National Park Service Cultural
Landscapes Inventory

2019

Bryce Park

Rock Creek Park

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Cultural Landscape Summary Site Plan

Cultural Landscapes in the Cultural Resources Inventory System:

The Cultural Resources Information System (CRIS)

CRIS is the National Park Service's database of cultural resources on its lands, consisting of archeological sites, historic structures, ethnographic resources and cultural landscapes. The set of CRIS records for cultural landscapes is referred to as CRIS-CL.CRIS-CL records conform to a standardized data structure known as the Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI). The legislative, regulatory and policy directions for conducting and maintaining the CRIS are: Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act, NPS Management Policies (2006), Director's Order 28 (Cultural Resources) and Director's Order 28a (Archeology).

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI)

The CLI is the data structure within CRIS used to document and evaluate all potentially significant cultural landscapes in which NPS has, or plans to acquire any enforceable legal interest.
Each CRIS-CL record is certified complete when the landscape is determined to meet one of the following:

Landscape individually meets the National Register of Historic Places criteria for evaluation; or,
Landscape is a contributing element of a property that is eligible for the National Register; or,
Landscapes does not meet the National Register criteria, but is managed as cultural resources because of law, policy or decisions reached through the park planning process.

Cultural landscapes vary from historic sites, historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes to historic ethnographic landscapes, but may also fit within more than one type. Those eligible for the National Register have significance in the nation's history on a national, state or local level, as well as integrity or authenticity. The legislative, regulatory and policy directions for conducting and maintaining the CLI within CRIS are: *National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 USC 470h-2(a)(1)). Each Federal agency shall establish…a preservation program for the identification, evaluation, and nomination to the National Register of Historic Places…of historic properties…*

Executive Order 13287: Preserve America, 2003. Sec. 3(a)…Each agency with real property management responsibilities shall prepare an assessment of the current status of its inventory of historic properties required by section 110(a)(2) of the NHPA…No later than September 30, 2004, each covered agency shall complete a report of the assessment and make it available to the Chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the Secretary of the Interior…

Executive Order 13287: Preserve America, 2003. Sec. 3(c) Each agency with real property management responsibilities shall, by September 30, 2005, and every third year thereafter, prepare a report on its progress in identifying… historic properties in its ownership and make the report available to the Council and the Secretary…

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Federal Agency Historic Preservation Programs Pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, 1998. Standard 2: An agency provides for the timely identification and evaluation of historic properties under agency jurisdiction or control and/or subject to effect by agency actions (Sec. 110 (a)(2)(A) Management Policies 2006. 5.1.3.1 Inventories: The Park Service will (1) maintain and expand the following inventories…about cultural resources in units of the national park system…Cultural Landscape Inventory of historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes,… and historic sites…

Cultural Resource Management Guideline, 1997, Release No. 5, page 22 issued pursuant to Director's Order #28. As cultural resources are identified and evaluated, they should also be listed in the appropriate Service-wide inventories of cultural resources.

Inventory Unit Description:

Bryce Park is a 0.59-acre park located in Northwest Washington, D.C. The quasi-triangular park is bounded by Wisconsin Avenue on the west, Garfield Street on the south, 36th Place NW on the east, and Massachusetts Avenue NW on the north. The park is comprised of United States Reservation 700, managed by the National Capital Region, Rock Creek Park.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW
The landscape that encompasses Bryce Park was first granted to English colonists as part of a 1632 land grant from King Charles I to George Calvert, the first Lord Baltimore. However, it remained unplanned and undeveloped through the 18th century, when it was included within the boundaries of the new District of Columbia. In the 19th century, the cultural landscape was eventually platted within the Massachusetts Avenue Heights neighborhood, as speculative developers anticipated the extension of Massachusetts Avenue (northwest from the city core) and the increasing development of Northwest Washington. The landscape boundaries were defined by the early 20th century, but the site remained wooded until the early 1920s, when a gas station was constructed on the northern section of the site. Between 1956 and 1958, the National Park Service acquired the site, with the intention of creating a small park for the surrounding neighborhoods in Northwest Washington, D.C. NPS landscape architect William Belden designed the park in 1962, and construction began in 1963. Bryce Park was dedicated in 1965, commemorating former British Ambassador to the United States James Bryce. Between 1965 and 1968, the National Park Service oversaw minor beautification improvements at the park, as Belden's planting designs were refined.

SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY
Bryce Park derives local significance as a neighborhood park constructed to serve the developing neighborhoods of Northwest Washington in the mid-20th century. It is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the creation of small parks in Washington, D.C. The recommended period of significance is 1962-1968, encompassing the initial designs for the park in 1962 and extending to 1968 to include the construction, dedication, and initial beautification improvements of the park.

ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION SUMMARY AND CONDITION
This CLI finds that Bryce Park retains integrity from its period of significance (1962-1968). Original landscape characteristics and features from the period of significance remain in place at Bryce Park, and the landscape displays all seven aspects that determine integrity, as defined by the National Register of Historic Places.

Site Plan

Property Level and CLI Numbers

Inventory Unit Name:	Bryce Park
Property Level:	Landscape
CLI Identification Number:	600167
Parent Landscape:	600167

Park Information

Park Name and Alpha Code:	Rock Creek Park - Bryce Park - ROCR
Park Organization Code:	3450
Park Administrative Unit:	Rock Creek Park

CLI Hierarchy Description

Concurrence Status

Inventory Status: Complete

Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:

This Cultural Landscape Inventory was researched and written by Molly Lester, Research Associate, University of Pennsylvania. Primary and secondary source material from within the National Park Service and local repositories was utilized to complete the inventory and is listed in the bibliography. Research and editorial assistance was provided by: Daniel Weldon, NCR CLI Coordinator, National Capital Region, National Park Service; Maureen Joseph, Regional Historical Landscape Architect, National Capital Region, National Park Service; Nick Bartolomeo, Chief of Resources, Rock Creek Park, National Capital Region, National Park Service; and Randall Mason, Associate Professor, Historic Preservation, University of Pennsylvania.

Concurrence Status:

Park Superintendent Concurrence: Yes

Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence: 08/15/2019

National Register Concurrence: Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination

Date of Concurrence Determination: 09/05/2019

National Register Concurrence Narrative:

Concurrence Graphic Information:

Statement of Concurrence
Bryce Park Cultural Landscape Inventory

The preparation of this CLI for Bryce Park is part of the National Park Service's efforts to update cultural resource inventories, as required by Section 110 (a) (1) of the National Historic Preservation Act.

- The D.C. Historic Preservation Office (DC HPO) concurs with the findings of the Bryce Park Cultural Landscape Inventory. The DC HPO further concurs that the cultural landscape resources of the Bryce Park, as enumerated, retain integrity to the site's period of significance; 1962-1968 and contribute to its historic character.

David Maloney
District of Columbia Historic Preservation Officer

9/5/2019
Date

Please email signed PDF copy to Daniel Weldon, NCR CLI Coordinator at daniel_weldon@nps.gov

DC HPO Signed Concurrence

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
National Capital Region
1100 Ohio Drive, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20242

1.A.2 (NCR-RESS)

July 30, 2019

Memorandum

To: Regional Landscape Architect, National Capital Region

From: Superintendent, Rock Creek Park

Subject: Statement of Concurrence, Bryce Park

I, Julia Washburn, Superintendent of Rock Creek Park, concur with the findings of the Bryce Park Cultural Landscape Inventory including the following specific components:

MANAGEMENT CATEGORY: Must be Preserved and Maintained

CONDITION ASSESSMENT: Good

Good: indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration
by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Fair: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of minor disturbances and deterioration by natural and/or human forces, and some degree of corrective action is needed within 3-5 years to prevent further harm to its cultural and/or natural values. If left to continue without the appropriate corrective action, the cumulative effect of the deterioration of many of the character defining elements will cause the inventory unit to degrade to a poor condition.

Poor: indicates the inventory unit shows clear evidence of major disturbance and rapid deterioration by natural and/or human forces. Immediate corrective action is required to protect and preserve the remaining historical and natural values.

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory for Bryce Park is hereby approved and accepted.

Superintendent, Rock Creek Park — Date 8/15/19

ROCR Superintendent's Concurrence with the findings of the CLI (NCR CLP 2019).

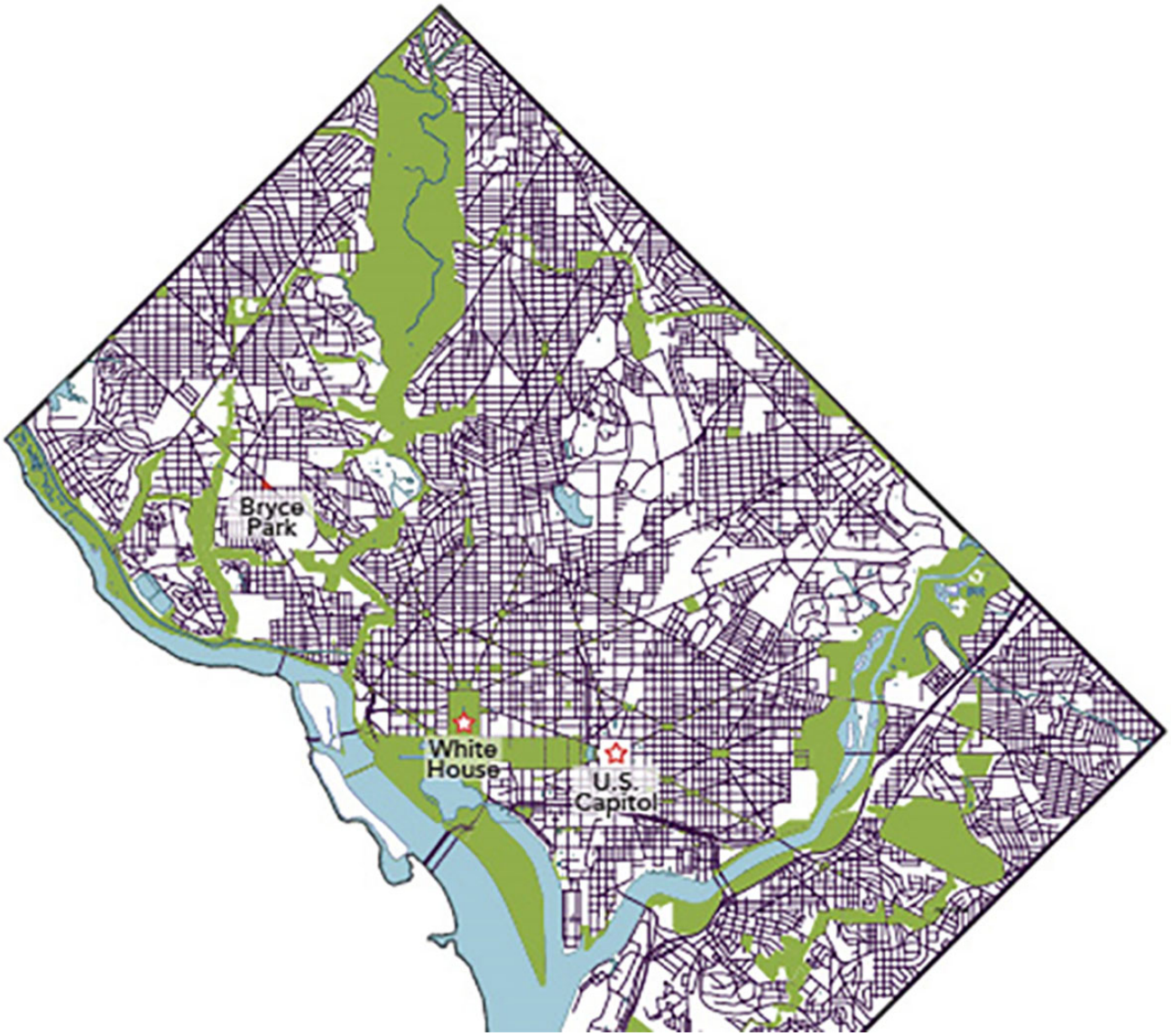
Boundary Coordinates:

Source:	Aerial Photograph
Type of Point:	Point
Latitude:	38.92839
Longitude:	-77.07304

Source:	Aerial Photograph
Type of Point:	Point
Latitude:	38.927585
Longitude:	-77.071889

Source:	Aerial Photograph
Type of Point:	Point
Latitude:	38.927588
Longitude:	-77.073074

Location Map:



Location of Bryce Park (2019).

Regional Context:

Management Information

General Management Information

Management Category: Should be Preserved and Maintained

Management Category Date: 08/15/2019

Management Category Explanatory Narrative:

Bryce Park is not currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Agreements, Legal Interest, and Access

Management Agreement:

NPS Legal Interest:

Type of Interest: Fee Simple

Public Access:

Type of Interest: Unrestricted

Explanatory Narrative:

Adjacent Lands Information

Do Adjacent Lands Contribute? Yes

Adjacent Land Narrative:

National Register Information

Existing National Register Status

National Register Landscape Documentation:

Undocumented

National Register Explanatory Narrative:

National Register documentation has not been prepared for Bryce Park.

Existing NRIS Information:

National Register Eligibility

National Register Concurrence: Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination

Contributing/Individual: Contributing

National Register Classification: District

Significance Level: Local

Significance Criteria: A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history

Area of Significance:

Area of Significance Category:	Community Planning and Development
Area of Significance Category:	Landscape Architecture

Statement of Significance:

Period of Significance: 1962 - 1968

The Bryce Park Cultural Landscape (United States Reservation 700) occupies a quasi-triangular 0.59-acre parcel, bound by Wisconsin Avenue to the west, Massachusetts Avenue to the north, 36th Place NW to the east, and Garfield Street NW to the south. The park is managed by the National Park Service, Rock Creek Park.

Bryce Park derives local significance under Criterion A as a neighborhood park constructed to serve the developing communities of Northwest Washington in the mid-20th century. This CLI recommends a period of significance of 1962-1968, based on the years during which the park was designed, constructed, dedicated, and initially improved.

CRITERION A
Local: 1962-1968
The Bryce Park Cultural Landscape derives local significance under Criterion A for its association with the creation of small parks in Washington, D.C. to serve the city's expanding population in the mid-20th century. Washington, D.C.'s population exploded in the decades after World War I, and the city was forced to expand beyond its historic L'Enfant boundaries and the extents of its early streetcar suburbs. The area around the cultural landscape was part of this trend of rapidly developing neighborhoods in the early and mid-20th century, as neighborhoods such as Massachusetts Avenue Heights, Cathedral Heights, Cleveland Park, and Woodley Park expanded in Northwest Washington. The extension of Massachusetts Avenue NW was particularly responsible for the platting of new streets and parcels in Northwest Washington; that avenue now serves as one of the perimeter streets for the cultural landscape. As one of the parks designed to serve residents in these developing neighborhoods, Bryce Park offered new passive green space for local residents in the form of a designed pass-through pocket park. It is thus locally significant for its role in the history of postwar community planning and landscape architecture in Washington, D.C.

The park was designed beginning in 1962 by William Belden, a landscape architect for the National Park Service. Belden's design constituted the first formal landscape plan for the triangular site, replacing a gas station that occupied the northern portion of the site for several decades in the 20th century. The park was dedicated in 1965, with an unveiling ceremony that featured Princess Margaret of England in a tribute to the park's namesake, British Ambassador James Bryce (1838-1922). As part of the dedication ceremony, a plaque was placed in the park to commemorate James Bryce, who visited the site in 1913 and praised its landscape and views of Washington, D.C. In the years immediately following the park's dedication, Belden's planting plans were refined in areas of the park, in keeping with Lady Bird Johnson's contemporary Beautification Program, which promoted seasonally coordinated flower beds and other improvements to the nation's parks and streetscapes. As part of these initial improvements, a plaque was placed southwest of the little leaf linden tree on the southwest terrace, commemorating the leadership of Mrs. James H. Rowe, Jr., as chairman of the National Capital Planning Commission. The National Park Service managed these modifications, and subsequent maintenance and upkeep. The current cultural landscape closely resembles Belden's original landscape design, as refined based on the Beautification Program. The period of significance begins with the park's design in 1962 and ends with the placement of the commemorative plaque for Mrs. James H. Rowe, Jr. in 1968.

Chronology & Physical History

Cultural Landscape Type and Use

Cultural Landscape Type: Historic Designed Landscape

Current and Historic Use/Function:

Primary Historic Function: Plaza/Public Space (Square)

Primary Current Use: Plaza/Public Space (Square)

Other Use/Function	Other Type of Use or Function
Leisure-Passive (Park)	Current, Historic

Current and Historic Names:

Name	Type Of Name
Bryce's Overlook	Historic
United States Reservation 700	Both Current And Historic

Chronology:

Year	Event	Annotation
CE 1608	Explored	Captain John Smith is the first English settler to explore and map the Potomac River and its Eastern Branch.
CE 1612	Platted	Captain John Smith publishes General Historie of Virginia, which maps his explorations along the Potomac River, its Eastern Branch and the area around Rock Creek.
CE 1632	Land Transfer	Charles Calvert, 5th Lord Baltimore, grants the land that would become Washington, D.C. to Cecilius Calvert, the second Lord Baltimore, who named the land Charles County, Maryland.
CE 1634	Settled	Maryland is settled by Englishmen sent by Cecilius Calvert, the second Lord Baltimore.
CE 1696	Land Transfer	The land around Bryce Park becomes part of Prince George's County in the colony of Maryland.
CE 1702 - 1703	Purchased/Sold	Ninian Beall purchases two warrants for land. He used 795 acres of the warrants to establish a tract of land in Prince George's County that he named the Rock of Dumbarton.

Year	Event	Annotation
CE 1713 - 1714	Platted	n 1713, Ninian Beall requests to have the tract resurveyed based on discrepancies with earlier surveys. In 1714, the surveyor determines that about 388 acres of Beall's tract belonged to other people based on earlier surveys. The remaining land in Rock of Dumbarton totals 407 acres, including the future site of Bryce Park.
CE 1717	Land Transfer	Ninian Beall dies, bequeathing the 407 acres of the Rock of Dumbarton to his son, George Beall. George and his wife Elizabeth establish their residence at the mouth of Rock Creek.
CE 1720 - 1723	Platted	George Beall disputes the findings of the earlier survey and has the Rock of Dumbarton resurveyed. This time, the survey determines that his tract, now patented as "Addition to the Rock of Dumbarton," encompasses 1,380 acres. The revised boundaries do not include the site of Bryce Park.
CE 1790	Purchased/Sold	Circa 1790, three men from Georgetown--Benjamin Stoddert, Uriah Forrest, and William Deakins, Jr.--begin to buy up portions of the earlier Beall tracts of land from heirs, including the future site of Bryce Park. Their tract is called Pretty Prospects.
CE 1790 - 1791	Established	The Residence Act of 1790 establishes the District of Columbia. Maryland and Virginia cede the area within a 100-square-mile diamond, laid out by Andrew Ellicott and Benjamin Banneker, to the federal government.
CE 1791	Designed	Pierre L'Enfant lays out the new federal city of the District of Columbia, sited between the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers.
CE 1792	Designed	Andrew Ellicott retained to reproduce a city plan based on L’Enfant’s original, after L’Enfant is dismissed from his position.
CE 1793	Platted	Benjamin Stoddert, Uriah Forrest, and William Deakins, Jr. ask the surveyor of Montgomery County to survey the 2,000 acres of Pretty Prospects that they had purchased. The survey determines that the previous patents were incorrect, and reduces the tract to 1,282.25 acres. The re-surveyed Pretty Prospects includes the land around Bryce Park.
CE 1798	Land Transfer	William Deakins, Jr. dies. Most of Pretty Prospects is conveyed to Uriah Forrest, the only one of the three men to live within the tract boundaries. His house, known as Rosedale, is located northeast of the site of Bryce Park.
CE 1798 - 1805	Land Transfer	Uriah Forrest lays out and sells the lower portion of Pretty Prospects (totaling 200 acres) into lots. He also builds a road to connect the tract to the Tennallytown Road (now Wisconsin Avenue).
CE 1800	Moved	The federal government officially moves from Philadelphia to Washington.

Year	Event	Annotation
CE 1801	Established	The 1801 Organic Act places the District of Columbia under the control of the U.S. Congress and organized the unincorporated area north of the district into Washington County.
CE 1802	Land Transfer	Montgomery and Prince George's Counties transfer jurisdiction of Washington County, including the area around Bryce Park, to the new federal government.
CE 1805	Purchased/Sold	When Uriah Forrest dies in 1805, his wife's brother and brother-in-law sell the remaining lots in Pretty Prospects, with the exception of the Forrest house and some land surrounding it. Walter Story Chandler purchases 98.75 acres of Pretty Prospects in 1805 for $3,275. His purchase includes the site of Bryce Park. He names his estate "Weston."
CE 1805 - 1817	Built	At some point during his ownership (1805 to 1817), Chandler is likely responsible for the construction of a new house on the Weston estate. The house (later demolished) was located immediately southeast of the Bryce Park cultural landscape.
CE 1817	Purchased/Sold	Walter Story Chandler sells his estate of Weston for $15,000 to Thomas L. McKenney, publisher of the Washington Republican and Congressional Examine
CE 1824	Purchased/Sold	Thomas L. McKenney's newspaper fails in 1824, and he is forced to sell his estate. It is unclear who purchased the land; the next known owner purchased the property in 1828.
CE 1828 - 1836	Purchased/Sold	Judge Buckner Thurston purchases Weston in 1828 and owns it until 1836.
CE 1836 - 1843	Purchased/Sold	Dr. Septimus Davis purchases Weston in 1836 from Thurston. He sells 30 acres of land to Joseph Nourse; this tract is located east of the site of Bryce Park. Davis owns the remaining 68.75 acres of Weston until 1843, when he sells the estate for $6,500 to James H. Causten
CE 1843 - 1874	Altered	James H. Causten owns Weston beginning in 1843 until his death in 1874. During those years, he makes extensive improvements to the house and grounds. When Causten dies in 1874, the land is conveyed to his direct heirs.
CE 1884	Purchased/Sold	Ten years after Causten's death, his heirs sell the property to realtor William C. Hill.
CE 1887	Purchased/Sold	Circa 1887, William C. Hill sells the estate to the Thompson real estate syndicate, which is comprised of John W. Thompson, A.E. Bateman, and Washington McLean.
CE 1901 - 1902	Designed	The McMillan Commission publishes its plan for the 20th century development of Washington, D.C. The plan's maps reiterate support for a proposed extension of Massachusetts Avenue.

Year	Event	Annotation
CE 1905	Established	District Commissioners order the renaming of Tennallytown Road (also referred to as Tenleytown Road, Tenley Road, and other similar names) as Wisconsin Avenue. This street forms the western edge of the Bryce Park site. In addition, Commissioners order that the name of Galveston Street be changed to Garfield Street. This street eventually forms the southern edge of the future Bryce Park site, but it was not yet formalized in this vicinity as of 1908.
CE 1908	Demolished	Pretty Prospects' historic estate, Weston, is demolished.
CE 1910 - 1916	Developed	At some point between 1910 and 1916, Garfield Street is formalized and widened at the southern edge of site (trimming the area of the cultural landscape). The 1916 widening project may actually mark the first time the street was formalized within the street grid.
CE 1910 - 1921	Built	At some point between 1910 and 1921, a small shed and gas tank are constructed on the site to serve as a filling station for the Penn Oil Company.
CE 1911	Land Transfer	In April 1911, Captain E.E. Hayden, U.S.N. purchases the triangular parcel of land bound by Massachusetts Avenue, Wisconsin Avenue, and Garfield Avenue from the Massachusetts Avenue syndicate. This is the tract that will later host Bryce Park.
CE 1911	Land Transfer	In February 1911, a real estate syndicate known as the Massachusetts Avenue Heights Company purchases 212 acres of land west of Rock Creek, one of the largest realty deals in early 20th century Washington D.C. (The company is related to the earlier syndicate, as one of the heaviest investors in the controlling syndicate is the estate of John W. Thompson; Thompson's name is denoted in the area around the Bryce Park site on contemporaneous maps.) The syndicate subdivides the tract and markets it as Massachusetts Avenue Heights, which one newspaper says will be "a little city of fashionable residences."
CE 1915 - 1916	Altered	Wisconsin Avenue is widened, beginning at a point between Massachusetts Avenue and Garfield Street and extending north. This widening project trims the western boundary of the project. As part of the roadwork, the street railway tracks on Wisconsin Avenue are removed and relocated within the avenue. An 8-foot sidewalk, 18-foot parking lane, and 4-foot tree space are added on both sides of Wisconsin Avenue as part of the project.

