

National Center for Preservation Technology & Training
NSU, 645 University Parkway
Natchitoches, LA 71497
(318) 356-7444
National Preservation Institute. The National Preservation Institute (NPI) offers specialized information, continuing education, and professional training to those involved in the management, preservation, and stewardship of our cultural heritage.

National Preservation Institute  
P. O. Box 1702  
Alexandria, VA 22313  
(703) 765-0100  
www.npi.org

National Trust for Historic Preservation. This national organization provides support for consultant services, feasibility studies, public programming, and heritage education activities to help preserve historic and cultural resources.

National Trust for Historic Preservation  
Northeast Regional Office  
Seven Faneuil Hall Marketplace, 4th Floor  
Boston, MA 02109  
(617) 523-0885  
www.preservationnation.org

PreservationDirectory.com. This web-based organization serves as an on-line resource for historic preservation and cultural resource management throughout the United States. Its annually-updated directory provides listing of historic preservation consultants, products, and organizations, as well as conference listings, and several other resources.

PreservationDirectory.com  
7017 North Alma Avenue  
Portland, OR 97203  
(503) 223-4939  
www.preservationdirectory.com

The Trust for Public Land. The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a national, nonprofit, land conservation organization that conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, community gardens, historic sites, rural lands, and other natural places, ensuring livable communities for generations to come.

The Trust for Public Land - Connecticut Office  
101 Whitney Avenue, 2nd Floor  
New Haven, CT 06510  
(203) 777-7367  
www.tpl.org
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BINNEY PARK

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