Year	Event	Annotation
CE 1917	Altered	Garfield Street, along the southern boundary of the tract, is widened to 90 feet and paved. This trims the area of the tract that would eventually become Bryce Park. The project also includes the installation of lighting fixtures, "wide parkings," and shade trees along both sides of the road. Exact locations of lighting and vegetation features unknown. The project is funded by John W. Thompson & Company.
CE 1918	Established	As of 1918, a streetcar stop is extant at the intersection of Wisconsin Avenue and Massachusetts Avenue, within the street boundaries of the site. It is unclear whether this stop was already in place, or whether it was established in 1918. It serves the northbound lines of the Washington Railway and Electric Company and other independent streetcar lines.
CE 1956	Platted	The site of the future Bryce Park is surveyed by D.C. Surveyor's Office, on behalf of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, as preparation for "improvements." Filling station is extant on the site at this point.
CE 1956 - 1957	Land Transfer	At some point between 1956 and 1957, 36th Place NW is extended through the site, truncating the southeast corner of the tract (prior to the creation of the park).
CE 1956 - 1958	Land Transfer	The National Park Service acquires the parcel of land that will become the site of Bryce Park.
CE 1961 - 1963	Demolished	The filling station in the northwest corner of the site is demolished at some point between 1961 and 1963.
CE 1962	Designed	The National Capital Office of the National Park Service develops the park design for Bryce Park. William Belden is the landscape architect.
CE 1962 - 1963	Built	Bryce Park is substantially constructed between 1962 and 1963. The design includes four terraces, in response to the steep topography of the site, with curvilinear paths and staircases linking the terraces. Additional features on the site from its initial construction include: radial fences and retaining walls; light poles; bluestone and scored concrete paving; and two types of benches--a "standard malleable iron bench" type and a "special bench" with both curved and straight variations. The planting plan is refined between 1962 and 1965, per the design of National Park Service landscape architect William Belden. The park is dedicated in 1965.
CE 1965	Established	Bryce Park is dedicated in a ceremony on November 17, 1965. A plaque is installed and unveiled as part of the ceremony, dedicating the park to the memory of James Bryce, Viscount Bryce of Dechmont, O.M., and British Ambassador to the United States from 1907 to 1913.

Year	Event	Annotation
CE 1966 - 1968	Altered	In the years immediately following the park's dedication, the planting plan is slightly altered on the middle terrace's beds. A commemorative plaque is installed on the upper terrace in the southwest corner of the park, in front of the Little Linden tree and in honor of Mrs. James H. Rowe, Jr., chairman of the National Capital Planning Commission from 1961-1968.
CE 1969 - 2019	Altered	The National Park Service continues to make minor alterations to the vegetation plan for Bryce Park, as some species of plants and several individual trees are removed or replaced in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. In particular, the planting beds for the central terrace are changed several times. In other locations on the site, new plantings are added to supplement the features from Belden's original landscape design.
CE 1980	Designed	A Study for Handicapped Access is conducted and recommends the installation of steel railings on all staircases throughout the site. It also recommends the addition of sidewalks to provide barrier-free access to each terrace level. However, current conditions at the site indicate that these recommendations were not implemented.

Physical History:

Introduction

The Bryce Park Cultural Landscape is located on a quasi-triangular, 0.59-acre parcel of land. The cultural landscape comprises United States Reservation 700. It is bounded by Wisconsin Avenue to the west, Massachusetts Avenue NW to the north, 36th Place NW to the east, and Garfield Street NW to the south; it is located within the Northwest Quadrangle of Washington, D.C. It is managed by the National Park Service, Rock Creek Park.

Colonial History and Settlement: 1608 to 1790

The first documented colonial exploration of the area associated with present-day Washington, D.C. occurred in 1608, when Captain John Smith mapped parts of the Potomac River and initiated contact with Native American tribes. He encountered a large Native American settlement, the seat of the Algonquin-speaking Nocotchtanks, located directly south of present-day Washington. Between 1608 and 1790, Europeans replaced Native Americans as the main inhabitants of land that would eventually become Washington, D.C. As European immigration increased, established Native American settlements were abandoned or taken by force. Forests were cleared to make way for agriculture as European-born and colonist subsistence farmers began to plan for profit (Bushong 1990: 12, 16). Colonists established a number of tobacco plantations between the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers.

The land around Bryce Park, including the parcel on which the park was later built, was eventually conveyed to English settlers as part of a 1632 land grant from King Charles I to George Calvert, the first Lord Baltimore, and then to Calvert’s oldest son, Cecilius, after George Calvert’s death. As the second Lord Baltimore, Calvert named the land Charles County (Riggs 1946/47:250). In 1662, Lord

Baltimore awarded the first patent in the region to George Thompson, a clerk of the Charles County Count. Thompson was granted 1800 acres comprising three tracts: Duddington Manor, Duddington Pasture, and New Troy (Downing 1918: 1). These tracts made up the majority of the future city of Washington, D.C., including land where the National Mall, White House, and United States Capitol now stand.

Additional patents were granted through the 1670s and 1680s. In 1696, the land around Bryce Park was included within the boundaries of Prince George's County in Maryland (McNeil 2002/3: 9). The land included the entirety of the future District of Columbia (McNeil 1991: 36).

Six years later, Ninian Beall purchased two warrants for land. Beall was a landmark figure in the establishment of the colony of Maryland in the 17th and 18th centuries, and later in the 18th century, his tracts of property figured prominently in the concession of land for the new District of Columbia. Born c. 1625 in Scotland, he fought with the Scottish Royalists against Oliver Cromwell at the Battle of Dunbar, Scotland (Benedetto et al. 2003: 30). When Cromwell's forces conquered the Royalists in 1652, thousands of the defeated Scots were imprisoned or deported to the West Indies and America. Among the captured was Colonel Ninian Beall, who was sentenced to indentured servitude for Richard Hall in the Province of Maryland (Reno 2008: 98-9). After his release in 1658—the same year that Cromwell died and Charles II was restored to the throne—Beall was named commander of the colonial forces in Maryland and began to purchase large swaths of land in the province, including his purchase in 1702-3 of the land grant that would later host Bryce Park (Benedetto et al. 2003: 30; McNeil 2002/03: 9).

With the two warrants of land purchased in 1702-03, Beall established a 795-acre tract of land in Prince George's County that he named the Rock of Dumbarton (McNeil 2002/03: 9). In 1713, he requested to have the tract resurveyed based on discrepancies with earlier surveys. The next year, the surveyor determined that approximately 388 acres of Beall's tract belonged to other people, based on earlier surveys; those acres were ceded from the Rock of Dumbarton. The future site of Bryce Park was part of the 407 acres within the Rock of Dumbarton tract that Beall retained (McNeil 2002/03: 9).

In 1717, Ninian Beall died and bequeathed the 407 acres of the Rock of Dumbarton to his son, George Beall. Soon after, George Beall and his wife established their residence at the mouth of Rock Creek, southeast of the cultural landscape site. In 1720, George Beall once again disputed the surveyed boundaries of the Rock of Dumbarton tract, contesting the conclusions of the 1714 survey. The new survey (completed in 1723) concluded that his tract did in fact include far more land than the boundaries set by the 1714 survey; his revised and enlarged tract, newly patented as "Addition to the Rock of Dumbarton" encompassed 1,380 acres. However, the revised boundaries no longer encompassed the site of Bryce Park (McNeil 2002/03: 8-9).

It is unclear how the landscape around Bryce Park was used throughout the 17th century; specifics regarding the development of individual properties are sparse. Generally, landowners in this area established tobacco plantations on their tracts, as was the norm throughout Prince George's County. The first known mention of a dwelling in the area appears in the will of Thomas Fletcher, who purchased Widow's Mite in 1714 and built a house that was likely near present-day 19th and M Streets, southeast of the cultural landscape (McNeil 1991: 37). Northeast of the Bryce Park site, Rosedale Cottage is believed to have been constructed in the 1740s (Williams 2018: 56). Georgetown, located south of the cultural landscape, was founded in 1751. As a tobacco port, it was the only urban development in the area.

In 1790, the Residence act authorized President George Washington to select the location for the permanent capital of the United States of America. On January 24, 1791, Washington announced the capital would be built on a ten-mile tract centered at the confluence of the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers. Washington appointed three commissioners of the District of Columbia—David Stuart of Virginia and Thomas Johnson and Daniel Carroll of Maryland—to survey the city and oversee construction of government buildings. Andrew Ellicott and Benjamin Banneker, working under the direction of the D.C. Commissioners, marked out a diamond-shaped area, measuring ten miles on each side, and encompassing territory in Maryland and Virginia, including the forks of the Potomac

River and its Eastern Branch, which would eventually be renamed as the Anacostia River. Forty boundary stones, laid at one-mile intervals, established the boundaries based on celestial calculations made by Banneker, a self-taught astronomer of African descent, and one of the few free blacks living in the vicinity (Leach 1997: VIII.7). Maryland and Virginia ceded the area within the 100-square-mile diamond to the federal government. Within the district, the area at the meeting of the Potomac and Eastern Branch rivers was laid out as the City of Washington.

Summary
Between 1608 and 1790, European settlers replaced Native Americans as the main inhabitants of land that would eventually become the city of Washington, D.C. As European immigration increased, established Native American settlements were abandoned or taken by force. Forests were cleared as colonists established a number of tobacco plantations between the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers (Bushong 1990: 12, 16).

The future site of Bryce Park was first conveyed to English settlers as part of a 1632 land grant from Lord Baltimore, and it was part of the land warrant purchased by Ninian Beall in 1702-3—a tract that he named the Rock of Dumbarton. The cultural landscape site itself fell within a disputed part of Beall's tract, as conflicting surveys in the early 18th century decided whether the area around Bryce Park fell inside or outside of Beall's property boundaries. The ownership status is unclear between 1714, when it was left out of the "Addition to the Rock of Dumbarton" tract, and the 1790s, when three landowners began to purchase property in the former Dumbarton tracts, in anticipation of the creation of a new federal city in Washington, D.C. Although we do not know the lineage of the property during these decades in the 18th century, we can reasonably assume (based on both its context and later accounts of the land's use and condition) that the site of Bryce Park was used for agricultural purposes during this time, with limited inhabitation or constructed features.

The L'Enfant Plan: 1791 to 1792

Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant, a French artist and engineer who had formed a friendship with George Washington while serving in the Revolutionary War, requested the honor of planning the new capital. L'Enfant's final design encompassed approximately 6,111 acres, an area that was double the combined area of colonial Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. The area within the boundaries of L'Enfant's plan was largely undeveloped, giving the federal city's founders the unique opportunity to create an entirely new capital city (Leach 1997: VIII.7).

L'Enfant's original plan did not extend to the area of Northwest Washington (west of Rock Creek) that would eventually include Bryce Park. Instead, the parcel was "undesigned," agrarian, and a part of Washington County that would remain rural until the mid-1800s. However, his designs did influence the development of the city beyond the original plan boundaries, including the expansion of the street grid around Bryce Park and the use of open space to memorialize significant figures. See the Small Parks Cultural Landscape Overview for more on L'Enfant's design principles and final plan.

The first sale of federal lots in the city of Washington took place in October 1791. Believing the sale would hinder the city's development, L'Enfant refused to furnish his plan for use. The sale was a failure, with only 35 of the 10,000 potential lots sold. Under pressure from the D.C. Commissioners, President Washington relieved L'Enfant of his position and retained Andrew Ellicott to reproduce a city plan based on L'Enfant's original. Ellicott's map largely followed the L'Enfant Plan, the most notable change being his straightening of Massachusetts Avenue. (At this time, Massachusetts Avenue did not yet cross Rock Creek, but its extension in the late 19th and early 20th centuries would help shape the Bryce Park cultural landscape.)

Ellicott also eliminated L'Enfant's notes concerning the installation of statues, monuments, and memorials at public spaces throughout the city, as well as his 15 yellow-shaded reservations, thereby abandoning any comprehensive plan for the treatment of the city's open spaces. He did, however, retain his predecessor's directive to divide the avenue into "footways, walks of trees, and a carriage way." Streets and avenue names first appeared on Ellicott's plan, although the convention of naming avenues after states in the union is thought to have been originally conceived by L'Enfant (Leach 1997: VIII. 9-10).

In 1792, Ellicott and Banneker set to work implementing the final plan, focusing on the area between the President's House and the Capitol Building. The construction of streets created additional federal acreage at the many odd-angled intersections. While these spaces were largely amorphous in L'Enfant's original plan, Ellicott reconfigured many intersections, cutting off some of their acute angles to form near circular or rectangular openings (Leach 1997: VIII. 11). The result was the creation of additional open spaces, located within street rights-of-way. These sites, many of which do not appear as delineated areas on either the L'Enfant or Ellicott maps, would eventually form the basis for Washington, D.C.'s network of small parks.

Summary
In 1791, the L'Enfant Plan for the city of Washington established the first designs for the street grid in the federal city, but its boundaries did not yet extend to the northwestern part of Washington County that included the Bryce Park site. Instead, the cultural landscape likely remained in agricultural use during this time, as speculative landowners began to purchase property beyond the city limits. Little is known about physical improvements to the Bryce Park cultural landscape during this period, but it is believed that the land was still rural and undeveloped, with limited agriculture use.

Pretty Prospects: 1790 to 1861

Meanwhile, northwest of L'Enfant and Ellicott's planned city, three men from Georgetown sought to anticipate the future expansion of the city. Beginning in the early 1790s, Benjamin Stoddert, Uriah Forrest, and William Deakins, Jr. began to acquire tracts of land located within Ninian Beall's original Dumbarton Oaks land grant. The three men had all served in the Revolutionary War, and in the years

after the war, they were men of status in the new federal city. Together, they purchased nearly 2,000 acres of land from the heirs of Beall (and others). By this time, most of the land in the area was occupied by owners or tenants (Williams 2018: 56).

In 1793, the surveyor of Montgomery County surveyed the land for Stoddert, Forrest, and Deakins. (Montgomery County remained responsible for the land within the Ten Mile Square until 1802, when land management in the District of Columbia was transferred to the federal government.) (McNeil 2002/03:10) Each of the three men held a 1/3 interest in what they thought was 2,000 acres of land, although the patent was issued in 1795 to Stoddert only (for simplicity's sake).

Unfortunately for the three men, the 1793 survey determined that once again, previous survey boundaries were incorrect. Based on various discrepancies and forfeitures from other, smaller tracts within their patent, the surveyor determined that Stoddert, Forrest, and Deakins actually owned 1,282.25 acres (over 400 acres less than they originally thought they had purchased). This revised tract was named Pretty Prospects, and—most importantly for the purposes of this cultural landscape inventory—it did include the future site of Bryce Park within its boundaries, at the northwest corner of the tract (McNeil 2002/03: 10). (See below for a map of the boundaries of Pretty Prospects, as traced on the 1887 Hopkins atlas.) Uriah Forrest and his wife, Rebecca Plater Forrest, and their children began to use Rosedale Cottage (built c. 1740s, northeast of the Bryce Park site) as their summer home (Williams 2018: 56).

The 1793 survey was not the only loss that Stoddert, Forrest, and Deakins suffered in the 1790s. In 1794, Forrest bought out Stoddert's interest in Pretty Prospects and constructed a new farmhouse and outbuildings called Rosedale, located northeast of the site. Soon after, however, both Forrest and Stoddert lost their fortunes when they invested in Morris-Nicholson syndicate, which speculated in the new federal city and failed (McNeil 2002/03: 10-11). Deakins, meanwhile, also suffered several financial misfortunes before he died in 1798.

Throughout the early and mid-19th century, the Bryce Park cultural landscape was likely still rural and in agricultural use (or simply dormant), based on the records of subsequent estates within the Pretty Prospects tract. In 1797, Forrest was forced to sell all but 130 acres of his land in Pretty Prospects (Williams 2018: 57). He retained the land that encompassed the Bryce Park site, but subdivided and sold off other portions of his original tract in an effort to prevent financial ruin. He also built a road to connect with the Tennallytown Road (now Wisconsin Avenue), a longtime Native American trail that was increasingly formalized as Washington County developed (McNeil 2002/03: 10-11, 23n). The Tennallytown (alternately known as Tenleytown) Road ran north-south (as it still does today) along the Bryce Park site, but it is unclear where the road that Forrest created was located, or how it may have affected the cultural landscape.

Rebecca Plater Forrest's brother-in-law, Philip Barton Key, took over Forrest's mortgage on the property around 1798, which allowed Forrest and his family to remain at Rosedale Cottage (Williams 2018: 57). Key also purchased 250 acres of Pretty Prospects and built a house named Woodley, due east of the Bryce Park site (Williams 2018: 57, 167). Uriah Forrest died in 1805, at which point his brother-in-law (John Rousby Plater) and Philip Barton Key sold the remaining Pretty Prospects acreage (including the cultural landscape at Bryce Park), with the exception of Rosedale and its environs (McNeil 2002/03: 10-11).

The federal government officially moved from Philadelphia to Washington in 1800. In 1801, Congress passed the District of Columbia Organic Act, which legally incorporated the area outside the city of Washington as the District of Columbia. The land north of the city street plan, including the area west of Rock Creek and north of Georgetown, was called Washington County (Richards 2004: 54).

One of the purchasers of land in Pretty Prospects was Walter Story Chandler, a major in the District of Columbia militia from 1802-1807. Chandler purchased 98.75 acres of land in 1805, including the cultural landscape that comprises Bryce Park. At some point in his 12 years of ownership in Pretty Prospects, Chandler was likely responsible for the construction of an estate home named Weston, which was located immediately southeast of the Bryce Park site (McNeil 2002/03: 14).

In 1817, Chandler sold the estate to Thomas L. McKenney, publisher of the Washington Republican and Congressional Examiner. When his newspaper failed in 1824, McKenney was forced to sell Weston. It is unclear to whom he sold the estate, as the next known owner purchased the property in 1828 (McNeil 2002/03: 14). That year, Judge Buckner Thurston purchased Weston and held the property until 1836, when he sold the land to Dr. Septimus Davis. Although Davis subsequently sold off 30 acres of the property to Joseph Nourse, he retained the remaining 68.75 acres that included the Bryce Park site. (Nourse's tract was located east of the park landscape.) (McNeil 2002/03: 14) In 1843, James H. Causten purchased the Weston estate from Davis for $6,500. Over the next three decades, Causten made extensive improvements to the house and grounds at Weston (McNeil 2002/03: 14). During this period, St. Alban's (Episcopal) Church was completed in 1854, north of the cultural landscape site (St. Alban's Church, www.stalbansdc.org/learn/resources/property-ministries/).

Summary
Throughout the early and mid-19th century, the Bryce Park cultural landscape remained rural and was likely agricultural. It sloped down from the Tennallytown Road (alternately known as Tenleytown Road; now Wisconsin Avenue), to the southeast. There were no structures or known circulation features on the site itself, although St. Alban's Church existed by this point north of the site, and James Causten's estate house at Weston stood to the southeast. Contemporary maps indicate limited vegetation—perhaps tobacco plantings or orchards, given the map symbology and the regional context, but these crops are unconfirmed (Boschke 1861). Because of this and the site's elevated topography—and as implied in the name "Pretty Prospects"—the cultural landscape retained views toward Rock Creek and the city core.

Outline of Pretty Prospects, as shown on the 1887 Hopkins Real Estate Atlas and printed in Washington History (McNeil 2002/03: 6). Map prepared by Matthew Gilmore. Annotation of Bryce Park's approximate boundaries (in red, with black outline) by CLI author.

Area around Bryce Park cultural landscape, as shown on the 1861 Topographical Map of the District of Columbia by A. Boschke. Annotation of Bryce Park's approximate boundaries (with white outline) by CLI author. (Boschke 1861)

Washington, D.C.'s Green Space Improvements in the Mid-19th Century: 1861 to 1887

Civil War Era Growth
While James H. Causten was making improvements to his estate of Weston, the federal city was facing several decades of upheaval in the middle of the 19th century. During the Civil War, the city erected a ring of forts on the high ground around the city, in order to protect itself against invasion from the Confederate Army. Ultimately, 68 forts and batteries were constructed throughout Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. Many of these fort sites would eventually become federal reservations in the 20th century, and were incorporated into Washington's system of parks (Causey 2014: VIII.70-74).

During the four years of the Civil War, and in the years immediately after, Washington's population exploded with military personnel, government workers, and vast numbers of displaced former slaves (known as contraband) and free men and women. Troop movement interrupted everyday commerce and made physical improvements to infrastructure difficult. Most public works projects came to a halt, as did most orderly development of the city (Trieschmann et al. 2006: VIII.19). The city's existing parks and open spaces became ideal campsites for troops protecting Washington and the contraband seeking refuge there.

Washington's population more than tripled as a result of the war, growing from 61,000 in 1860 to 200,000 in 1864 (Leach 1997: VII.19). Real estate speculation spread from the city's core to Washington County—where Weston was located—as northern businessmen bought land at rapidly rising prices. As private investment grew, so did the need for sewers, streetlights, and other urban improvements. In the decade following the war, the city scrambled to provide services to residents. In June 1864, Congress took the first step in a larger push toward infrastructure construction, passing

an act to clear the streets and parks of squatters' shacks and other unauthorized structures (Leach 1997:VIII.19).

Further legislation, known as the Parking Act, narrowed the area that required federally funded improvement. Passed on April 6, 1870, the act formed the Parking Commission, which effectively allowed private encroachment upon many of L'Enfant's small open spaces and rights-of-way. The legislation allowed for private investment in federal property—enabling owners or occupants of adjoining properties to improve small parks with plantings, ornamental features and fencing, without transfer of land. The act reduced the federal government's immediate responsibility for a number of reservations and remains in effect today (Leach 1997:VIII.22).

Street paving during the postbellum period resulted in the delineation of many of the small triangular-shaped parcels, created by L'Enfant's plan. Though located within street rights-of-way, these oddly-shaped areas were not considered "parkings," or part of the roadways, and were therefore outside the jurisdiction of the Board of Public Works. Instead, as part of overall federal lands, their management fell under the Office of Public Buildings and Ground of the Army Corps of Engineers.

Office of Public Buildings and Grounds and the Bureau of Public Works
In 1867, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, part of the Department of War, assumed responsibility for federal lands within Washington. Lt. Nathaniel Michler was appointed officer of department's newly formed Office of Public Buildings and Grounds (OPBG). Michler, author of an influential report recommending the acquisition of land in the Rock Creek Valley for the site of a large public park, was an early advocate for extending the city's system of parks outside the boundaries of the L'Enfant Plan, in an effort to preserve natural landscapes in advance of the development of Washington County (Leach 1997:VIII.20).

A few years after the Army Corps of Engineers assumed responsibility for D.C.'s federal lands, a short-lived territorial government (formed by a Congressional Act of February 2, 1871) drastically changed the face and reputation of Washington and inspired decades of growth, investment, and improvement. In four short years under the control of Alexander "Boss" Shepherd, the Board of Public Works undertook the monumental task of improving the city's neglected infrastructure. Shepherd's comprehensive plan called for grading and paving streets and laying sewer and drainage systems. By 1872, streets were under construction in much of the northwest quadrant (albeit not yet extending to the Bryce Park site), as well as in the southeast and southwest quadrants were under construction. These projects completely graded the existing informal roads, and paved them with concrete, wood, or stone (Leach 1997:VIII.22). Under Shepherd, the Board of Public Works proposed "parking" the city's wide streets and avenues, edging the roadways with long borders of lawn and planting trees, in an effort to reduce paving costs. A "Parking Commission" was set up to oversee the work and eventually planted over 60,000 street trees throughout the city (Beveridge et al. 2013: 67). This approach to edging city streets would eventually shape the context and design of the Bryce Park cultural landscape, once development reached that area of the city in the early 20th century.

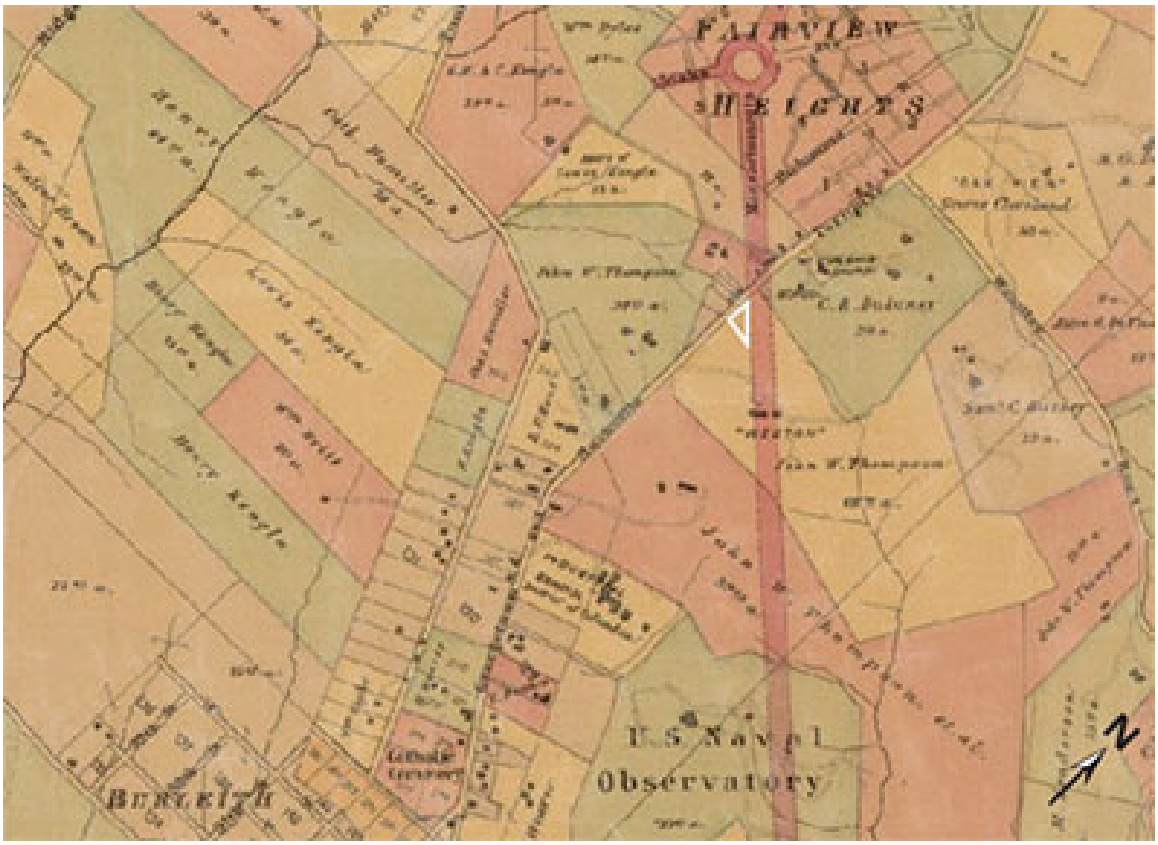
Meanwhile, Lt. Nathaniel Michler of OPBG issued writings and reports that espoused the popular belief that park development could lead to societal reform. Parks would not only improve the appearance of the city, but would "largely contribute to the health, pleasure and recreation of its inhabitants." Additionally, the improvement and maintenance of both parks and roads would provide much-needed employment in the war-ravaged capital. "Public works should be, in more sense than one, public benefactors." Michler's thinking was in keeping with the Urban Parks Movement, which advocated for the inclusion of open space in rapidly developing metropolitan centers.

During these decades in the late 19th century, the Bryce Park cultural landscape was not yet part of such a crowded residential area. However, as Washington, D.C. continued to expand in the decades after the Civil War, it would soon become part of the emerging streetcar suburbs, which began to develop in the 1870s and 1880s. During this postbellum period, James H. Causten died in 1874, and his property was conveyed to his direct heirs. A decade later, Causten's descendants sold the property to realtor William C. Hill (McNeil 2002/03: 14).

The first step toward the suburbanization of the area around the Bryce Park site was Hill's sale of

Weston in 1887 to a real estate syndicate comprised of John W. Thompson, A. E. Bateman, and Washington McLean. This syndicate (formed in 1884) was known as the Massachusetts Avenue Heights Syndicate or the Massachusetts Avenue Heights Company, according to contemporary newspaper accounts and various filings (Smith 2010: 149). Together, the investors spent more than 25 years assembling a tract of land in northwest Washington, D.C.—including the Bryce Park site, located at the western edge of the syndicate's property.

Summary
The Bryce Park site remained undeveloped as of 1887, a vacant parcel on the east side of the Georgetown and Rockville Turnpike (formerly Tennallytown Road; Wisconsin Avenue today) and sandwiched between St. Alban's Church to the north and the Weston estate house to the southeast. The topography remained consistent with earlier periods and maps, sloping downward from its western edge (on the Georgetown and Rockville Turnpike) toward the southeast. There were no structures or known circulation features on the site at this time, and at least one map suggests that the site was relatively clear-cut of vegetation by this time (Lydecker and Greene 1884). This suggests that the site retained its views toward Rock Creek and the city center, both of which occupied lower elevations.



Area around Bryce Park cultural landscape, as shown on the 1887 Map of the District of Columbia by G.M. Hopkins. Annotation of Bryce Park's approximate boundaries (with white outline) by CLI author. (Hopkins 1887)

Massachusetts Avenue Heights Syndicate: 1887 to 1890

The cultural landscape remained largely undesigned as the Massachusetts Avenue Heights Syndicate amassed its tract, which they intended to subdivide for upscale suburban development, as the population of Washington, D.C. expanded from the urban core in the late 19th and early 20th

centuries. Eventually, the tract encompassed 138 acres of property, including the triangular parcel of land that would later host Bryce Park (Smith 2010: 149). The Bryce Park site was located at the western edge of the parcel assembled by the syndicate operated by John W. Thompson, A. E. Bateman, and Washington McLean.

Of the three investors in the syndicate, John W. Thompson was a particularly high-powered figure in late-19th century Washington, D.C. Born in Canada in 1822, Thompson and his brother William moved to New York and then Washington, settling in the federal city in 1849. Thompson made his money in banking and business, serving for a time as the president of the New York, Alexandria, Washington, and Georgetown Steamship Company. He was also very involved in the construction of the Metropolitan Street Railroad in Washington, D.C., and from 1874 to 1897, he was president of the National Metropolitan Bank.

Thompson's partnership with A. E. Bateman and Washington McLean, and their syndicate's plans for a future subdivision in Northwest Washington, stood to benefit from two different transportation developments taking root in the 1880s and 1890s. For several years in the 1880s, District Commissioners debated the plan to extend Massachusetts Avenue past Rock Creek and the Naval Observatory. This extension would connect northwest Washington, D.C.—and the Massachusetts Avenue Heights Syndicate's property in particular—with the federal city center. In platting the potential avenue extension, District Commissioners considered both a direct route (along the same linear path as the original Massachusetts Avenue) and a deflected route, in which the avenue would turn northwest at a point just west of Florida Avenue/Boundary Street (The Washington Post, October 20, 1886: 1).

While these debates about the route were playing out, several property owners in northwest Washington marketed their land for new development or played hardball with District Commissioners, withholding support for the plan and wielding their property as a (literal) roadblock for the project in order to garner a higher price (The Washington Post, December 1, 1886: 2). Eventually, the final holdout sold his property to a new owner, who donated the land to the District and cleared the way for the avenue extension project (The Washington Post, November 19, 1886: 4).

Construction languished for over a decade, however, as the District Commissioners neglected to commit to a path (direct or deflected) and repeatedly chose not to allocate funding for the project (The Washington Post, January 12, 1887: 1). The project also required the support of officials at the Naval Observatory, who sought reassurance that any path for the avenue would route around their property (The Washington Post, June 27, 1891: 2). This state of limbo lasted into the early 20th century.

Meanwhile, John W. Thompson and his brother William were also involved in the incorporation of the Georgetown and Tennallytown Railroad Company in 1886. The line was chartered in 1888, and service between Tenleytown and Georgetown began in 1890. This new streetcar service ran along the road that is now Wisconsin Avenue—the western boundary of the Bryce Park site—connecting the developing neighborhoods in Northwest Washington with Georgetown to the south. The north-south streetcar line relied on overhead wires and ran along the western boundary of the Bryce Park site, further enabling the northwestern development of Washington, D.C. In 1897, the Washington and Rockville Railway was formed, extending to Rockville by 1900 (Fletcher, "Streetcars on Wisconsin Avenue," GloverParkHistory.com).

At the same time that the Georgetown and Tennallytown Railroad Company was establishing service along the western boundary of the cultural landscape, Congress was preparing legislation to create a large park along Rock Creek, east of the Bryce Park site. The same urban recreation and green space movement promoted by advocates like Lt. Nathaniel Michler (OPBG) was responsible for the creation of Rock Creek Park in 1890—a large new reservation of land that marked the most substantial expansion to date of green space beyond L'Enfant's original plan. The influence of these large-scale green space improvements trickled down to smaller urban spaces as well. By the late 19th century, small parks were considered vital features of an urban park system—especially when located within crowded residential areas, where they might serve as "lungs" or "breathing spaces" and would be readily accessible to those unable to venture further into the country for relief from

urban ills (Leach 1997: VIII.31).

Summary
During the decades that the Massachusetts Avenue Heights Syndicate focused on assembling land in this area, the site of Bryce Park saw little physical change. The topography remained consistent (sloping downward from northwest/southwest to southeast, toward Rock Creek); a 1910 article described the ground as still “very rough” even then, twenty years later (The Evening Star, March 24, 1910: 1). With little development in this area by this time (the triangular tract itself was not yet subdivided), the land use of the tract is unclear; it likely served as woodland and passive green space. There were no formal or mapped circulation features within the site; circulation around the perimeter of the site consisted of roads, rather than any formal pedestrian walkways. The Georgetown and Rockville Road, which is now Wisconsin Avenue, was not yet macadamized; it was likely a dirt and/or gravel surface. The platted, but incomplete, path of Massachusetts Avenue Extended, was also not yet macadamized. Garfield Street (historically known as Galveston Street) was not yet in place along the southern boundary of the site. The parcel was generally clear of vegetation, and featured no buildings or structures from the late 19th century into the early 20th century (Hopkins 1894: Vol. 3, Plate 18; Baist 1903: Vol. 3, Plate 18; Baist 1907: Vol. 3, Plate 26; Baist 1913-1915: Vol. 3, Plate 26).

Area around Bryce Park cultural landscape, as shown on the 1894 Real Estate Plat-Book of Washington, District of Columbia by Griffith .M. Hopkins. Annotation of Bryce Park’s approximate boundaries (with white outline) by CLI author. (Hopkins 1894: Vol. 3, Plate 18)

Washington, D.C.’s City Planning Movements in the Early 20th Century: 1890 to 1911

The City Beautiful Movement
As the Massachusetts Avenue Heights Syndicate was in the process of assembling its tract in northwest Washington, a number of reform movements swept the federal city and the country as a

whole in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, a period often referred to as the Progressive era. These movements focused on alleviating a host of societal ills, many of which were associated with urban life in particular. Reformers sought to introduce new opportunities for robust activity to help address these ills, and parks were increasingly prized as places of respite and recreation. A similar desire to reform the built environment took root at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, under the name of the City Beautiful movement. See the Small Parks Cultural Landscape Overview for more on how the City Beautiful Movement inspired and reshaped the urban form of Washington, D.C. in the early 20th century.

The McMillan Plan

Seven years after the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, the sole focus of the 1900 annual meeting of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) was the development of Washington, D.C. as a permanent White City on the Potomac River. AIA leaders envisioned the nation's capital as the perfect place to espouse the ideals of the City Beautiful. As the city approached the centennial of its status as the federal capital, a consensus emerged that leaders needed a plan to guide the city's built environment into the 20th century. Thus, Congress formed a joint committee, which held its first meeting on February 21, 1900, with Senator James McMillan of Michigan as chairman and McMillan's secretary, Charles Moore, as secretary (Leach 1997: VIII.32).

An illustrious committee formed to advise the Senate Commission; it included architect Daniel Burnham, landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., architect Charles F. McKim, and sculptor Augustus St. Gaudens. With the exception of an ailing St. Gaudens, Secretary Charles Moore and the other committee members traveled to Europe for seven weeks to study precedents in park and city planning. Their resulting report aimed "to prepare for the city of Washington such a plan as shall enable future development to proceed along the lines originally planned—namely, the treatment of the city as a work of civic art—and to develop the outlying parks as portions of a single, well considered system" (Leach 1997: VIII.32).

The McMillan Commission's plan for Washington is widely regarded as one of the seminal documents in the history of American city planning. Moreover, as a prime example for the City Beautiful movement, the plan aspired to promote public welfare, civic virtue, social harmony, economic growth, and an increased quality of life through park planning and naturalistic design. City Beautiful practitioners sought to induce social reform through pleasant, functional, and inspirational design. They shunned the creation of beauty solely as an aesthetic exercise, and instead promoted beautification as a way of encouraging a sense of collective well-being and shared identity within urban populations. Both Progressivism and the City Beautiful also recalled the urban parks movement that began in the mid-19th century as a response to the increasingly undesirable and harmful living conditions in major metropolitan areas (Causey 2014: VIII.90-91).

The final plan, published in 1902 and commonly known as the McMillan Plan, included a social component, but it was also a masterwork of functional design. The Commission repeatedly stressed that its primary objectives were to update and enhance the L'Enfant Plan and to expand it beyond the old city boundaries via a modern system of parks and parkways. According to their plan, the resulting city expansion would encompass the entire District of Columbia—including the area of northwest Washington being assembled for development by the Massachusetts Avenue Heights Syndicate—and extending into Maryland and Virginia (Causey 2014: VIII.90). Specifically, the Commission's recommendations called for: extending Washington's ceremonial core; consolidating city railways and alleviating at-grade crossings; clearing slums; designing a coordinated municipal office complex in the triangle formed by Pennsylvania Avenue, 15th Street, and the Mall; reclaiming the Anacostia flats; preserving space for parks and parkways in the rapidly-developing suburbs; and establishing a comprehensive recreation, park, and parkway system that would preserve the ring of former Civil War fortifications around the city (Leach 1997: VIII.33; Moore 1902).

In Washington's historic center, the plan focused on redesigning the National Mall, reinterpreting the spirit of L'Enfant's plan through the City Beautiful movement's Neoclassical principles, the construction of new monuments, and the development of parklands as part of a cohesive plan. A few pages were devoted to the treatment of the smaller parks along L'Enfant's original avenues. The report acknowledged their bountiful placement, and their importance as spaces for passive recreation

and beautification, but criticized the sculptural decoration as “out of keeping” with the design of the rest of the parks. It also suggested that older small parks should be adapted to the needs of individual neighborhoods, and should offer “special forms of recreation chosen with a view to the surroundings and capabilities of each particular area.” Although the plan made no specific recommendations with respect to individual small parks, it did present possibilities for their use as playgrounds, bandstands and concert groves, electrified fountains, and specialty gardens. Furthermore, the plan encouraged a variety of activities for the parks, suited to different types of users (Moore 1902: 79-81; Leach 1997: VIII.33).

In the city’s booming and burgeoning streetcar suburbs, the plan identified, mapped, and marked many spaces that would be suited for small and large parks (Moore 1902: 14-17). In areas that were not yet developed, including the area around the Bryce Park cultural landscape, the plan focused on the connective opportunities of greenways, rather than specific spatial recommendations for small parks. Despite this restraint, the Commission concluded that the system of small park reservations within the old city limits should be extended to outlying areas as well. If the distribution of small parks were to match that of the L’Enfant plan, “there [would] be some ten or twelve hundred” in suburban Washington. Recognizing that such “an arbitrary rule” was impractical, the Commission still recommended that “considerable numbers of these minor spaces ought now…to be secured while much of the land is selling at acre prices.” Having abandoned the idea of faithfully extending the L’Enfant Plan, the Commission’s suggestion in choice of land was motivated by the bottom-line. When several similar spaces were available for purchase, the Commission recommended that the federal government purchase whatever land was cheapest (Moore 1902: 77).

The House of Representatives never approved the McMillan Plan, and no funds were appropriated for its recommendations. Instead, work proceeded in a piecemeal fashion for several decades, with each project contingent upon its own enabling legislation and source of funding. Outside of the historic L’Enfant boundaries, acquisition of new reservations proceeded slowly. A 1900 map published by the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds shows the first acquisitions in 19th century subdivisions were similar to L’Enfant’s smaller reservations, and consisted of triangles and circles located in 19th century subdivisions directly north of Florida Avenue (Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army, Office of Public Buildings and Grounds 1900). In the meantime, parcels of green space such as the future site of Bryce Park lay dormant for several years or decades, awaiting further development as the city expanded outward, inspired by the ideas and ideals of the McMillan Plan.

Massachusetts Avenue Extended

In its plan for the expansion of the city limits according to the principles of the City Beautiful movement, the McMillan Plan’s maps revived the plans for the northwestern extension of Massachusetts Avenue, an idea that had been under consideration for nearly two decades by that point but had not yet been formally adopted or implemented. This vision for the extension of the avenue had a direct impact on the Bryce Park cultural landscape, as Massachusetts Avenue NW forms the northern boundary of the site today. (The road seems to have existed informally in northwest Washington by this point, as newspaper articles refer to it; however, it was unpaved, which likely limited its usefulness as a thoroughfare.) In the city core, Pierre L’Enfant’s original designs for Washington, D.C. established the street as a transverse avenue that would extend diagonally (from southeast to northwest) between the Eastern Branch and Rock Creek. The avenue is the longest of the transverse avenues in L’Enfant’s plan, and it runs roughly parallel to Pennsylvania Avenue. L’Enfant’s original plan conceived Massachusetts Avenue as the major access route to the city from both the northwest and the southeast (Beauchamp 1974: VIII.1).

By the time the McMillan Plan was published in 1902, Massachusetts Avenue’s northwestern extent terminated at Florida Avenue (known at the time as Boundary Street), east of Rock Creek. For several decades, however, officials had entertained the idea of extending the avenue further west to serve the growing population and development in northwest Washington. Among the advocates for the extension of the avenue were the leaders of The American University, located northwest of the Bryce Park site. Established in 1893, the university had a vested interest in lengthening the Massachusetts Avenue in order to link their campus with the city core. University officials began to lobby for the avenue’s extension as early as 1891; they were fortunate to have Senator James McMillan as one of their incorporators and a supporter of the idea (Alexis 1989: 170). Although

McMillan resigned from his role at the university while chairing the eponymous commission, he did carry forward the proposal and rallied support for legislative approval of the extension (Alexis 1989: 171).

A year after the publication of the McMillan Plan, an article in the Washington Post described the avenue extension as “one of the matters of the greatest importance [for] the rapid and fine development of the entire northwest section west of Rock Creek” (The Washington Post, October 25, 1903: D3). That same article noted that District Commissioners intended to “ask Congress to authorize the further improvement of the avenue to its junction with Wisconsin avenue [sic] this winter” (referring to the winter of 1904)—an improvement that would grade and macadamize Massachusetts Avenue all the way to the western extent of Bryce Park’s site (The Washington Post, October 25, 1903: D3).

One year later, District Commissioners ordered the renaming of Tennallytown Road (also historically known as Tenleytown Road, Tenley Road, and other similar names) as Wisconsin Avenue. They also renamed Galveston Street as Garfield Street, although it was not yet formalized or paved by this time (The Washington Post, April 26, 1905: 10). In 1908, the Weston house (constructed by Walter Story Chandler between 1805 and 1817, and located immediately southeast of the Bryce Park site) was demolished as the Massachusetts Avenue Extension project finally made headway in this area (McNeil 2002/2003: 14). Also around this time and in the vicinity of the Bryce Park site (but not within the cultural landscape itself), the Washington Cathedral was established north of the site in 1906 (although construction on the building did not start until the following year). St. Alban’s School, located across Massachusetts Avenue from the site, was established in 1909 adjacent to the church of the same name (established in 1854).

Summary
Although the area around it saw increasing development between 1890 and 1911, no known development of the Bryce Park site occurred during this period. Instead, it remained a vacant parcel bound by the road now known as Wisconsin Avenue (on its western perimeter), the new Massachusetts Avenue (running northwest-southeast on the site’s eastern perimeter), and the informal and unpaved road now known as Garfield Street (along its southern perimeter). The site had no structures or known circulation features by this time. Descriptions and photographs of the site published a few years later (see sections below) indicate that the site was overgrown with trees and low brush as of this time. Despite this vegetation, it seems to have retained its views toward Rock Creek and downtown Washington, D.C., based on the observations of a visitor named James Bryce (see sections below).

Area around Bryce Park cultural landscape, as shown on the 1907 Baist's Real Estate Atlas of Surveys of Washington, District of Columbia by G.W. Baist. Annotation of Bryce Park's approximate boundaries (with white outline) by CLI author. (Baist 1907: Vol. 3, Plate 26)

Massachusetts Avenue Heights: 1911 to 1916

In February 1911, the Massachusetts Avenue Heights Company purchased 212 acres of land west of Rock Creek, marking one of the largest realty deals in early 20th century Washington, D.C. The company was related to (and possibly the same as) the earlier Massachusetts Avenue Heights Syndicate, as one of the heaviest investors in the controlling syndicate was the estate of John W. Thompson (The Washington Post, February 4, 1911: 1). In fact, although he died several years earlier, Thompson's name is still used on maps through the early 20th century (Baist 1903: Vol. 3, Plate 18).

Just two months after the landmark property deal by the Massachusetts Avenue Heights Company, the first large sales of property within the new subdivision were finalized in April 1911. One of the first sales was to Captain E. E. Hayden, who worked at the U.S. Naval Observatory nearby and purchased the triangular plot of land bounded by Massachusetts and Wisconsin Avenues, and Garfield Street—the future site of Bryce Park (The Washington Times, April 12, 1911: 15). Captain Hayden was later transferred to the Philadelphia Naval Home and the naval station in Key West, Florida; it is unclear how long he owned the property (The Evening Star, September 20, 1910: 3; The Evening Star, October 2, 1911: 16; The Evening Star, December 8, 1912: 4).

These sales also confirmed the identity of the area around the Bryce Park cultural landscape as the Massachusetts Avenue Heights neighborhood. As individual lots were purchased, new homes were constructed. This resulted in a scattered-site development pattern as the area transitioned from woodland and green space to an increasingly dense residential neighborhood. Meanwhile, as new owners constructed new buildings, the street system in the area became increasingly formalized, as new streets were created and existing streets were macadamized and widened. This included

Garfield Street, which was widened in 1916 (this may have marked the first time that Garfield Street was paved, although further research is needed to confirm), trimming the boundaries of the eventual park site (The Evening Star, June 30, 1917: 10). The project also included the installation of lighting fixtures, trolley tracks along Garfield Street (via Cleveland Street), “wide parkings,” and shade trees along both sides of the road. The exact locations of lighting and vegetation features is unknown. The project was funded by the Massachusetts Avenue Heights Company (The Evening Star, June 30, 1917: 10).

Wisconsin Avenue was also widened in 1915-16, beginning at the intersection of Wisconsin Avenue and Garfield Street and extending north, past the cultural landscape site. As part of that street widening project, the railway tracks on Wisconsin Avenue were removed and relocated within the avenue (The Washington Post, October 8, 1915: 16). An 8-foot sidewalk, 18-foot parking lane, and 4-foot tree space were added on both sides of Wisconsin Avenue, within or immediately adjacent to the cultural landscape boundaries (The Evening Star, November 18, 1915: 17; The Washington Post, February 5, 1916: 14). As of 1918 (and possibly earlier), a streetcar stop existed at the intersection of Wisconsin Avenue and Massachusetts Avenue NW, within the street boundaries of the site. The stop served the northbound lines of the Washington Railway and Electric Company, as well as other independent streetcar lines (The Evening Star, April 18, 1918: 7).

Although the Massachusetts Avenue Heights neighborhood generally saw increasing construction and development, the area bound by (the newly-improved) Wisconsin Avenue, Massachusetts Avenue NW, and Garfield Streets hosted no structures for several decades. The triangular parcel, purchased by Hayden in 1911, was subdivided into 5 tracts by 1913 (along with a grassy strip along Massachusetts Avenue).

Summary
As of 1916, there were no structures on the cultural landscape site (Baist 1913-1915; Baist 1916). In addition to early 20th century insurance maps, two contemporaneous events offer evidence of the physical conditions of the Bryce Park cultural landscape around this time, including the vegetation and circulation features extant on the site by 1916. In 1910, a fatal crash between an automobile and a trolley car on Wisconsin Avenue resulted in extensive newspaper articles and photographs that account for the physical condition of the site. Then, three years later in 1913, British Ambassador James Bryce gave a speech in which he described this particular site. (It was this speech that inspired officials to name this park after James Bryce; his life and significance is addressed in more detail below, when discussing the creation of the park in the 1950s and 1960s.)

In 1910, a car traveling south on Wisconsin Avenue turned eastward into the path of a southbound trolley at nearly the exact location of the Bryce Park site. A passenger in the car (Mrs. Herbert J. Slocum) was killed, and the resulting press coverage offers several descriptions and some imagery of the contemporary conditions—including circulation and vegetation features, land use, and topography—of the Bryce Park cultural landscape. For example, the newspaper accounts indicate that Garfield Street was not yet formalized along the southern boundary of the site. In fact, an article stated that “the point where the accident occurred is about on the line of Garfield street, but that thoroughfare has not been improved, and it is not a regular crossing of the trolley tracks”; a second eyewitness account reiterated that “Garfield street [did] not cross Wisconsin Avenue” at this time (The Evening Star, March 23, 1910: 2). Rather, it ended at Wisconsin Avenue, and from that intersection (the current southwest corner of Bryce Park), a “shady by-path leading toward the grounds of the Naval Observatory” curved south between Wisconsin Avenue and 36th Street (The Evening Star, March 23, 1910: 2).

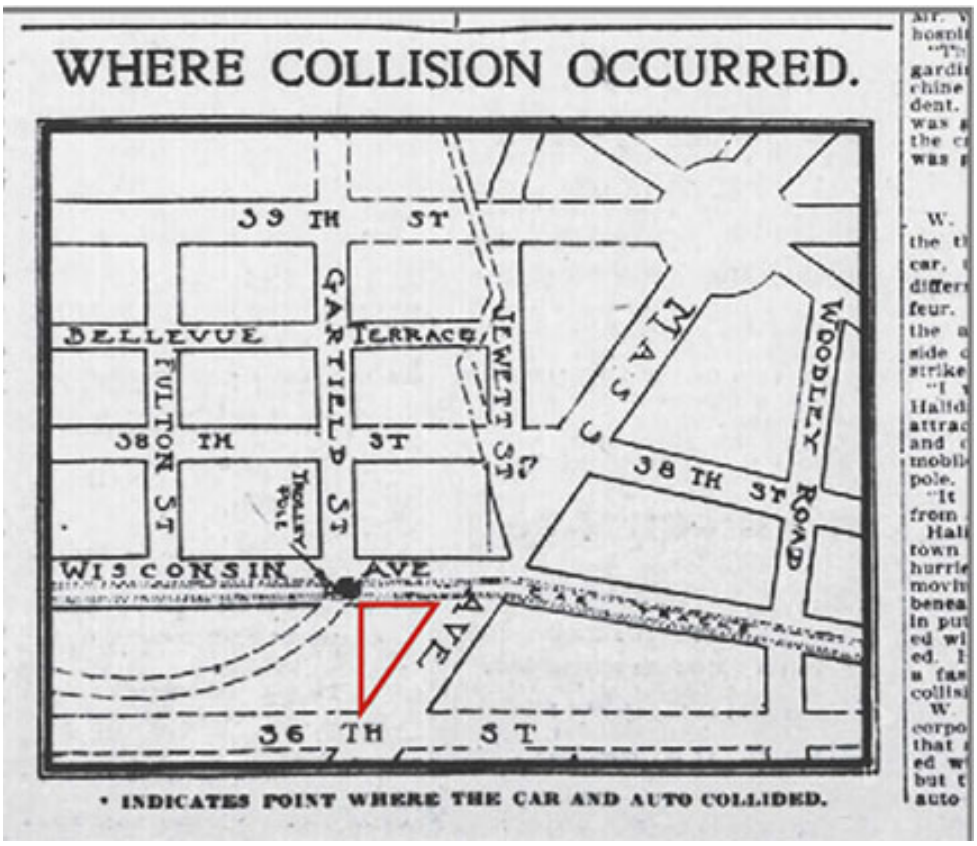
In terms of vegetation features, photographs of the collision site indicate that the Bryce Park site was rather overgrown with brush and trees. (The newspaper reproductions are not of sufficient quality to determine specific types or species of vegetation.) This vegetation pattern suggests that the land was not yet developed, formally laid out, or used as recreational or residential space. Instead, it seems that it still functioned as passive green space within the expanding street grid (The Evening Star, March 23, 1910: 2). Lastly, the newspaper descriptions refer to the site as “the high ground,” when describing the car turning from Wisconsin Avenue toward the subject site.

Contemporary with these eyewitness accounts of the cultural landscape at the time of the accident, British Ambassador James Bryce gave a speech in 1913 in which he described this exact point in Washington, DC. In particular, Bryce described the views and vistas available from the site as of the early 20th century:

May I mention a point of view that is now threatened and perhaps almost gone? You all know the spot at which Wisconsin Avenue intersects Massachusetts Avenue, which has now been extended beyond that intersection into this country. At that point of intersection, just opposite where the Episcopal Cathedral is to stand, there is one spot commanding what is one of the most beautiful general views of Washington. You look down upon the city, you see its most striking buildings—the Capitol, the Library, State, War, and Navy Department, and the Postoffice [sic] and other high buildings along Pennsylvania Avenue—and beyond them you see the great silvery flood of the Potomac and the soft lines fading away in a dim outline in the far southeast. It is a delightful and inspiring view. [emphasis added] (The Washington Herald, September 7, 1913: 8).

Bryce's description underscores both the elevation (and related, topography) and the available views at the Bryce Park cultural landscape by the time the Massachusetts Avenue Heights Company began to subdivide the area. By this time, construction on the Washington National Cathedral had begun (north of the cultural landscape), although it then languished during World War I.

(Original citation: Harris & Ewing 1914. Corrected location identified: Fletcher, "Massachusetts Avenue Heights," www.gloverparkhistory.com/glover-park/residential-development-before-1926/massachusetts-avenue-heights/



Map of the Bryce Park site, as published in newspaper accounts of the 1910 crash between a trolley car and an automobile. The collision site, at the southwest corner of the cultural landscape, is noted with a black circle at the intersection of Wisconsin Avenue and Garfield Street. The cultural landscape is annotated in red by the CLI author. (The Evening Star, March 23, 1910: 2)

Newspaper photograph of the 1910 collision between an automobile (at left in main photo) and a trolley car, taken from Wisconsin Avenue and looking east at the Bryce Park site. Although the newspaper reproduction is of poor quality, the photograph does offer a broad impression of the physical conditions of the Bryce Park cultural landscape in the early 20th century, including the generally overgrown state of the vegetation features. (The Evening Star, March 23, 1910: 2)

Newspaper photograph of the 1910 collision between an automobile (at left) and a trolley car, taken from Wisconsin Avenue and looking east at the Bryce Park site. The Evening Star, March 24, 1910: 12

New Park Planning in Washington, D.C. and Acquisition of the Bryce Park Site: 1916 to 1958

In the years after the collision and James Bryce's speech, the land in Massachusetts Avenue Heights remained privately owned for several decades. Meanwhile, the federal city's park planning efforts and land acquisition activity ramped up in the decades after World War I. By the late 20th century, these planning initiatives affected the cultural landscape and set the stage for the acquisition of the parkland in 1956 and 1958.

Implementation of the McMillan Plan: Commission of Fine Arts and the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds
First, however, District officials faced the challenge of implementing the McMillan Plan in the early decades of the 20th century, since the House of Representatives never approved the plan and so there were no federal funds to execute it. Instead, each project relied on its own enabling legislation and funding source to make progress. Outside of the L'Enfant boundaries, acquisition of new reservations began slowly. In 1910, Congress established the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA) to protect the tenets of the McMillan Plan. The CFA was tasked with consulting with the government on the design of all public buildings, bridges, sculptures, parks, paintings, and other artistic matters within Washington, D.C. At the outset, the CFA concentrated on the development of Washington's monumental core, beginning in 1911 with the design and construction of the Lincoln Memorial and the landscape of the surrounding West Potomac Park (Leach 1997: VIII.34).

While many aspects of the McMillan Plan's design for the Mall remained unrealized, the grand ideals set forth by the McMillan Commission, and promoted by the CFA, gradually trickled down to designs for the smaller parks. In 1916, Office of Public Buildings and Grounds (OPBG) landscape architect George Burnap echoed many of the McMillan Plan principles in his book Parks, Their Design, Equipment, and Use. Burnap recommended a series of new treatments for the city's small parks.

These included replacing the curvilinear, meandering routes, and the fussy, fenced-off landscaping of the Victorian garden design movement with Beaux Arts-approved formal and symmetrical paths. Although Burnap's design principles are not overtly evident in the asymmetrical layout of Bryce Park, we can see in the Bryce Park cultural landscape some continuity with Burnap's emphasis on the utility of "walk-lines" and the use of landscape features to create unique park designs and compositions. See the Small Parks Cultural Landscape Overview for more on Burnap's design principles and final plan.

As Burnap and his successors began to redesign the city's small parks, new reservations continued to be added to the system. By 1913, 43 new reservations had been transferred to, or acquired by, the federal government. They ranged in size from 250 square feet to 293 acres. An OPBG inventory from that year listed 122 reservations as fully improved; 121 reservations were described as partially improved; and 108 reservations were unimproved. Since it lacked the funds to improve many of the reservations, and because some of the illegal occupants maintained the land in better condition than it might have been otherwise, the OPBG began leasing some of the spaces for nominal annual fees (United States War Department 1913: 3208; Leach 1997: VIII.34-35).

In total, 163 reservations were added to the park system between 1902 and 1922. This land included: East Potomac Park, comprised of land reclaimed from the Potomac Flats and transferred to OPBG in 1912; Rock Creek Park, which was placed under the management of OPBG in 1918; and extensive tracts purchased by the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission between 1916 and 1931 for the establishment of another McMillan Plan proposal—a scenic drive connecting Rock Creek Park with central Washington (Mackintosh 1985). The number of small reservations added to the system "steadily increase[ed] during the same period…as the development of the city…gradually extended toward the District Boundaries" (United States War Department 1922: 2177). Many of these smaller reservations, described as triangles and center parking strips, were transferred to the OPBG from the District Commissioners.

New Construction on the Bryce Park Cultural Landscape Site
Around the same time that the OPBG was taking on the management of parkland around Washington, D.C., the Bryce Park cultural landscape experienced its first development in the fledgling Massachusetts Avenue Heights neighborhood. At some point between 1910 and 1921, a small shed and gas tank were constructed on the site to serve as a filling station for the Penn Oil Company. That date range is established based on the accounts of the trolley-automobile crash in 1910, which did not indicate any use of the site, and the photograph below, taken by the National Photo Company on the site circa 1920-21. Based on the description of the photograph and the presence of the Wisconsin Avenue streetcar wires in the background (at the right edge of the photograph), the photographer appears to have been standing near Massachusetts Avenue, facing south/southwest in the site (National Photo Company [between] 1920-1921).

The filling station marked the first known structure on the site in the centuries since English settlement reached the area. It was a simple one-room gable-roof structure of wood or metal construction, with a corrugated metal roof. The station was served by overhead electrical wires, and a single gasoline pump was located in front of the shed. The electrical poles and pump are the first known and documented small-scale features on the site. With regard to vegetation and circulation features, the area around the station was cleared of trees and brush, creating a parking area to serve the station. A track or road is visible through the trees behind the station. Given the size of the parcel, this is likely an informal driveway through the site, rather than Garfield Street at the southern boundary of the site. The site's vegetation is otherwise characterized by the low brush and tree stands around the southern and western edges of the site. (The condition along the Massachusetts Avenue boundary of the site cannot be confirmed.) This vegetation pattern suggests that limited views were still available from the site, although it is unclear how far they extended, given the increase in development in the area.

This filling station remained in place on the site for over three decades, until the National Park Service acquired that portion of the site in 1958. It was associated first with the Penn Oil Company and later with the American Oil Company (also known as AMOCO). Between 1921 and 1933, two islands with fuel pumps (totaling 5 pumps) were installed in front of the station shed (National Photo

Company 1921; Heaton and Client Amoco Oil Company 1933).

In 1933 and 1934, local architect Arthur B. Heaton designed several iterations of an automobile service station for the site, on behalf of AMOCO. (Some drawings also list the client as the Lord Baltimore Filling Station, Inc.; the two corporations were related.) Heaton had been supervising architect for the Washington National Cathedral (across the street from the site of his proposed service station) from 1908 to 1928, and his elaborate designs for AMOCO envisioned a large Gothic Revival structure befitting its ecclesiastical neighbor. The drawings are catalogued at the Library of Congress, and although the sequence of Heaton's iterations is unclear, the designs consistently represent a substantial structure organized around a two-story tower at the northeast end of the building and a large body shop (with 2 or 3 bays, depending on the drawing). Several of the drawings also feature an apse-like bay on the southwest elevation, reiterating the Gothic Revival design language of the scheme (Heaton and Client Amoco Oil Company 1933; Heaton and Client American Oil Company 1934).

Heaton generated several different drawings and schemes for the filling/service station. However, it appears that none of the designs were actually executed (perhaps because of the Great Depression), based on the conditions that were later documented in the 1950s in a site survey conducted by the DC Surveyor's Office. These later surveys and photographs indicate a service station that is inconsistent in placement, footprint, and configuration with the building in Heaton's designs. Instead, the shed station that existed as of 1921 was replaced at some point after 1934 by 6 gas pumps and slightly larger filling station (with a simpler footprint than Heaton's designs) (Sanborn 1959: Vol. 5, Plate 535). The 1934 date is established based on a location survey of the extant station that was catalogued with Heaton's drawings (Heaton and Client American Oil Company 1934, ADE-Unit 975). This enlarged station was accessed via curb cuts on both Wisconsin and Massachusetts Avenues (United States Department of Agriculture 1957 [HistoricAerials.com]).

National Capital Park Commission (NCPC) and the National Capital Parks and Planning Commission (NCPPC)
Even as OPBG continued to add new reservations to Washington, D.C.'s park system, the United States' entry into World War I in 1917 resulted in a population boom in the nation's capital. The population expanded from 280,000 in 1900 to 525,000 in 1918. As Washington's population grew, and the size of the federal government significantly increased, the city was forced to expand farther beyond the L'Enfant boundaries and the early streetcar suburbs (Leach 1997: VIII.35).

Increased development in neighborhoods like Brookland, Woodley Park, and Brightwood led to renewed calls to preserve parkland in Washington's booming suburban neighborhoods (KCI Technologies 1999: B-37). Realizing the city faced planning dilemmas that could not be solved by the OPBG, CFA, or the District Commissioners alone, citizen-led groups such as the American Planning and Civic Association, and its local arm, the Committee of 100 on the Federal City, called for congressional intervention. Congress responded by creating the National Capital Park Commission (NCPC) on June 6, 1924. The NCPC was comprised of the Chief of the Army Corps of Engineers, Officer in Charge of the OPBG, the Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia, the Director of the National Park Service, and the Chairmen of the Congressional Committees on the District of Columbia. Both the NCPC and its successor as of 1926, the National Capital Park and Planning Commission (NCPPC), were authorized to acquire new parkland in the region surrounding the original city, in order to keep pace with the growing population as development expanded out from the urban core (Leach 1997: VIII.36; Guttheim 2006: 178). Parkland acquired by the NCPC and NCPPC was incorporated into the park system as new reservations, and managed by OPBG and its successor agency, the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks (OPBPP). See the Small Parks Cultural Landscape Overview for more on the priorities of NCPC and NCPPC.

Capper-Cramton Act
Many of these NCPC/NCPPC acquisitions occurred as a result of the Capper-Cramton Act of May 29, 1930. This landmark law marks a pivotal moment in the administrative and planning history of Washington, D.C.'s parks, authorizing advance land purchase powers for the National Capital Park and Planning Commission (Mackintosh 1985, www.npshistory.com/publications/nace/adhi/chap3.htm). The Capper-Cramton Act made it possible

for the federal city to keep pace with the increase in park use over the course of the 20th century, enabling the acquisition and creation of the District's small parks as green space throughout the city. (The Capper-Cramton Act also authorized the District to supplement its large reservations of green space, under the aegis of the NCPPC.) The Act provided federal matching funds for the purchase of land in the D.C. metropolitan area, with the goal of creating a regional system of parks, playgrounds, and parkways. Congress authorized a total of $16 million for land acquisition within the District and an additional $13.5 million in the adjoining areas of Maryland and Virginia (Causey 2014 VIIII.100-101). It was under the authority of the Capper-Cramton Act that the National Park Service later acquired the land for Bryce Park in 1956 (when the southern portion of the site was purchased) and 1958 (when the northern tract, including the gas station site, was purchased). By the end of 1958, the National Park Service had acquired the entire triangular parcel bound by Wisconsin Avenue, Massachusetts Avenue, and Garfield Street. It was known as United States Reservation 700.

Transfer of Park Management to the National Park Service
In 1933, responsibility for the federal reservations was transferred from the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks to the National Park Service (NPS), housed within the Department of the Interior. That same year, the Forest Service and War Department transferred 56 national monuments and military sites to NPS. Until that point, the National Park Service's holdings were primarily concentrated in western states. The transfer of federal reservations in Washington, D.C. to NPS management marked a new era in the agency's mission to "promote and regulate the use of…national parks, monuments and reservations…to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner." It marked the National Park Service as a steward and manager for a more diverse set of public lands, particularly in the nation's capital.

In 1934, NPS created the National Capital Parks unit as the direct legal successor to the office of the original three Federal Commissioners (which had existed since George Washington's presidency). As such, National Capital Parks occupied an unusual place with respect to the National Park Service. Many of its functions were entirely different from other field units in the Park System, in that the National Capital Parks office supervised a system of parks, rather than large individual parklands of the type associated with western parks (Heine 1953).

Between 1933 and 1959, acquisitions under the National Park Service included a number of large reservations in Maryland and Virginia, as well as smaller sites throughout the city. Several additional Civil War Defenses of Washington sites and a number of small playgrounds were part of these acquisitions. An agreement between the National Park Service, District Commissioners, the Board of Education, and the city's Coordinator of Recreation resulted in some 178 recreational facilities within federal parks being turned over to the city's Community Center and Playgrounds Department. While managed by the city, National Capital Parks continued to maintain and improve these properties (Heine 1953; Fortner 1956: 221-222).

Acquisition of the Bryce Park site
As the National Park Service spent two decades acquiring parkland within the District boundaries, the Bryce Park cultural landscape remained intact, with the filling station at the northern end of the property marking the only development. In 1956, the D.C. Surveyor's Office conducted a survey on behalf of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission, as preparation for "improvements" (Surveyor's Office D.C. 1956). At some point between that 1956 survey and the time a 1957 aerial photograph was taken of the area, 36th Place NW was extended through the site, truncating the southeast corner of the tract (Surveyor's Office D.C. 1956; United States Department of Agriculture 1957 [HistoricAerials.com]). This street project marked the final adjustment to the boundaries of what would become Bryce Park; by 1957, the perimeter of the site was consistent with the perimeter conditions in 2018.

The southern section of the triangular parcel remained relatively undeveloped during this period, dense with trees and low brush. The 1957 aerial photograph (see below) appears to show at least two features (perhaps structures) on the site, but the 1956 survey does not indicate any buildings, structures, circulation features, or small-scale elements on the southern portion of the site at this time (Surveyor's Office D.C. 1956).

In 1956, the National Park Service acquired 0.44 acres of the 0.59-acre site (United States Reservation 700), as authorized by the Crapper-Cramton Act of 1933 (Land Resources Program Center 2011: 45). In 1958, NPS acquired the remaining 0.15 acres, under the same authority (National Park Service, Reservation 700, Lands Division file). The National Capital Parks office of NPS oversaw the subsequent demolition of the filling station at some point between 1961 and 1963 (Zambrane 1961; United States Department of Agriculture 1963 [HistoricAerials.com]). National Capital Parks was also responsible for the design and construction of Bryce Park on the site (Belden 1962[a-f]). The filling station structure and its driveways were both demolished soon after the site was acquired, and were gone by 1963, when construction on the park began in earnest.

Summary
At the time the National Park Service acquired the site for Bryce Park, the site was bound by Wisconsin Avenue, Massachusetts Avenue NW, 36th Place NW, and Garfield Street. Consistent with earlier eras, its topography generally sloped from northwest to southeast; the elevation dropped approximately 20 feet from the western edge to the southeastern corner of the site. The triangular parcel was occupied by the gas station in the northern corner and vegetation on the southern half of the site. This combination of commercial use and passive recreation/woodland characterized the land use of the site from circa 1921 (if not a few years earlier) through 1958.

The gas station included a metal office building that occupied a square footprint along Massachusetts Avenue. It also included two hydraulic car lifts and two gas pump islands.

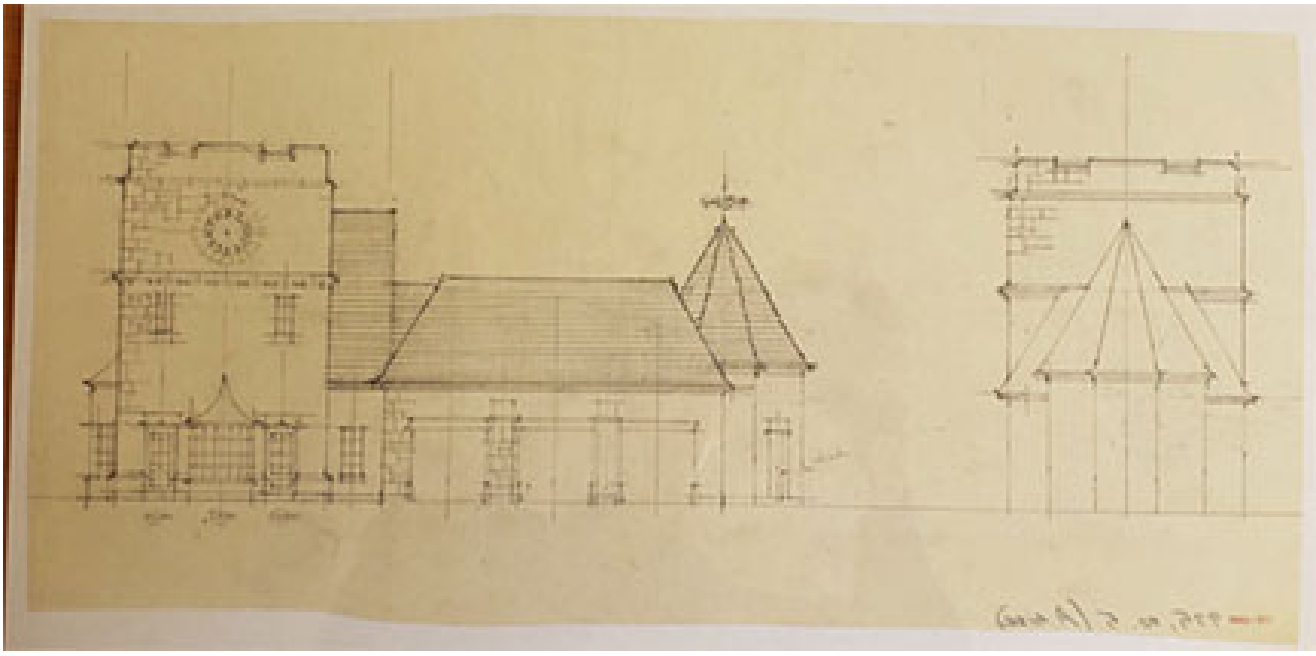
The gas station area was paved. It was accessed by two driveways extending into the site: a curb cut from Wisconsin Avenue on the western edge of the site, and a second driveway extending southwest into the site from Massachusetts Avenue NW. Additional circulation features in place by this time included concrete walkways around the perimeter, separating the site from surrounding streets.

The small-scale features associated with the gas station included: temporary wood storage bins; air pressure tanks; at least one light pole; an oil tank; and two concrete coping and retaining walls, framing the paved area on the northwest and southeast edges of the station (Surveyor’s Office D.C. 1956).

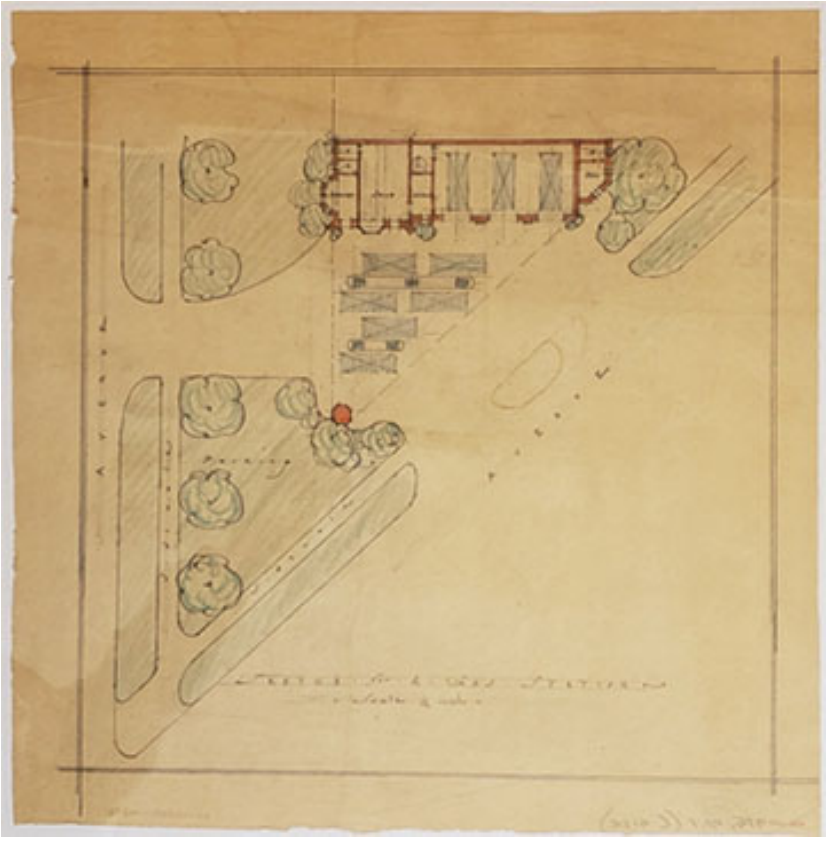
The 1956 survey did not identify any buildings or structures, circulation features, or small-scale features elsewhere on the site, outside the boundaries of the gas station. The remainder of the quasi-triangular site featured trees (including elms) and grassy ground cover; there was no formal planting pattern at this time. Based on aerial photographs of the site’s context, as well as remarks at the dedication ceremony in 1965 (see below), the site evidently had limited views and vistas toward downtown by this point; instead, the views had been obstructed by maturing trees and new buildings.

Penn Oil Company filling station on the Bryce Park site, circa 1920-1921. View likely from Massachusetts Avenue, looking southwest. Wisconsin Avenue streetcar wires are visible at right in photograph. (National Photo Company 1921)

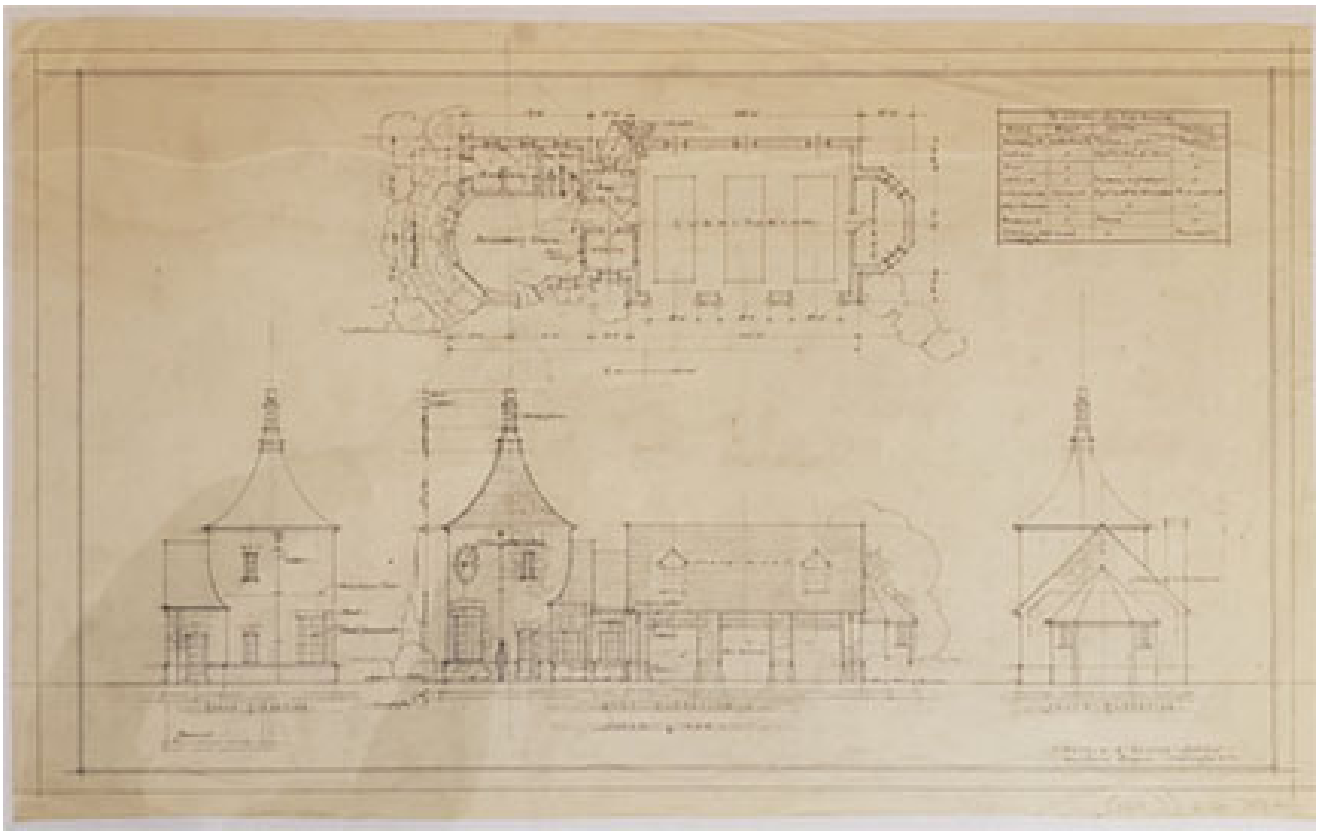
Elevation drawing (Iteration A) for an automobile service station for American Oil Company at Massachusetts Avenue and Wisconsin Avenue. (Heaton and Client Amoco Oil Company 1933)



Elevation drawing (Iteration B) for an automobile service station for American Oil Company at Massachusetts Avenue and Wisconsin Avenue. (Heaton and Client Amoco Oil Company 1933)



Plan drawing (Iteration B) for an automobile service station for American Oil Company at Massachusetts Avenue and Wisconsin Avenue. (Heaton and Client Amoco Oil Company 1933)

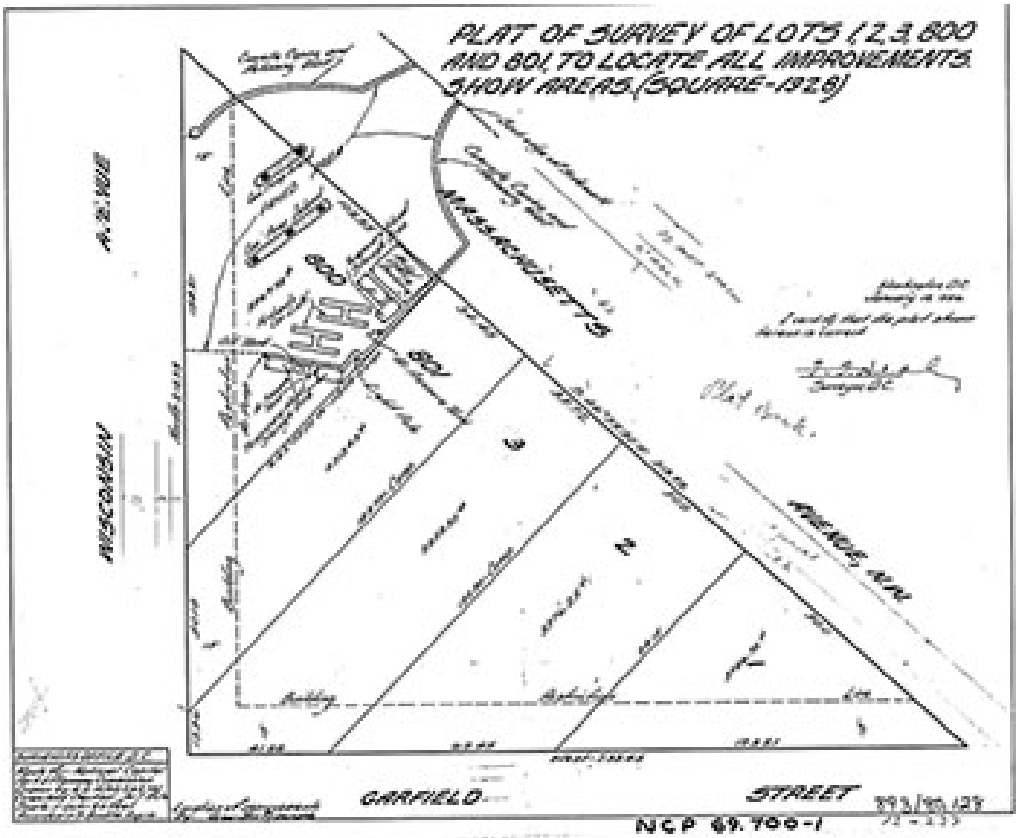


Plan and elevation drawings (Iteration C) for an automobile service station for American Oil Company at Massachusetts Avenue and Wisconsin Avenue. (Heaton and Client Amoco Oil Company 1933)

Perspective rendering (Iteration D) for an automobile service station for American Oil Company at Massachusetts Avenue and Wisconsin Avenue. (Heaton and Client American Oil Company 1934)

Perspective rendering (Iteration E) for an automobile service station for American Oil Company at Massachusetts Avenue and Wisconsin Avenue. (Heaton and Client American Oil Company 1934)

Perspective rendering (Iteration E) for an automobile service station for American Oil Company at Massachusetts Avenue and Wisconsin Avenue. (Heaton and Client American Oil Company 1934)



1956 survey of the Bryce Park parcel, in advance of the National Park Service's purchase of the property. (Surveyor's Office D.C. 1956)

Aerial photograph of the Bryce Park site as of 1957, just two years before the National Park Service acquired the property. (United States Department of Agriculture 1957)

Acquisition and Creation of Bryce Park: 1958 to 1965

Landscape Design

The National Park Service acquired the site in two different purchases that were completed by 1958. Initially, the site was simply graded and seeded under NPS ownership. By 1962, however, the United States Congress had appropriated money "for the development and uplifting of a number of small parks and reservations leading to the United States Capitol, White House, and the central city." The appropriation reportedly identified the site at Wisconsin Avenue and Massachusetts Avenue as an opportunity for just such a small park, given its location at the intersection of two significant streets, its proximity to several embassies and the National Cathedral, the presence of several apartment and residential buildings nearby, and the lack of a community park to serve those residents (National Park Service, Reservation 700, Lands Division file).

Thus, later that year, NPS landscape architect William Belden developed design and construction drawings for the site. Incorporating concrete walkways, steel benches, and fixtures with streamlined profiles, Belden's designs adopted a Modernist material palette and aesthetic similar to the contemporary facilities being erected under the National Park Service's Mission 66 program. However, this design assignment arrived rather early in Belden's career, and as such, there is no record of him being directly involved in the Mission 66 program at a leadership level (Smith 2019). Rather, he was likely adhering to the general Modernist landscape trends of the mid-century era.

First and foremost, Belden's design addressed the site's relatively steep topography by grading the park into four paved terraces:

1. The two highest terraces (at approximately 365 feet above sea level) are on the western edge,

along Wisconsin Avenue. Located at the northwest and southwest corners of the park, these terraces are separated by a grassy lawn but occupy the same relative elevation on the site. Beginning at the sidewalk along Wisconsin Avenue, the northwest terrace occupies an irregular polygonal footprint (covering an area of approximately 110 square feet) before segueing to the curving concrete path. The southwest terrace is roughly circular in shape, with an approximate radius of 31 feet. The northwest terrace steps down via a broad concrete staircase, and the southwest terrace steps down via two concrete staircases, so that they meet in the center of the site on the central terrace.
2. The central terrace is located at approximately 359 feet above sea level. The grading of the terraces relied on a curvilinear retaining wall between the southwest and central terraces. The stone wall featured a bluestone veneer on its exposed surface, facing east. The core area of the central terrace occupies a quasi-circular footprint (reinforced by the overlapping round planting beds at its center). The approximate radius of this terrace is 39 feet. It steps down to the lowest terrace via another concrete staircase.
3. The lowest-grade terrace is in the southeast corner of the site, at approximately 347 feet above sea level. It is teardrop-shaped, with an approximate radius of 36 feet.

Curvilinear paths connect these terraces and ultimately serve as pass-through walkways for the park, linking each of the boundary streets. The walkways were specified as scored concrete paving throughout the site, with the exception of the southwest terrace. Here, a circular planting bed was surrounded by Pennsylvania bluestone paving.

At each of the four terrace levels, the curvilinear paths framed planting beds. Belden's original 1962 plans called for grass and gravel within these beds, but by 1965 (when the park was dedicated), the park's planting list specified the use of General Eisenhower tulips, blue Verbena sparlite (8-14"), and purple waters in the central terrace's planting bed. Elsewhere on the site, the landscape plans removed some pre-existing trees and inserted flowering dogwoods (Cornua florida), saucer magnolia trees (Magnolia soulangeana), Japanese red pines (Pinus densiflora 'umbraculifera'), and little-leaf linden trees (Tilia cordata). Planted shrubs included azaleas (Rhododendron kurume 'Christmas Cheer' and Rhododendron mucronatum 'Delaware Valley'), Chinese holly (Ilex cornuta), viburnum (Viburnum burwoodi and Viburnum tomentosum), and spreading English yews (Taxus baccata 'repandens'). In the areas not covered in grass, the specified ground cover plants were English ivy.

Belden included two types of benches in his plans: "standard malleable iron benches" flanking the walkways throughout most of the site; and a specially-designed steel-frame/wood-slat backless bench. The latter was installed according to both a rectilinear footprint (in the northwest corner, at the intersection of Wisconsin Avenue and Massachusetts Avenue) and a curved footprint (around the planting bed in the southwest corner). Belden's designs also included four luminaire-style light poles (made with a fluted-metal pole, painted black), a drinking fountain on the central terrace, and a radial steel fence (32 inches tall) around the planting bed in the southwest corner (Belden 1962X, NPS ETIC File Number X893 893 80135).

James Bryce
In October 1965, shortly before the park was completed, the National Park Service decided to dedicate United States Reservation 700 to the memory of Viscount James Bryce (National Park Service, Reservation 700, Lands Division file). Sir James Bryce was the British Ambassador to the United States from 1907-1913, and he lived in the area around this site during his time in Washington, D.C. Bryce was also a prominent literary figure in late 19th and early 20th-century America, publishing his observations on American life and culture in his 1888 book, The American Commonwealth. During his travels and years of service in the United States, Bryce became good friends with (among others) President Theodore Roosevelt, and like Roosevelt, he was a strong advocate for the conservation of parks and green space in the United States. He praised the beauty of the Rock Creek landscape, and in 1913, a particularly long treatise on "enhancing these beauties" of Washington specifically cited the views of downtown available from the intersection of Wisconsin and Massachusetts Avenues in northwest Washington, D.C (Harvie 2004, https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/32141; The Washington Herald, September 7, 1913: 8).

Dedication of the Park
As a sign of Viscount James Bryce's stature and the close relationship of the United States and Great

Britain, Princess Margaret and her husband, the Earl of Snowdon, attended the dedication ceremony for Bryce Park on November 17, 1965. The ceremony was a centerpiece of their tour of the United States, which also included events with President Lyndon B. Johnson. The Under Secretary of the Interior, John A. Carver, offered remarks, acknowledging that “we have not preserved much of the view from this level” that Bryce had praised in 1913. Nevertheless, the National Park Service had “belatedly…reclaimed this pleasant site, and [created] the landscape value that Bryce recommended” (Carver 1965).

As part of the Bryce Park ceremony, Princess Margaret unveiled a bronze plaque dedicated to James Bryce. The plaque was affixed to the bluestone retaining wall (and is still in place today). It reads:
BRYCE PARK
DEDICATED TO
JAMES BRYCE
VISCOUNT BRYCE OF DECHMONT, O.M.
BRITISH AMBASSADOR TO
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
1907-1913
AUTHOR ● DIPLOMAT ● SCHOLAR
HE DELIGHTED
IN THE PARKS OF WASHINGTON

Summary
Most of the designed features were in place by 1963, including the graded terraces and retaining wall, planting beds, and circulation features. Between 1963 and 1965, additional vegetation and small-scale features were installed, including the two bench types, light poles, new plantings, and the commemorative bronze plaque honoring James Bryce. As John Carver noted in his speech at the dedication ceremony, the vistas of downtown Washington, D.C. were limited; however, views toward the tower of the National Cathedral (north of the park) would have been available by this time. By 1965, the park design was essentially complete and generally consistent with what we see at the site today.

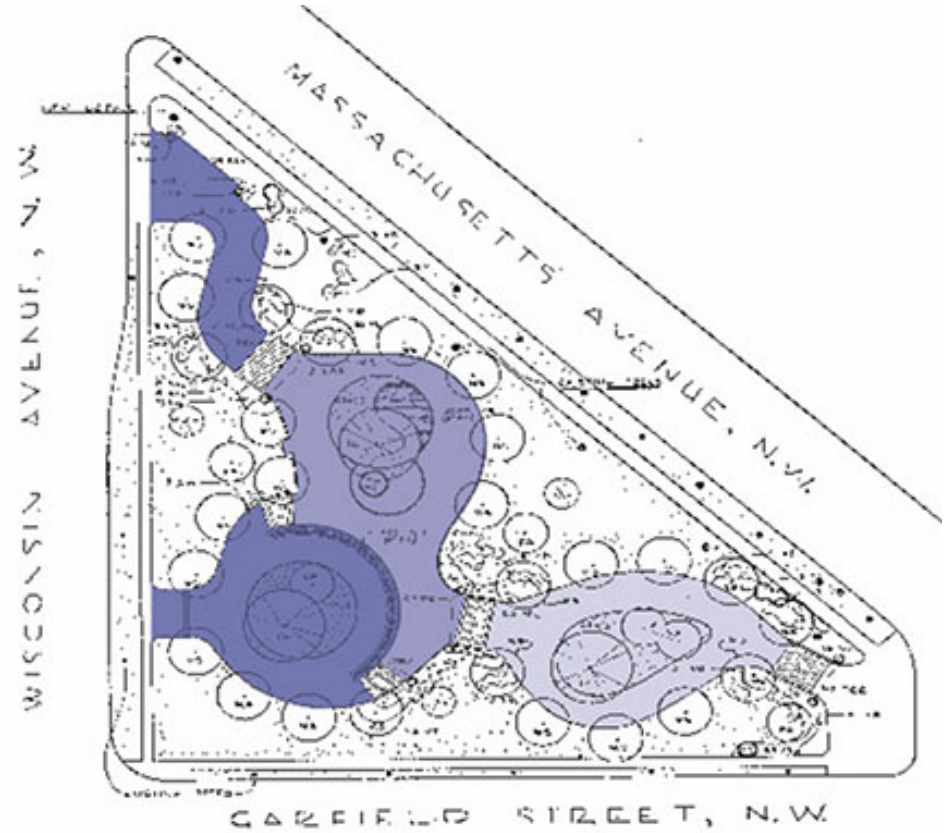
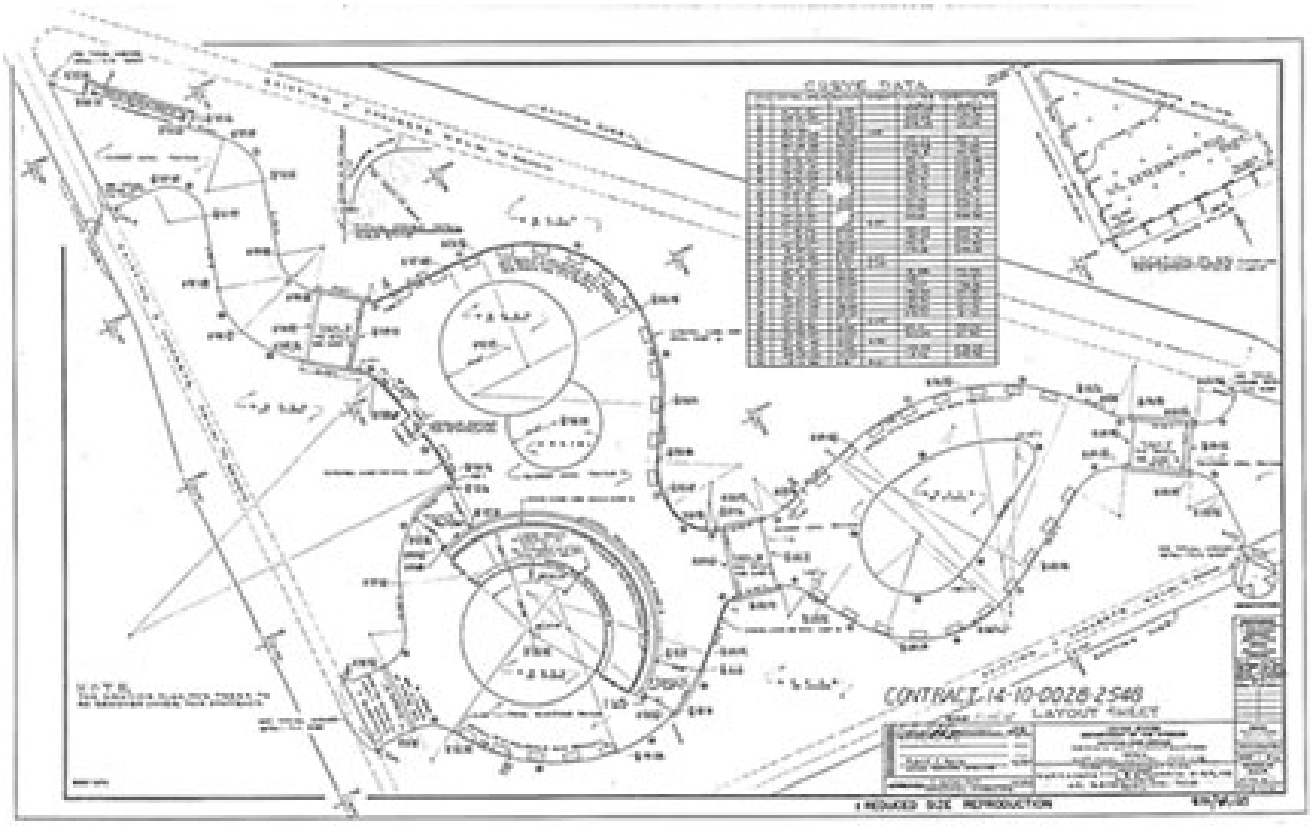
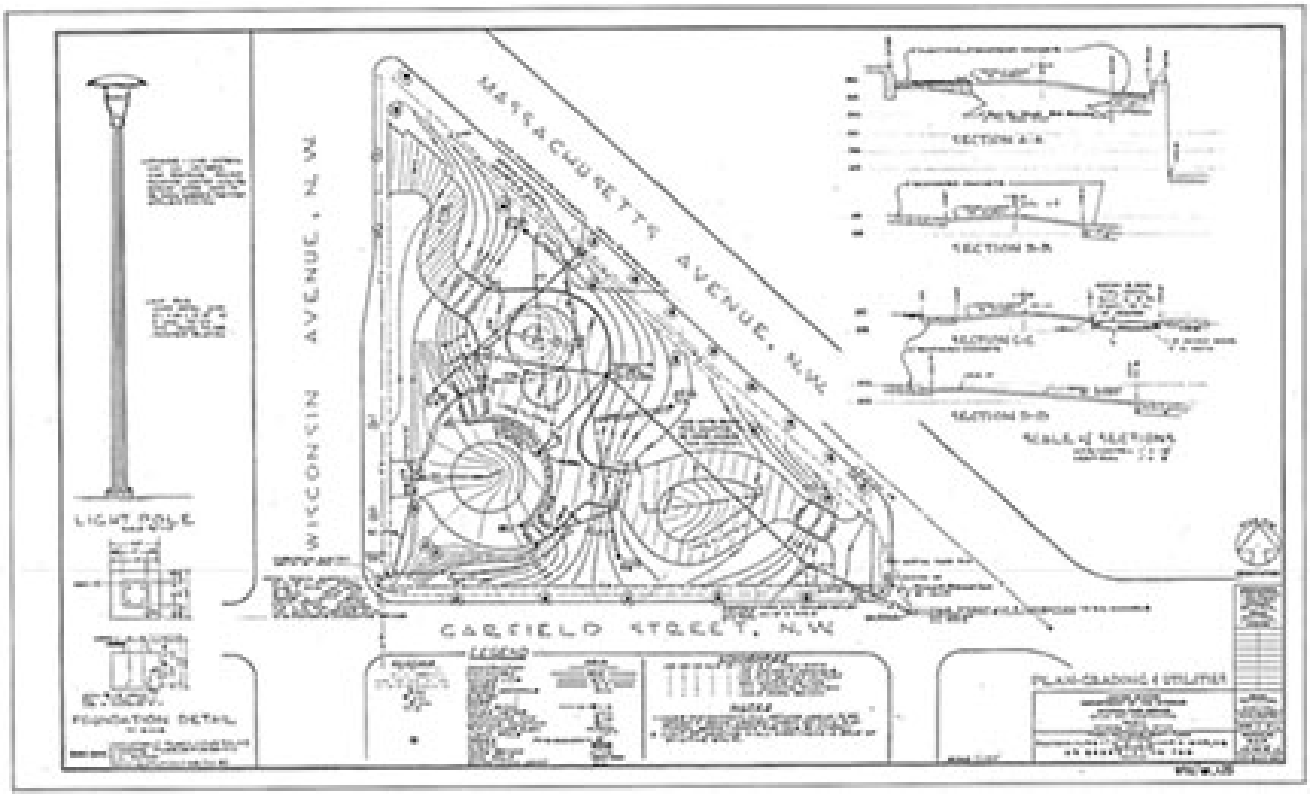


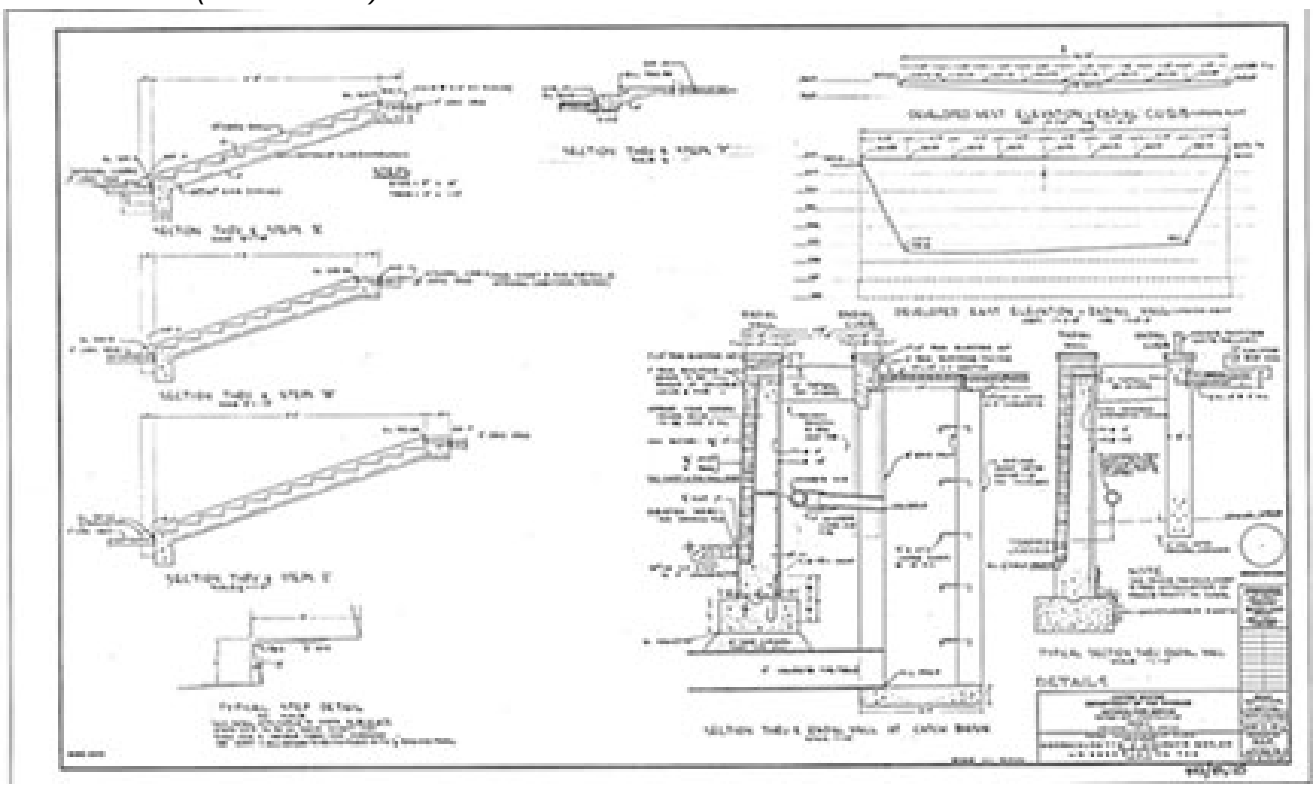
Diagram of the four terraces that respond to the site's topography, from the highest-elevation terraces (dark blue) to the central terrace, to the lowest-elevation terrace (light blue). Diagram overlaid on the 1963 landscape plan for Bryce Park, as designed by NPS Landscape Architect William Belden. (Belden 1963)



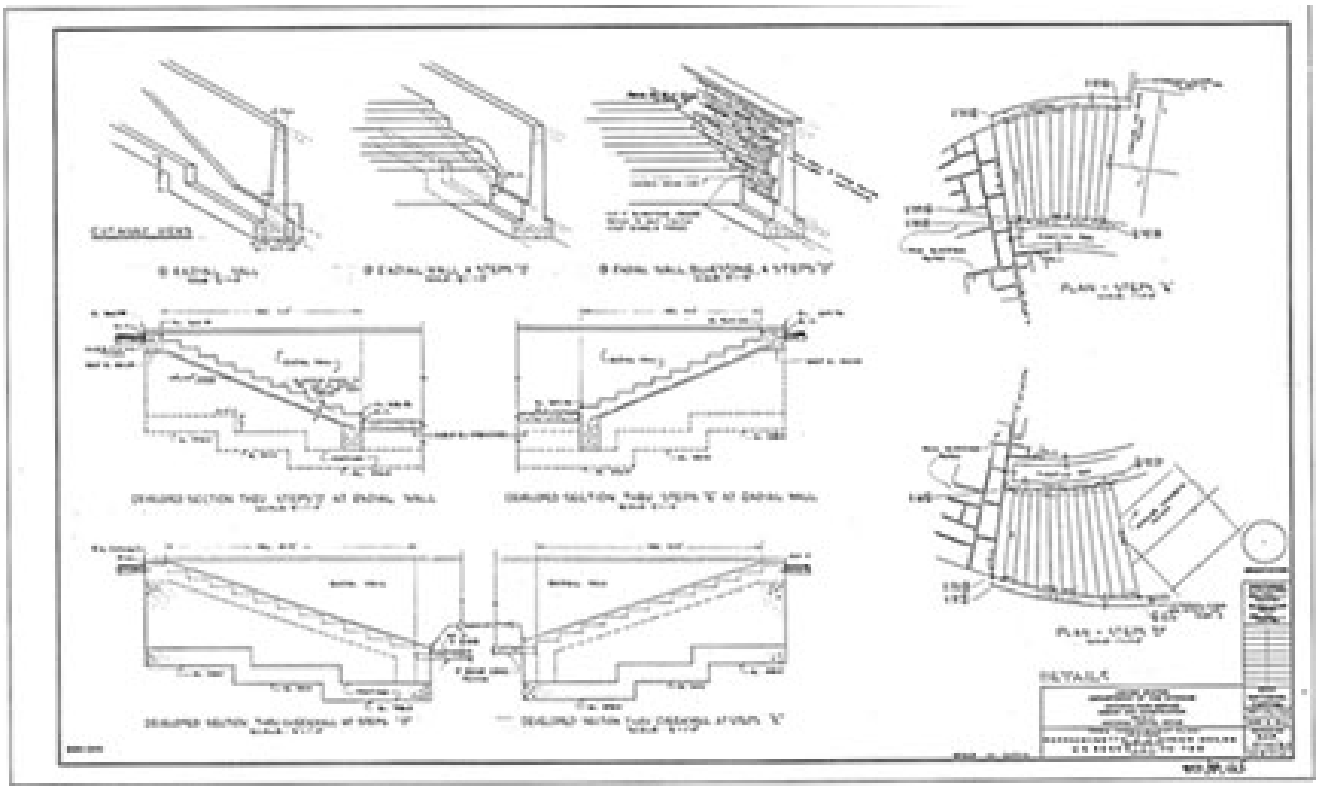
1962 landscape plan for Bryce Park, overall design and construction drawing, as designed by NPS Landscape Architect William Belden. (Belden 1962a)



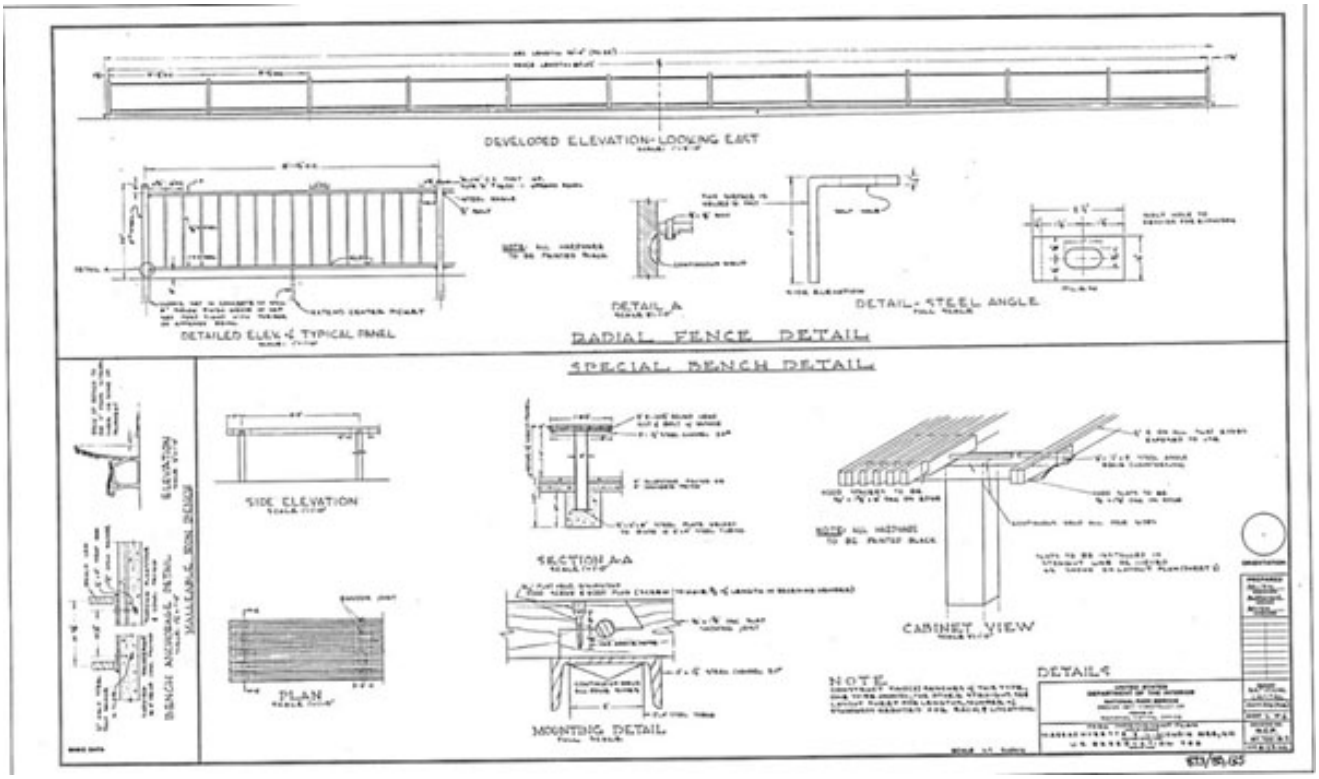
1962 landscape plan for Bryce Park, grading and utilities plan, as designed by NPS Landscape Architect William Belden. (Belden 1962b)



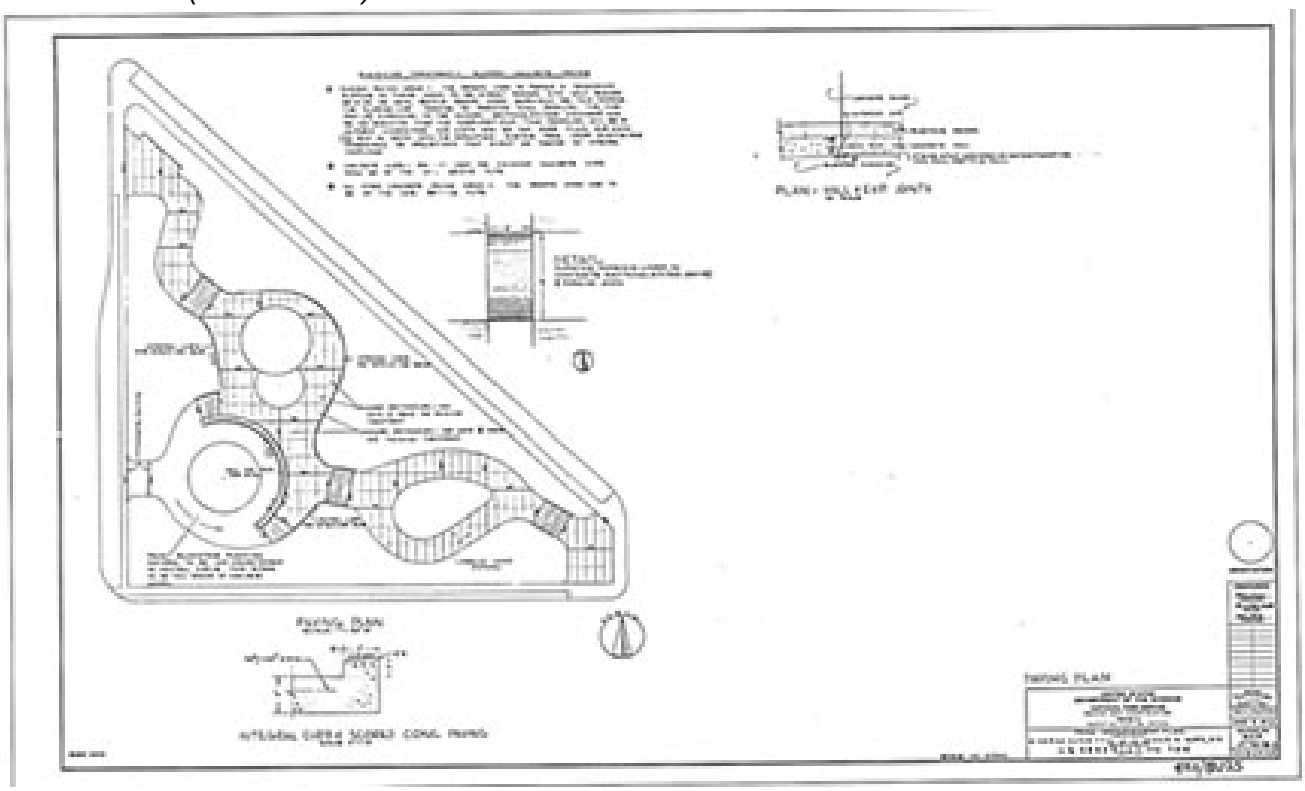
1962 landscape plan for Bryce Park, stair and wall details, as designed by NPS Landscape Architect William Belden. (Belden 1962c)



1962 landscape plan for Bryce Park, stair and wall details, as designed by NPS Landscape Architect William Belden. (Belden 1962d)



1962 landscape plan for Bryce Park, fence and bench details, as designed by NPS Landscape Architect William Belden. (Belden 1962e)



1962 landscape plan for Bryce Park, paving plan, as designed by NPS Landscape Architect William Belden. (Belden 1962f)

Commemorative plaque dedicated in 1965, photographed in 2018. (Photo by CLI author)

Improvements and Beautification: 1966 to 1968

Although it was dedicated as late as 1965, the creation of Bryce Park coincided with a movement—advocated by the First Lady, Lady Bird Johnson—to beautify American parks and streetscapes. Concerned that major new development, increased traffic congestion, and deteriorating downtown areas were marring the nation's most scenic streets and byways, and affecting the natural environment, Lady Bird Johnson undertook a campaign to restore beauty to blighted areas, as a means to improve the urban condition. Beginning in the nation's capital, Lady Bird Johnson's Beautification Program extended from 1965 (the year that Bryce Park was dedicated) to 1969. It was a two-part project, focused on improving the appearance of Washington's most heavily touristed areas, while simultaneously addressing the deteriorated condition of parks and streetscapes in neighborhoods throughout the city (Gould 1999: 67). A quote from the First Lady sums up the overall approach to improvements undertaken as part of the program: "Where flowers bloom, so does hope." (For more on Lady Bird Johnson's Beautification Program, see the Small Parks Cultural Landscape Overview.)

As a park that had only just been designed and planted, Bryce Park did not fit the same profile as many other small parks within the beautification program. However, Lady Bird Johnson's advocacy for neighborhood parks such as Bryce Park—and her endorsement for flowering landscapes in particular—likely contributed to the planting improvements that were made soon after Bryce Park's dedication ceremony. Bryce Park had seasonal plantings, with park staff routinely changing the content of the planting beds. Between 1967 and 1969, additional flowering plants were introduced in the park's vegetation plans, including: 800 bulbs of Ibis—single early tulips; 10,000 bulbs of White Triumphator—lily-flowered tulips; 250 white cascade petunias; 250 red ricard geraniums; 225 roll-call mums; 500 snapdragons; 225 Neptune mums; 800 bulbs of Bellona—single early tulips; and 800 bulbs for Bondstreet—late cottage tulips (National Park Service, Design & Construction 1967; National Park Service 1968; National Capital Parks 1967a; National Capital Parks 1967b; National Capital Parks 1968).

In 1968, a little leaf linden tree was planted on the southwest terrace and dedicated with a bronze plaque honoring Mrs. James H. Rowe, Jr. for her service as chairman of the National Capital Planning Commission from 1961 to 1968 (EBW/U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service 1968). Both the tree and the plaque, set into a cast concrete base, remain in place on the site today.

Commemorative plaque dedicated in 1968, photographed in 2019. (Photo by CLI author)

Late Twentieth Century and Current: 1969 to Present

Planting plans and aerial photographs from the last 50 years, as well as fieldwork conducted in 2018 and 2019, indicate few changes to the overall landscape of Bryce Park since the beautification improvements. Belden's original design, including the spatial organization of circulation features and topography defining four terraces stepping down through the park, remain extant and legible in the park today.

There have been minor alterations to the vegetation plan since the park's period of significance (1962 -1968), as some species of plants and several individual trees have been removed or replaced. (See the appendix for diagrams of these changes to individual plantings.) In particular, the plant list for the central terrace has changed since 1968; it currently features Aztec marigold (Tagetes erecta) blooms. A limited number of saucer magnolia trees (Magnolia soulangeana) have been removed. In several other locations on the site, including the northwest and southeast corners, new plantings of Christmas Cheer Azalea (Rhododendron kurume 'Christmas Cheer') have been added, supplementing the azaleas that were featured in Belden's original landscape design. Lastly, in the semi-circular planting bed that caps the bluestone retaining wall, several different species of plants have encroached on the English ivy (Hedera helix) that Belden originally stipulated.

In 1980, the National Park Service drew up plans for handrails on the staircases to address accessibility concerns; however, these handrails are not in place on the site today and were likely never installed (De Haven 1980). A limited number of small-scale features, including at least one of the park's two trash cans as well as the water fountain, have been replaced. Otherwise, the site's significant features have remained unchanged. The decades since the dedication ceremony in 1965 and its initial improvements in 1968 have ushered in few alterations to the original design of the recreational and cultural landscape at Bryce Park.

General site conditions, southwest terrace, photographed in March 2019. (Photo by CLI author)

Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

Periods of Significance: 1962-1968

This section provides an evaluation of the physical integrity of the Bryce Park Cultural Landscape characteristics and features present during the period of significance with the existing conditions. Landscape characteristics are the tangible and intangible aspects of a landscape that allow visitors to understand its cultural value. Collectively, they express the historic character and integrity of a landscape. Landscape characteristics give a property cultural importance and comprise the property's uniqueness. Each characteristic or feature is classified as contributing or non-contributing to the site's overall historic significance.

Landscape characteristics are comprised of landscape features. Landscape features are classified as contributing if they were present during the property's period of significance. Non-contributing features (those that were not present during the historical period) may be considered "compatible" when they fit within the physical context of the historical period and attempt to match the character of contributing elements in a way that is sensitive to the construction techniques, organizational methods or design strategies of the historic period. Incompatible features are those that are not harmonious with the quality of the cultural landscape and, through their existence, can lessen the historic character of a property. For those features that are listed as undetermined, further primary research, which is outside the scope of this CLI, is necessary to determine the feature's origination date.

Landscape characteristics identified for Bryce Park are: land use; topography; spatial organization; circulation; views and vistas; vegetation; and small-scale features.

This section also includes an evaluation of the landscape's integrity in accordance with the National Register criteria. Historic integrity, as defined by the National Register, is the authenticity of a property's identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the site's historic period. The National Register recognizes seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Several or all of these aspects must be present for a site to retain historic integrity. To be listed in the National Register, a property not only must be shown to have significance under one or more criteria, but must also retain integrity to its period or periods of significance.

Integrity
Summaries of landscape characteristics identified for Bryce Park are listed below.
Land Use
Land use refers to the principal activities conducted upon the landscape and how these uses organized, shaped, and formed the land. Historically, the Bryce Park cultural landscape was likely used for agricultural cultivation, and as the area around the site developed, passive woodland and green space. The creation of Bryce Park on the site during the period of significance marked the first formally-planned use of the site for passive recreation, introducing features that made the site suitable for resting on benches, and strolling around or through the park. Its current use as a small park is consistent with its use during the period of significance. Bryce Park cultural landscape retains integrity with respect to land use.

Topography
Topography refers to the three-dimensional configuration of the landscape surface, characterized by features such as slope, articulation, orientation, and elevation. Bryce Park's site has always been characterized by its steep slope. Its landscape design responds to that topography by incorporating stepped terraces and sloped pathways. The extant topography is consistent with those conditions from the period of significance, and is considered to be one of the cultural landscape's character-defining features. As such, the landscape's topography retains integrity.

Spatial Organization
A site's spatial organization refers to the three-dimensional organization of physical forms and visual associations in the landscape, including articulation of ground, and vertical and overhead planes that define and create spaces. Beginning in the early 20th century, the cultural landscape site was delineated by three perimeter streets (Wisconsin Avenue, Massachusetts Avenue, and Garfield Street), which created a triangular parcel. Circa 1956, 36th Place NW was extended through the site, truncating a small portion of the southeast corner of the site and creating the current boundaries of the quasi-triangular park. Prior to the period of significance, the triangular site was generally organized as one—at most, two—tracts; the introduction of a gas station on the northern section of the site circa 1921 marked the first time the site was spatially subdivided. When the park was designed and constructed beginning in 1962, the landscape design reunited the two portions of the site into one cohesive landscape. This design addressed the parcel's topography by organizing the interior of the site around a series of stepped terraces, linked by staircases and curvilinear paths that link the park's perimeter streets. This design, and its inherent spatial organization, is consistent with the current conditions of the park. The Bryce Park cultural landscape retains integrity of spatial organization.

Circulation
Circulation is defined by the spaces, features, and applied material finishes that constitute systems of movement in a landscape. For much of its evolution as a cultural landscape, Bryce Park's circulation features were limited to the streets that bound the quasi-triangular site, as they were platted and eventually paved in the 19th and early 20th centuries for use as vehicular circulation. Within the site, documented circulation features were limited until the early 20th century, when a gas station parking area was created in the northern half of the site circa 1921. The parking area was irregularly enlarged towards Massachusetts and Wisconsin Avenues over the next few decades; it was not accompanied by any other formal circulation features within the site. When the park was created and initially improved in 1962-1968, the landscape emphasized the circulation features and function of the small park, deploying curvilinear Bluestone and scored concrete paths to frame planting beds and offer pass-through connections between the perimeter streets. These circulation features remain in place, consistent with the period of significance. The Bryce Park cultural landscape retains integrity of circulation.

Views and Vistas

Views and vistas are defined as the prospect afforded by a range of vision in the landscape, conferred by the composition of other landscape characteristics and associated features. Historically, the Bryce Park site was known for its views toward Rock Creek and downtown Washington, D.C., to the south and east of the cultural landscape. In 1913, British Ambassador James Bryce (for whom the park is named) gave a speech that specifically highlighted the views from this site toward the Capitol, the Library of Congress and various other agency buildings along Pennsylvania Avenue, and to the Potomac River beyond. These views have been lost to intervening development and the growth of vegetation within and beyond the site. However, the site is also characterized by its views toward Washington National Cathedral, north of the site, which was constructed over the course of several decades in the 20th century; the dedication of its tower in 1964 coincided with the construction of Bryce Park during the period of significance, and marked the most significant vista for the small park. This vantage is still available from the cultural landscape, and contributes to its significance as the Bryce Park cultural landscape retains its integrity of views and vistas.

Vegetation
Vegetation features are characterized by the deciduous and evergreen trees, shrubs, vines, ground covers and herbaceous plants, and plant communities, whether indigenous or introduced in the landscape. Although minor alterations have been made to individual plantings since the period of significance, William Belden's original landscape design and vegetative material palette are still legible today. The cultural landscape retains its overall vegetation composition, as defined by the layout of the planting beds, the selection of tree/shrub species to serve as focal points on each terrace, and the use of saucer magnolia trees (Magnolia soulangeana) to define the perimeter of the walkways/terraces throughout the site. Bryce Park retains integrity with respect to vegetation.

Small Scale Features
Small-scale features are the elements that provide detail and diversity, combined with function and aesthetics to a landscape. Historically, documented small-scale features included the hydraulic lifts, gas pump, and other features associated with the gas station that was on the site c. 1921- c. 1963. Extant small-scale features at Bryce Park include the benches, light poles, fencing, retaining wall, and bronze commemorative plaque specified in William Belden's original landscape design. These features are therefore with the period of significance, and the Bryce Park cultural landscape retains integrity of small-scale features.

THE SEVEN ASPECTS OF INTEGRITY
Location
The location aspect of integrity involves the place where the landscape was constructed. Bryce Park has been consistent footprint and position since its original construction as a small park between 1962-1968. Thus, the landscape retains integrity of location to the period of significance.

Design
Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a cultural landscape or historic property. For Bryce Park, the aspect of design integrity is defined in relation to William Belden's original plan for the small park during the period of significance. The primary features of Belden's design remain intact and legible in the cultural landscape today, including the historic design of the site's four terraces, the arrangement of the planting beds and walkways to create focal points within the design, and the use of changing flowering material to define the experience of walking through the small park. These features all remain intact in the current cultural landscape. Bryce Park retains integrity with respect to design.

Setting
Setting is the physical environment of a cultural landscape or historic property. When Bryce Park was constructed as a small park during the period of significance, it was designed to serve the residential and institutional context of northwest Washington, DC. The current setting of Bryce Park closely resembles the character and combination of uses that were present during the period of significance. The setting of the cultural landscape therefore retains integrity.

Material
Materials are the physical elements of a particular period, including construction materials, paving, plants and other landscape features. For Bryce Park, the material palette of the cultural landscape historically included hardscaped paving (including Pennsylvania bluestone and scored concrete), structural materials in the form of

the retaining wall (with a Pennsylvania bluestone veneer and cap), and plant materials in the form of trees, shrubs, and ground cover. In particular, the typical vegetative materials included: little leaf linden trees (Tilia cordata), saucer magnolias (Magnolia soulangeana), flowering dogwoods, and two types of azalea shrubs (Rhododendron kurume 'Christmas Cheer' and Rhododendron mucronatum 'Delaware Valley'). These materials are all consistent and extant on the site today. Thus, the Bryce Park cultural landscape retains integrity of materials.

Workmanship
Workmanship includes the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular period. At Bryce Park, the aspect of workmanship is most evident in the artisanship of the hardscaped features (including the terraces, walkways, and Pennsylvania bluestone retaining wall) and the landscape maintenance practices. The techniques that crafted and cared for these features are consistent with the current conditions at the site. As a result, the cultural landscape retains integrity of workmanship to the period of significance.

Feeling
Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period. As the essential landscape and layout designed by William Belden for the National Park Service remains extant, historic feeling from the period of significance has been preserved. The cultural landscape continues to express its aesthetic and experience as a small park within an urban context, consistent with its historic condition. It therefore retains integrity with respect to feeling.

Association
Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. Bryce Park has been associated with the National Park Service since its design and construction during the period of significance. Moreover, Bryce Park continues to be associated with its historic use (as a small park in an urban context) and users (serving local residents, businesses, and institutional neighbors) since its development as a park. Bryce Park thus retains integrity of association.

Landscape Characteristics and Features
This section presents an analysis of landscape characteristics and their associated features and corresponding List of Classified Structures names and numbers, if applicable. It also includes an evaluation of whether the feature contributes to the property's National Register eligibility for the historic period (1962-1968), contributes to the property's historic character, or if it is noncontributing, undetermined, or managed as a cultural resource.

Landscape Characteristic:

HISTORIC

Little is known about the cultural landscape's land use before the 19th century. However, under English settlement in the 17th and 18th centuries, the area was generally characterized by tobacco plantations and agricultural use. The first known dwelling in the area—marking the encroachment of settlement—was in 1714, when the will of a man named Thomas Fletcher mentioned a house that was located southeast of the cultural landscape. The site likely remained rural and in agricultural use throughout the 19th century. An 1861 map indicates that the cultural landscape was characterized by limited vegetation—perhaps tobacco plantings or orchards, given the map's symbology and the regional context—suggesting the site was in confirmed agricultural use by this time.

Subsequent maps and photographs indicate an evolution in vegetation patterns at the site in the late 19th and early 20th centuries: the cultural landscape was relatively clear-cut of vegetation as of 1884, and by 1910, it was overgrown with trees and brush. This suggests that the site was no longer in agricultural use by this time. Instead, it seems to have been a passive suburban landscape in an otherwise developing area of Washington, D.C.

By 1921, when a gas station was constructed at the intersection of Wisconsin Avenue and Massachusetts Avenue, the northern portion of the site was in commercial use for the first time. The southern portion of the site remained relatively untouched as passive, wooded green space. In the ensuing decades, this gas station remained in place and was expanded somewhat, although the southern section of the triangular parcel remained relatively undeveloped and densely wooded.

By 1958, the National Park Service acquired the entire site. The agency prepared for its conversion to passive recreational use, beginning with the demolition of the gas station at some point between 1961 and 1963. NPS landscape architect William Belden designed the initial plans for the park in 1962, although he continued to develop additional plans for other site features (including lighting and seating fixtures) until the dedication ceremony in 1965. Construction for the park began in 1963, and by 1965, the park was complete and in recreational use.

A plaque in memory of James Bryce was placed at the site during its 1965 dedication ceremony to memorialize Bryce's speech that extolled the character of this site and its views toward downtown Washington, DC. A second bronze plaque was installed in 1968 alongside the little leaf linden tree on the southwest terrace, honoring the leadership of Mrs. James H. Rowe, Jr. as the chairman of the National Capital Planning Commission from 1961 to 1968.) These plaques gave the site a commemorative function as well. Bryce Park has remained a public park since it officially opened in 1965, and it retains its commemorative name and its two commemorative plaques.

EXISTING CONDITION

The use and purpose of the Bryce Park cultural landscape has not changed since the period of significance, when the park was designed by William Belden of the National Park Service. It remains in use as a passive green space within an urban context. Its commemorative name, and the plaques dedicated to James Bryce and Mrs. James H. Rowe, Jr., remain in place at the site.

EVALUATION

The site's passive recreational and commemorative uses have not changed since the park was dedicated in 1965. As a result, the site retains integrity of land use to the period of significance.

Character-defining Features:

Feature: Passive recreational use as a small park with pass-through design

Feature Identification Number: 186621

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Commemorative use as tribute to James Bryce (honored via the park's name and a bronze plaque on site)

Feature Identification Number: 186622

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Commemorative use as tribute to Mrs. James H. Rowe, Jr. (honored via a bronze plaque on site)

Feature Identification Number: 186623

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:

Bronze plaques were installed at Bryce Park during the period of significance, dedicated to James Bryce (top) and Mrs. James K. Rowe Jr. (bottom). These plaques remain in place as of 2019, and give the cultural landscape a commemorative land use, in addition to its recreational use as a small park. (Photos by the CLI author, November 2018 and March 2019)

HISTORIC
Bryce Park's topography has remained relatively consistent through history, sloping down from its highest elevations on the western perimeter of the cultural landscape (approximately 365 feet above sea level) to its lowest elevation at the southeast corner of the site (approx. 347 feet above sea level). The cultural landscape's topography can be attributed in part to its location in northwest Washington, which is characterized by its higher elevations relative to the city center and the capital's natural features such as the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers. Because of this location, the cultural landscape's topography is largely responsible for the vistas available from the site (which are evaluated below). It was this landscape condition that James Bryce remarked upon in 1913.

Slight topographical changes were made in the early 20th century, when the northwest corner was graded circa 1921 to create a new gas station with an associated parking area. However, a survey conducted in 1961 (in preparation for the design of the park) confirms that the site's topography was consistent with earlier eras, with the highest elevation on the western edge of the triangular site, and the lowest point in the southeast corner. Within the boundaries of the cultural landscape, the elevation dropped approximately 18 feet from the western edge to the southeastern corner of the site.

The construction and initial improvement of the park between 1963 and 1968 resulted in other minor adjustments to the cultural landscape's topography, but the design of the park generally relied on and retained the site's existing sloping topography. In response to the site's topography, the landscape design graded four terraces at different elevations. (The two highest terraces share the same approximate elevation.) The terraces step down from west to east, mirroring the historic topographical slope of the site. The two highest terraces (approximately 365 feet above sea level) are on the western edge of the cultural landscape, along Wisconsin Avenue. They step down and meet at a central terrace (359 feet above sea level), in the center of the site. The lowest-grade terrace (at approximately 347 feet above sea level) is in the southeast corner of the site. The difference in grade between the highest terrace and the lowest terrace is an estimated 18 feet.

EXISTING
The current topography of the Bryce Park cultural landscape is consistent with Belden's 1963 design for the park, with no known alterations to the site's grading or elevation. It retains the terraces, stepped down from west to east, that respond to the historic slope of the site. The highest elevation (365 feet above sea level) remains along the western perimeter of the cultural landscape, bordering Wisconsin Avenue. The lowest point on the site (347 feet above sea level) is still the southeastern corner of the cultural landscape, at the intersection of Garfield Street and 36th Place NW.

EVALUATION
The topography of Bryce Park has not changed since its original design and construction in 1962-1968, which marks the period of significance for the cultural landscape. The site, therefore, retains integrity of topography.

Character-defining Features:

Feature: Topography graded into four terraces on descending slope from west to east of site

Feature Identification Number: 186624

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:

The topography cultural landscape site includes a steep slope downward from the western boundary to the southeast. The high elevation of the northwest terrace is pictured in the top photograph, descending to the central terrace; the bottom photograph is taken from the southeast corner, looking northwest at the slope of the park landscape. (Photos by the CLI author, March 2019)

HISTORIC

Until the early 20th century, the Bryce Park cultural landscape is thought to have been generally organized as one tract, subsumed within larger parcels. Historically, it was associated with large tracts known as (in chronological sequence) the Rock of Dumbarton parcel; Pretty Prospects; the Weston estate; and Massachusetts Avenue Heights. In each of these cases, and over the course of several centuries, historic maps indicate that the Bryce Park site was located at the periphery of these larger tracts, with little to no spatial organization features to distinguish areas within the cultural landscape.

The 1861 Boschke map is the first known representation of the site's physical condition; it denotes vegetation throughout the site, with no other features (e.g. circulation or structures) to organize the landscape (Boschke 1861). By 1884, the vegetation was mostly gone, but once again, maps represent the site without any distinguishing spatial organization (Greene 1884). The current boundaries—inscribing a quasi-triangular site—were not in place and formalized until the early 20th century. In 1911, Captain E. E. Hayden purchased the cultural landscape site from the Massachusetts Avenue Heights Company; his purchase confirms that the site was not yet subdivided into smaller tracts (although it is unclear how long he owned the property).

The construction of a filling station on the site circa 1921 marks the first major alteration to the cultural landscape's spatial organization. The presence of the gas station on the northern half of the site delineated the tract between a developed, commercial use on the northern half of the cultural

landscape, and an undeveloped, wooded area on the southern half of the site. This remained the spatial organization for the next four decades, consistent even as the gas station was expanded at some point between 1934 and 1956. (Those years mark the creation of two different site surveys, bracketing the years during which the gas station was enlarged.)

By 1959, the National Park Service had acquired the property, and at some point between 1961 and 1963, the NPS demolished the gas station in preparation for the creation of a public park—restoring the cultural landscape to a singular, unified spatial composition. William Belden's 1962 landscape design for the cultural landscape organized the park around four curvilinear terraces, in response to the site's steep, 18' topographical descent from west to east. (See the appendix for Belden's full drawing package.)
As the two highest terraces (at approximately 365 feet above sea level), the northwest and southwest terraces are located on the western portion of the cultural landscape, along Wisconsin Avenue. Located at the northwest and southwest corners of the park, these terraces are separated by a grassy lawn but occupy the same relative elevation on the site. Beginning at the sidewalk along Wisconsin Avenue, the northwest terrace occupies an irregular polygonal footprint (covering an area of approximately 110 square feet) before seguing to the curving concrete path. The southwest terrace is roughly circular in shape, with an approximate radius of 31 feet. This terrace uses Pennsylvania bluestone, whereas the rest of the site is organized based on 5'x10' scored concrete paving. The northwest terrace steps down via a broad concrete staircase, and the southwest terrace steps down via two concrete staircases, so that they meet in the center of the site on the central terrace.

The central terrace is located at approximately 359 feet above sea level. The grading of the terraces relied on a curvilinear retaining wall between the southwest and central terraces. The stone wall featured a bluestone veneer on its exposed surface, facing east. The core area of the central terrace occupies a quasi-circular footprint (reinforced by the overlapping round planting beds at its center). The approximate radius of this terrace is 39 feet. It steps down to the lowest terrace via another concrete staircase.

The lowest-grade terrace is in the southeast corner of the site, at approximately 347 feet above sea level. It is teardrop-shaped, with an approximate radius of 36 feet.

The terraces are connected by parabolic walkways and broad concrete staircases, forming a curving composition of plateaus and slopes, with a quasi-triangular circulation footprint that mirrors that of the overall parcel. These walkways vary in width from approximately 12' to approximately 49', comprised of 5'x10' scored concrete paving. The staircases throughout the site range have a width ranging from 10' to 13'2.4" with a standard tread. The spatial organization of Belden's design emphasized the links between the three corners of the site, offering meandering paths through the site as an alternative to the direct sidewalks along the perimeters of the cultural landscape—all while maintaining the pass-through function of an urban small park.

The walkways are lined by trees and planting beds throughout the site. However, that spatial relationship is also inverted on each terrace, as the walkways encircle a large planting bed:
• On the southwest terrace, the walkways define a circular planting bed (reinforced by the curving steel fence and bluestone retaining wall). The planting bed is at the center of the terrace.
• On the central terrace, the walkways encompass a large planting bed in the shape of two overlapping circles (the perimeter of the bed is shaped like a figure 8). The planting bed is located in the center of the terrace.
• On the southeast terrace, the walkways delineate a teardrop-shaped planting bed. The planting bed is at the center of the terrace.
This was the physical condition of the cultural landscape's spatial organization by the end of the period of significance (1962-1968). The spatial organization of the Bryce Park cultural landscape remained consistent in the decades after the dedication ceremony. There were no known alterations to the site's spatial organization in the late 20th or early 21st centuries.

EXISTING
The site's extant spatial organization is consistent with Belden's original landscape designs, treating the cultural landscape as one unified composition. It retains the assemblage of terraces and

walkways that frame the planting beds and link the three corners of the site in a curvilinear contrast to the bounding sidewalks.

EVALUATION
The spatial organization of the Bryce Park cultural landscape is consistent with composition during the period of significance. The site, therefore, retains integrity of spatial organization.

Character-defining Features:

Feature: Unified composition of the park landscape, occupying the full quasi-triangular parcel

Feature Identification Number: 186625

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Terraced spatial arrangement in response to the site's steep sloping topography

Feature Identification Number: 186626

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Proximity/accessibility of Bryce Park to surrounding public streets and roads

Feature Identification Number: 186627

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:

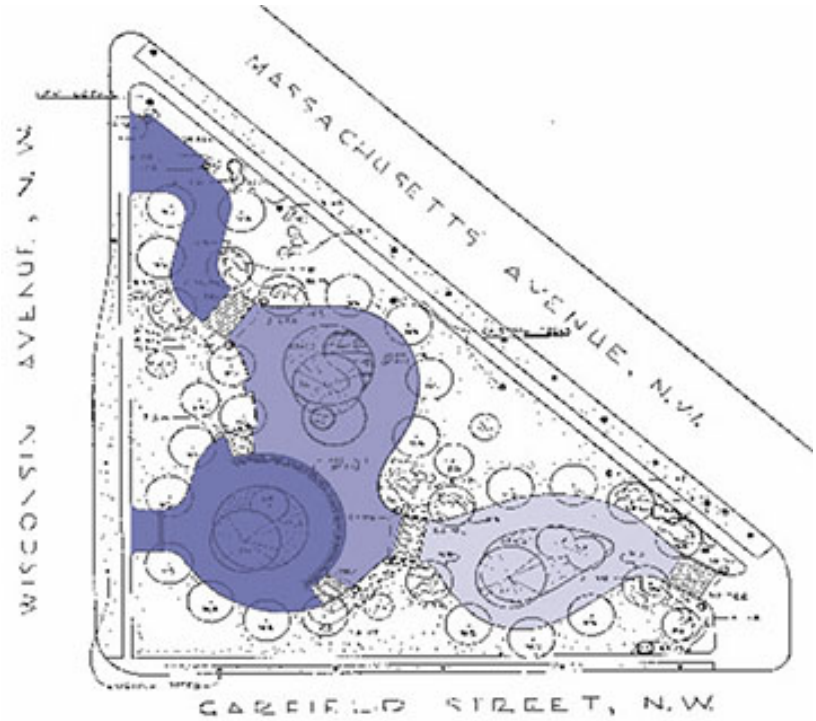


Diagram of the four terraces that organize the cultural landscape's spatial arrangement, from the highest-elevation terraces (dark blue) to the central terrace, to the lowest-elevation terrace (light blue). Diagram overlaid on the 1963 landscape plan for Bryce Park, as designed by NPS Landscape Architect William Belden. (Belden 1963)

HISTORIC
The first known circulation features within the cultural landscape boundaries were documented in the early 20th century. Before that time, the site may have had informal paths, but they were not indicated on 19th century maps. The four roads that define the perimeter of the cultural landscape are: Wisconsin Avenue (running north-south), Massachusetts Avenue (northwest-southeast), 36th Place NW (north-south), and Garfield Street (east-west). These perimeter streets were introduced and formalized at different points, with Wisconsin Avenue as the oldest of the four and 36th Place NW the most recent. Wisconsin Avenue has existed for several centuries, first as a trail, then a trade route, and eventually a road. It has had various names historically, including the Tennallytown or Tenleytown Road, and the Georgetown and Rockville Road/Turnpike. Massachusetts Avenue NW was constructed circa 1908. Garfield Street was formalized soon after, and 36th Place NW was extended through the site circa 1956.

Wisconsin Avenue was widened in 1915-16, beginning at the southwest corner of the cultural landscape and extending north. As part of that project, an 8-foot sidewalk and an 18-foot parking lane were established on both sides of Wisconsin Avenue, within or immediately adjacent to the cultural landscape boundaries. Garfield Street was also widened in 1916 (this may have also marked the first time that Garfield Street was paved), trimming the boundaries of the eventual park site. With the exception of these projects that affected circulation features at the perimeter of the cultural landscape, the first known circulation feature within the site boundaries was introduced circa 1921, when a gas station was constructed on the northern portion of the site and included a broad parking area. In the early years of this station's presence, the parking area was informal, irregular, and

unpaved. A photograph of the gas station shows a track or road running presumably southwest-northeast behind the station. Given the size of the parcel, and the presumed position of the photographer, this was likely an informal, unpaved path or driveway through the site.

Between 1921 and 1933, two islands with fuel pumps were installed in front of the station shed, and two hydraulic lifts were inserted immediately south of the station (National Photo Company 1921; Heaton and Client Amoco Oil Company 1933). The entrance curb cuts remained consistent on Massachusetts Avenue and Wisconsin Avenue. The station and its parking area remained in place on the northern portion of the site through the 1950s. In 1957, an aerial photograph hints at the presence of informal paths of desire through the southern half of the site, crossing between Massachusetts Avenue and Garfield Street below the tree cover of mature vegetation. However, the resolution of the photograph is not sufficient to confirm the presence of these paths. That same year, a surveyor documented the site in preparation for its acquisition by the National Park Service; no circulation features were documented on that site plan south of the gas station parking area. The only other circulation features in place on the cultural landscape by this time included concrete walkways around the perimeter of the site, separating the parcel from surrounding streets.

Between 1959 and 1961, the gas station and parking area were demolished to make way for a park on the site. William Belden's 1962 design for Bryce Park gave prominence to the landscape's circulation features, using them in part to address the site's steep topography. First and foremost, Belden's design addressed the site's slope by grading the park into four paved terraces. Each of these terraces functioned as a focal point within the circulation pattern, but the four terraces also segued seamlessly into walkways that progressed through the site and created the pass-through function of the park.

The two highest terraces (at approximately 365 feet above sea level) were located on the western edge, along Wisconsin Avenue. Located at the northwest and southwest corners of the park, these terraces were separated by a grassy lawn but occupied the same relative elevation on the site.
1. Beginning at the sidewalk along Wisconsin Avenue, the northwest terrace occupied an irregular polygonal footprint (covering an area of approximately 110 square feet) before seguing to the curving concrete path. The northwest terrace was surfaced with scored concrete pavers laid out in a gridded pattern, in keeping with all other circulation features on the site other than the southwest terrace.
2. The southwest terrace was roughly circular in shape, with an approximate radius of 31 feet. It was surfaced with Pennsylvania bluestone paving laid out in an irregular pattern, concentric the central circle. Belden specified that this stone was to be the "full range of available color" (Belden 1962f).
3. The central terrace was located at approximately 359 feet above sea level. The grading of the terraces relied on a curvilinear retaining wall between the southwest and central terraces. The stonewall featured a bluestone veneer on its exposed surface, facing east. The core area of the central terrace occupied a quasi-circular footprint, reinforced by the walkways that encircled the overlapping round planting beds at the center of the terrace. The approximate radius of this terrace was 39 feet. It was surfaced with scored concrete pavers laid out in a gridded pattern.
4. The lowest-grade terrace was in the southeast corner of the site, at approximately 347 feet above sea level. It was teardrop-shaped, with an approximate radius of 36 feet. It was surfaced with scored concrete pavers laid out in a gridded pattern.

Based on Belden's plans, curvilinear paths connected the terraces. In effect, these parabolic walkways flared out around each terrace, encircling a focal point on each of the site's terraces before meeting again at each of the site's staircases. Based on this site design, the staircases serve as channeling circulation features, conducting pedestrians toward the next terrace (up or down). In this way, the landscape design's circulation features created a pass-through park, linking each of the boundary streets and making the recreational landscape into a useful link in the urban street pattern. This kind of "passing through" park had been recommended in 1916 by George Burnap, former landscape architect for DC's Office of Public Buildings and Grounds—a predecessor of the National Capital Region office of the National Park Service. In his book, Parks, Their Design, Equipment and Use¸ Burnap recommended a series of new treatments for the city's small parks to produce "walk-lines of practical use, recognizing both traffic requirements and the desirability of location for numerous park benches" (Burnap 1916: 9-13). (For more on Burnap and his tenets of landscape design, see "Commission of Fine Arts, the OPBG, and Implementation of the McMillan Plan: 1903-

1924," in the Small Parks Cultural Landscape Overview.) Belden's design for the circulation features at Bryce Park upheld these principles, adapting them to for the steep site at Bryce Park.

The design's four terraces were linked via broad concrete staircases, totaling six sets of steps. (See diagram below.) All six staircases were concrete, with deep treads (measuring 15") and shallow risers (5" tall). They were edged by low concrete curbs that were 2" tall and 4" wide.

Four of those staircases (A, B, C, and F in the diagram) were straight stairs.
• Staircase A was located in the northwest corner, linking the northwest terrace with the central terrace. It was designed with 11 steps.
• Staircase F was located in the southwest corner, connecting Wisconsin Avenue to the southwest terrace. It was the shortest staircase on the site, designed with just two steps.
• Staircase B was located in the southern half of the site, leading from the central terrace to the southeast terrace. It was designed with 10 steps.
• Staircase C was located in the southeast corner, linking the park's circulation features with the perimeter sidewalks at the intersection of Garfield Street, 36th Place NW, and Massachusetts Avenue NW. It was designed with 13 steps.
The remaining two staircases (D and E in the diagram) were slightly curved, hugging the radial retaining wall as they descended from the southwest terrace to the central terrace. Staircase D (with 12 steps) was slightly longer than Staircase E (which had 11 steps).

EXISTING
The extant circulation features at Bryce Park are consistent with Belden's design. The four terraces and six staircases remain in place in their original composition, and retain their materials (both Pennsylvania bluestone and scored concrete), workmanship, and design. The scored-concrete walkways that connect the terraces and staircases also remain intact.

No new circulation features have been introduced.

EVALUATION
The existing conditions at Bryce Park are consistent with William Belden's landscape design and the period of significance. The Bryce Park cultural landscape therefore retains integrity with respect to circulation.

Character-defining Features:

Feature: Northwest terrace, with scored-concrete paving in gridded pattern

Feature Identification Number: 186629

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Southwest terrace, with Pennsylvania bluestone paving in irregular pattern

Feature Identification Number: 186631

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Central terrace, with scored-concrete paving in gridded pattern

Feature Identification Number: 186632

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Southeast terrace, with scored-concrete paving in gridded pattern

Feature Identification Number: 186633

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Curvilinear walkways throughout site, with scored-concrete paths in gridded pattern

Feature Identification Number: 186634

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Staircase A, including broad concrete steps with shallow risers (5”), deep treads (15”), and concrete curbs (2” tall and 4” wide)

Feature Identification Number: 186635

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Staircase B, including broad concrete steps with shallow risers (5”), deep treads (15”), and concrete curbs (2” tall and 4” wide)

Feature Identification Number: 186636

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Staircase C, including broad concrete steps with shallow risers (5”), deep treads (15”), and concrete curbs (2” tall and 4” wide)

Feature Identification Number: 186637

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Staircase D, including broad concrete steps with shallow risers (5”), deep treads (15”), and concrete curbs (2” tall and 4” wide)

Feature Identification Number: 186638

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Staircase E, including broad concrete steps with shallow risers (5”), deep treads (15”), and concrete curbs (2” tall and 4” wide)

Feature Identification Number: 186639

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Staircase F, including broad concrete steps with shallow risers (5”), deep treads (15”), and concrete curbs (2” tall and 4” wide)

Feature Identification Number: 186640

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:

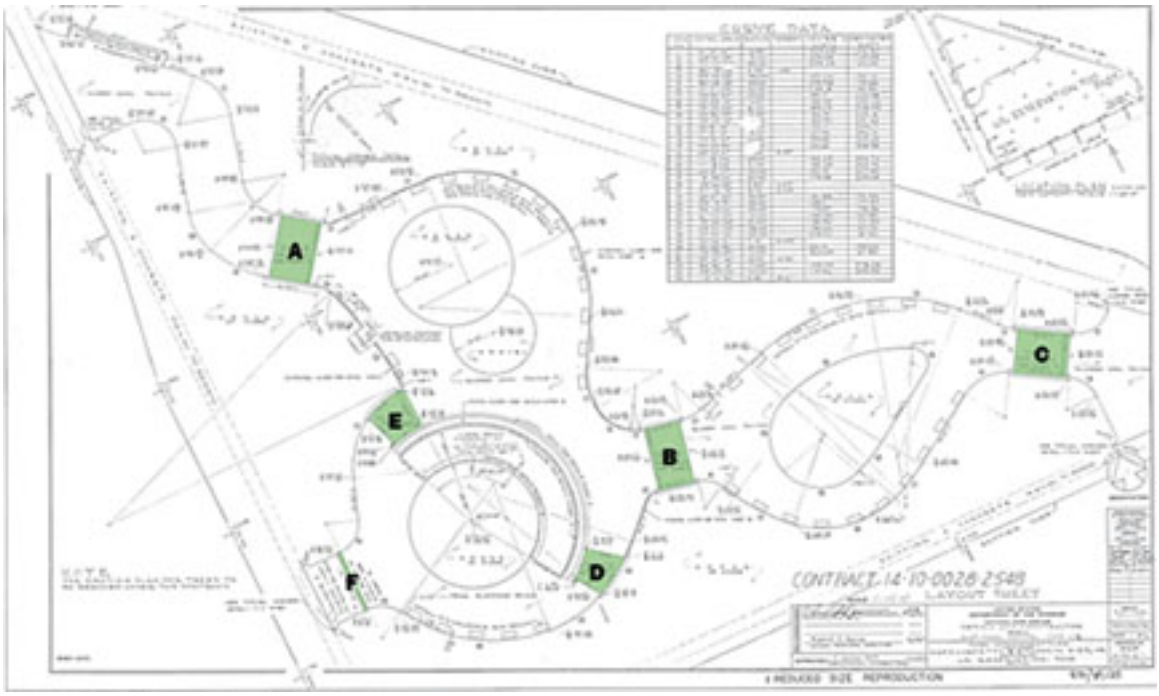


Diagram of the six staircases that link the cultural landscape’s circulation features. Diagram overlaid on the 1962 landscape plan for Bryce Park, as designed by NPS Landscape Architect William Belden. (Belden 1962a)

Typical circulation conditions at the Bryce Park cultural landscape include scored-concrete walkways and staircases on the northwest, central, and southeast terraces (left) and Pennsylvania bluestone paving on the southwest terrace (right). (Photos by the CLI author, March 2019)

HISTORIC
Given its relatively high elevation (at 347-365 feet above sea level), the Bryce Park cultural landscape likely had extensive views and vistas for several centuries of English settlement. Indeed, as of 1793, the site was part of a tract of land known as “Pretty Prospects,” a name that would seem to confirm the views available from this area of Washington County toward Rock Creek, the Potomac River, and the federal city, to the southeast.

As the site’s vegetation patterns changed over the course of the 19th century, the associated views and vistas likely shifted as well. Importantly, however, the vistas did not disappear altogether, thanks to the site’s location, topography, and elevation. Based on later accounts of the site, the cultural landscape retained its views toward the Potomac River through the 19th century. With the completion of the Capitol Dome in 1866, the site likely enjoyed views toward that landmark as well (according to subsequent descriptions of the views from this location.) The area immediately surrounding the cultural landscape saw more development in the mid- and late-19th century, and the views from the cultural landscape were increasingly characterized by vistas toward neighborhood landmarks to the north and west, in addition to views toward Rock Creek and the city core, to the east and south. By 1854, St. Alban’s Church was constructed to the north and was most likely visible from the cultural landscape.

The site’s views likely remained consistent for the latter half of the 19th century and the first decade of the 20th century. In 1913, British Ambassador James Bryce gave a speech in which he described this particular site and the views available therein, saying:
May I mention a point of view that is now threatened and perhaps almost gone? You all know the spot at which Wisconsin Avenue intersects Massachusetts Avenue, which has now been extended beyond that intersection into this country. At that point of intersection, just opposite where the Episcopal Cathedral is to stand, there is one spot commanding what is one of the most beautiful

general views of Washington. You look down upon the city, you see its most striking buildings—the Capitol, the Library, State, War, and Navy Department, and the Postoffice [sic] and other high buildings along Pennsylvania Avenue—and beyond them you see the great silvery flood of the Potomac and the soft lines fading away in a dim outline in the far southeast. It is a delightful and inspiring view. [emphasis added] (The Washington Herald, September 7, 1913: 8).
Bryce's eyewitness account confirms the vistas available from the cultural landscape toward the south and east, as of the early 20th century. The condition of views to the north and west were unknown during this time, although it can be assumed that St. Albans remained visible.

At some point in the decade after Bryce's speech (certainly by 1921), a gas station was constructed on the northern portion of the site. This alteration, which relied on the removal of some vegetation and the grading of a driving/parking area for the station shed and pump, likely made additional views possible from the site, as it removed some of the natural obstructions.

Substantial portions of the Washington National Cathedral (mentioned in Bryce's speech and located north of the cultural landscape) were complete by 1932 (although construction continued until the 1970s). Thus, as the 20th century progressed, the cultural landscape enjoyed views toward that landmark immediately north-northeast of the site. The cathedral tower was not completed until 1964. Its dedication ceremony coincided with the construction of the park, so that one of the most significant vistas from the new Bryce Park was toward the National Cathedral.

By the time Bryce Park was completed, most of the site's historic views toward the south and east were obscured by mid-20th century development and the growth of the surrounding tree line. In their place, Belden's design for the park ensured views toward the surrounding neighborhood context, including the large historic apartment houses along Wisconsin Avenue (e.g. Alban Towers) and the rowhouse-lined blocks across Garfield Street. These views toward the surrounding residential context reinforced Bryce Park's status and use as a small park in service to its immediate neighbors.

The most significant view, however, was the vista toward the Washington National Cathedral. Although Belden's plans do not make specific mention of significant vistas, his design did implicitly retain the vantage toward the National Cathedral as a view for the cultural landscape. The new park enjoyed views toward its other institutional neighbors as well, including St. Alban's School to the north (directly across Massachusetts Avenue) and St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral to the east. The latter was completed in 1955 and visible most prominently from the park's southeast terrace.

Belden's design for the park—more specifically, the site's topography, vegetation, and circulation design—also framed views within the site. These internal vistas took advantage of the site's features to direct the eye toward the center point of each terrace, creating focal points out of: the steel-frame benches on the northwest terrace; the little leaf linden tree on the southwest terrace; the planting bed on the central terrace; and the ring of benches and planting bed on the southeast terrace. Connecting these focal points, the walkways and their perimeter vegetation reinforce the interior sightlines of the park, shepherding the visitor from one terrace to another and guiding the visitor's eye in the process.

EXISTING
The site's original historic views toward the city core and the Potomac River are obscured today by later development and mature vegetation. Instead, the defining view from Bryce Park is of the Washington National Cathedral—in particular, its prominent tower. This view is available in all seasons from various points in the site (rising above the vegetation on and outside of the park), including the northwest, southwest, and central terraces. Other vistas, looking outward from the park, include the prominent apartment buildings along Wisconsin Avenue (e.g. Alban Towers), and the view from the southeast corner toward St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral.

The internal vistas that were embedded in Belden's design remain largely intact, retaining the same focal points as the historic views that existed during the period of significance. Although some of the vegetation features within the planting beds have been altered, the focal points at the center of each terrace remain consistent, including: the steel-frame benches on the northwest terrace; the little leaf linden tree on the southwest terrace; the planting bed on the central terrace; and the ring of benches

and planting bed on the southeast terrace. The walkways and their perimeter vegetation continue to reinforce the interior sightlines of the park, consistent with the conditions during the period of significance.

EVALUATION

The Bryce Park cultural landscape retains views consistent with the period of significance. The development of the city resulted in the loss of some of the historic views that were available before the park was constructed (including the views named by James Bryce in 1913). However, these losses do not diminish the vistas that were implicitly accounted for in William Belden's landscape plan, including the views toward: the Washington National Cathedral; St. Alban's School; the apartment buildings on Wisconsin Avenue; St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral; and the residential blocks on Garfield Street. As a result, the Bryce Park cultural landscape retains integrity of views and vistas.

Character-defining Features:

Feature: View of Washington National Cathedral

Feature Identification Number: 186641

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: View of St. Alban's School campus

Feature Identification Number: 186642

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: View of St. Sophia Greek Orthodox Cathedral

Feature Identification Number: 186643

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: View of Garfield Street residences

Feature Identification Number: 186644

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: View of historic Wisconsin Avenue apartment buildings (including Alban Towers)

Feature Identification Number: 186645

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Internal vistas of each terrace, as framed by the cultural landscape's topography, vegetation, and circulation design

Feature Identification Number: 186646

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:

Bryce Park features views to the Washington National Cathedral, outside the boundaries of the cultural landscape. (Photo by CLI author, March 2019)

Bryce Park features views to Alban Towers on Wisconsin Avenue, outside the boundaries of the cultural landscape. (Photo by CLI author, March 2019)

Bryce Park features views to the St. Alban's School, outside the boundaries of the cultural landscape. (Photo by CLI author, March 2019)

Within the site, the layout of the circulation and vegetation features, in relation to the topography, frames internal vistas between terraces. (Photo by CLI author)

HISTORIC

In the centuries before it was converted into a small park, the Bryce Park cultural landscape was historically characterized by its rural context and likely agricultural use—a reflection of its vegetation patterns in historic accounts and maps. In 1860, the Boschke map indicate limited vegetation on the site—the specific crops cannot be confirmed, but may have been tobacco plantings or orchards, given the map symbology and the regional context. By 1884, the site was relatively clear-cut of vegetation (or at least mature trees). Instead, its vegetation was likely characterized by ground cover and brush at the turn of the 20th century.

In 1910, photographs of the cultural landscape indicate that the site was rather overgrown with brush and trees. (The newspaper reproductions are not of sufficient quality to determine specific types or species of vegetation.) When a gas station was constructed on the site circa 1921, the area around the station was cleared of trees and brush to create a dirt parking area. The site's vegetation was otherwise characterized at this time by low brush and tree stands around the southern and western edges of the site. (The condition on the northern edge of the site, along Massachusetts Avenue, was not documented.)

At some point between 1934 and 1956 (the years that two different site surveys were conducted), the gas station was expanded, clearing additional vegetation to make way for an enlarged parking area and additional pumps. By the time the National Park Service acquired the site in 1956-1958, the southern half of the site (outside the gas station boundaries) was overgrown with mature trees (including elms) and ground cover. There was no formal planting pattern at this time.

Vegetation as of 1962 (Start of cultural landscape's period of significance)
When the site was graded for a park and laid out with four terraces, William Belden's 1962 design for the landscape featured several planting beds (framed by curvilinear paths), located on and between the terraces. The areas not covered by paving or planting beds were left as grass and were generally free of shade.

• On the northwest terrace, the planting bed was long and linear along the north side of the terrace's walkway, separating the terrace from the sidewalk along Massachusetts Avenue. The earliest plans called for this bed to include Chinese holly trees (Ilex cornuta), Christmas Cheer and Delaware Valley azaleas (Rhododendron kurume 'Christmas Cheer' and Rhododendron mucronatum 'Delaware Valley'), and spreading English yew (Taxus baccata 'repandens').
• On the southwest terrace, the primary planting bed was round with grassy ground cover. A little leaf linden tree (Tilia cordata) was paired with two flowering dogwoods (Cornua florida) on the earliest plans, but the little leaf linden tree was not actually planted until 1968. A second planting bed capped the semi-circular bluestone retaining wall; it was designed to host English ivy (Hedera helix) as ground cover.
• On the central terrace, the planting bed occupied a figure-8 footprint, with a large circle of grass overlapping with a smaller circle of gravel.
• On the southeast terrace, the planting bed was designed in the shape of a teardrop. Within that planting area, the vegetation echoed the plantings on the southwest terrace, with a little leaf linden tree (Tilia cordata) paired with two flowering dogwoods (Cornua florida).
• In addition to the primary planting beds at the center of each terrace, secondary planting beds were typical along the staircases, marking the changes in grade and the points of convergence in the landscape.

The 1962 landscape plans for Bryce Park removed some pre-existing trees and inserted saucer magnolia trees (Magnolia soulangeana), flowering dogwoods (Cornus florida), and Japanese red pines (Pinus densiflora 'umbraculifera'), little leaf linden trees (Tilia cordata), and Chinese holly trees (Ilex cornuta). Compositionally, the magnolia trees were used to frame the walkways throughout the site, lining the paths on each terrace and providing shade along the perimeter of the walkways. The flowering dogwoods, Japanese red pines, and little leaf linden trees were focal points in the center of the planting beds on the southwest, central, and southeast terraces, providing shade from the center of their planting beds.

Shrubs were planted along the walkways and most commonly featured at the staircase junctures. They included Burkwood viburnum (Viburnum burwoodi), Doublefile Viburnum (Viburnum tomentosum), and Christmas Cheer and Delaware Valley azaleas (Rhododendron kurume 'Christmas

Cheer' and Rhododendron mucronatum 'Delaware Valley').

Vegetation as of 1963
The vegetation plan continued to be refined as construction on Bryce Park progressed. By 1963, the plans called for the addition of three Franklinia shrubs (Franklinia altamaha), located by staircases A, B, and C. In addition, the revised plans noted the deletion of 3 glossy privets (Ligustrum lucidum) and 1 flowering dogwood (Cornua florida). (The location of these changes is not noted; the use of "deletion" on the plans may mean these were never actually planted.)

On the central terrace, the figure-8 planting bed was now further distinguished. Within the larger circle, the plantings were separated between grass and ground cover along a line reminiscent of a yin-yang. The smaller circle bed now featured a little leaf linden tree (Tilia cordata) and a Japanese red pine (Pinus densiflora 'umbraculifera'). It is unclear whether these plantings retained or replaced the gravel filler specified in the 1962 drawings.

Vegetation as of 1965
By 1965 (when the park was dedicated), the park's planting list specified the use of General Eisenhower tulips (Tulipa 'General Eisenhower'), blue Verbena sparlite (possibly Verbena hastata), and purple waters mums (Chrysanthemum morifolium) in the central terrace's round planting bed—specifically, within the larger circle of the figure-8 planting bed. These new plantings would have occupied one-half of the yin-yang planting bed on the central terrace; the other half of the yin-yang remained grass. It is unclear if the smaller circle was gravel or grass by this time.

Vegetation as of 1966
Although the dedication occurred in 1965, the creation of Bryce Park coincided with the Beautification Program- an initiative advocated by Lady Bird Johnson, First Lady of the United States, to improve the urban environment. The effort focused on introducing plant materials and hardscapes to elevate the urban condition. At Bryce Park, these beautification efforts resulted in minor alterations to the vegetation plan in the years immediately following the park's dedication ceremony.

In 1966, one year after the park was dedicated, the plantings on the central terrace were replaced: the beds of General Eisenhower tulips, blue Verbena sparlite and purple water mums were rehabilitated or replanted with Coltness orange. These shrubs were planted in the same portion of the yin-yang bed on the central terrace as the tulips, sparlite, and mums had been. The other half of the yin-yang pattern remained grass. No other changes to the vegetation were specified on the 1966 vegetation plan.

Vegetation as of 1967
There are no known drawings of Bryce Park's vegetation plan as of 1967. However, a National Capital Parks (North) planting list for Spring 1967 specifies the use of the following flowering material for United States Reservation 700 (Bryce Park):
• "Ibis—Single Early Tulips" (species unknown), 800 count
• "White Triumphator—Lily-flowered Tulip" (Tulipa 'White Triumphator') 10,000 count
• "White Cascade Petunia" (species unknown), 250 count
• "Red Recard Geranium" (species unknown), 250 count
• "Roll call mum" (Chrysanthemum 'roll call'), 225 count
The planting list does not specify where within the park these species were to be added. Given the precedent of earlier years, at least some of this flowering material was likely planted in the bed on the central terrace.

Vegetation as of 1968 (End of cultural landscape's period of significance)
In 1968, a little leaf linden tree (Tilia cordata) was planted on the southwest terrace, in keeping with William Belden's original landscape plans. There are no known drawings of the vegetation plan at this time, but the National Capital Parks planting list for Summer and Fall 1968 indicates that United States Reservation 700 (Bryce Park) would receive:
• Snapdragons, Floral Carpet (Antirrhinum majus 'Floral Carpet Mix') in mixed colors, 500 count
• Mums – Neptune (species unknown), 225 count
The planting list does not specify where within the park these species were to be added. As with the

1967 planting list, it is likely that these new plantings were added to the figure-8 planting bed on the central terrace.

Vegetation after 1968
In general, the planting plan and species at Bryce Park remained consistent in the decades after the period of significance. Targeted alterations affected individual plantings, but the primary features and planting palette from Belden's design remained in place into the early 21st century. According to archival sources (including aerial photographs, a limited number of site photographs published in periodicals, and a 1990/91 planting plan), the alterations during these decades included:
• The planting of Bellona – Single Early Tulip (Tulipa 'Bellona') and Bondstreet – Late Cottage Tulip – Double Plant (Tulipa 'Bond Street'). These flowering plant materials were likely used in the figure-8 planting bed on the central terrace. (Source: 1969 planting plan)
• The addition of several azalea plantings, including both Christmas Cheer and Delaware Valley azaleas (Rhododendron kurume 'Christmas Cheer' and Rhododendron mucronatum 'Delaware Valley White'). These plantings were added to several locations within the park: the northwest terrace's linear planting bed; the planting bed on the north side of Staircase A; and the planting beds that flank Staircase C at the southeastern corner of the park. (Source: 1990/1991 planting plan)
• The addition of several plantings Doublefile Viburnum (Viburnum tomentosum) at the northwest corner of the park, in the linear planting bed on the north side of the northwest terrace. These shrubs were consistent with Belden's original planting palette, but were planted after the period of significance. (Source: 1990/1991 planting plan)
• The addition of a line of Burkwood Viburnum (Viburnum burkwoodi) behind the rectangular steel-frame/wood-slate bench in the linear planting bed on the northwest terrace. These shrubs were consistent with Belden's original planting palette, but were planted after the period of significance. (Source: 1990/1991 planting plan)
• The planting of new species in the semi-circular planting bed on top of the radial retaining wall. In these decades after the period of significance, the English ivy (Hedera helix) in Belden's plans was replaced with Willowleaf Cotoneaster (Cotoneaster salicifolius 'Scarlet Leader'). (Source: National Park Service, National Capital Region 1990/1991)
• The replacement of selected saucer magnolia trees (Magnolia soulangeana) throughout the site with similar species. (Source: National Park Service, National Capital Region 1990/1991)
• The replacement of the Japanese red pine in the figure-8 planting bed on the central terrace. The tree was extant as of 1981 (see Figure 42 below) but is no longer present in 2019. (See Existing Conditions below.) (Source: National Park Service, National Capital Region 1990/1991)
• The removal of some plantings of Burkwood Viburnum (Viburnum burkwoodi) in the planting bed on the north side of Staircase A. As of 1981, these shrubs provided a significant buffer and screen around the central terrace, according to a photograph published that year in the journal Landscape Architecture. (See Figure 42) below. As of 2019, the shrubs are no longer dense in that area; it is unclear when they were thinned, between 1981 and 2019.
• The possible removal (and, in some cases, replacement) of perimeter trees around the park, including several red oaks (Quercus borealis) along the boundary with Massachusetts Avenue. (Source: National Park Service, National Capital Region 1990/1991)
See the diagrams in the appendix for additional notes on specific alterations during this period.

EXISTING
Planting plans and aerial photographs from the last 50 years, as well as fieldwork conducted in 2018 and 2019, indicate few changes to the overall landscape of Bryce Park since the beautification improvements undertaken in 1967-1968. The primary significant features in Belden's landscape plans remain in place, including: the saucer magnolia trees (Magnolia soulangeana) along the walkways throughout the site; various species of azaleas (Rhododendron kurume 'Christmas Cheer' and Azalea 'Delaware Valley') throughout the site; and the little leaf linden tree (Tilia cordata) and flowering dogwood (Cornus florida) on the southwest terrace.

In addition to these plantings, the planting beds on each terrace adhere to their original shapes from Belden's plans:
• On the northwest terrace, the planting bed remains long and linear along the north side of the terrace's walkway, separating the terrace from the sidewalk along Massachusetts Avenue.
• On the southwest terrace, the primary planting bed is round with grassy ground cover, in keeping

with the period of significance. A second planting bed remains in place around the top of the radial retaining wall, occupying a semi-circular footprint as defined by the nested retaining wall as it projects above grade.
• On the central terrace, the planting bed continues to occupy a figure-8 footprint, with a large circle overlapping with a smaller circle. Since 1963, the larger circle in this planting bed has been further divided into two separate regions, reminiscent of a yin-yang symbol. This arrangement within the planting bed remains consistent with the period of significance.
• On the southeast terrace, the planting bed is still designed in the shape of a teardrop.
• Although several of the secondary planting beds are not very clearly defined, they remain in place along the staircases throughout the site, marking the changes in grade and the points of convergence in the landscape.
The grassy lawns are intact and consistent with Belden's designs. Most of the site's perimeter street trees remain intact, preserving a natural buffer between Bryce Park and the streets and sidewalks that define its boundaries. These features define the vegetative character of Bryce Park's cultural landscape today.

There have been minor alterations to the vegetation plan since the park's period of significance (1962 -1968). Some species of plants and several individual trees have been removed or replaced. (Removals on individual terraces are noted below.) In various locations throughout the site, a limited number of saucer magnolia trees (Magnolia soulangeana) have been removed (on the northwest, southwest, and southeast terraces). In addition, several plantings of Burkwood Viburnum (Viburnum burkwoodi) and Doublefile Viburnum (Viburnum tomentosum) have been removed; see the diagram in the appendix for exact locations.

In several cases, new plantings have been added to the cultural landscape, supplementing the plantings in Belden's original design with similar species. (New additions to individual terraces are noted below.) In several locations on the site, including the northwest and southeast corners, new plantings of Christmas Cheer azalea (Rhododendron kurume 'Christmas Cheer') have been added, adding to the azaleas that were featured in Belden's original landscape design. On the northeast perimeter of the site, one new scarlet oak (Quercus coccinea) has been planted line with the other oak trees on this boundary of the cultural landscape.

Other alterations to the cultural landscape's vegetation plan have affected plantings on individual terraces. This includes the removal and/or replacement of the trees that served as focal points for the terraces in Belden's original plans. Documented changes to the vegetation plan since the period of significance include:
• On the northwest terrace, the planting bed now includes a screen of Doublefile Viburnum (Viburnum tomentosum) at the northwest corner, a screen of Burkwood Viburnum (Viburnum burkwoodi) behind the rectangular steel-frame/wood-slate bench, and English ivy (Hedera helix) as ground cover. The Doublefile Viburnum and Burkwood Viburnum were added between 1968 and 1990/1991. The English ivy was added or replaced between 1990/1991 and 2019.
• On the southwest terrace, in the semi-circular planting bed that caps the bluestone retaining wall, several different species of plants have encroached on the English ivy (Hedera helix) that Belden original stipulated. This alteration happened between 1990/1991 and 2019.
• On the central terrace, the plant list has changed several times since 1968; it currently features Aztec marigold blooms (Tagetes erecta) in one-half of the yin-yang pattern of the larger circle. The remainder of the figure-8 planting bed on the central terrace (including the smaller circle) features grassy ground cover, in keeping with the vegetation features by the end of the period of significance. The little leaf linden tree (Tilia cordata) in Belden's original designs is no longer extant; in fact, there is no tree or shrub in the larger circle of the figure-8 planting bed. The smaller circle currently features a relatively small tree that replaces the Japanese red pine (Pinus densiflora 'umbraculifera') planted according to Belden's original landscape design. The alterations occurred in various stages between 1968 and 2019. (See the diagrams in the appendix for the exact sequence.)
• On the southeast terrace, the little leaf linden tree at the center of the teardrop-shaped planting bed has been replaced with a new tree. This tree is relatively small and was likely planted in recent years.

(See the diagrams in the appendix for other, smaller alterations to individual plantings and specific terraces.)

EVALUATION
Minor alterations have affected individual plantings within the cultural landscape since the period of significance. However, these changes do not detract from the overall integrity of the cultural landscape's vegetation features. Belden's landscape design and vegetative material palette is still legible today, retaining its overall composition as defined by the layout of the planting beds, the selection of tree/shrub species to serve as focal points on each terrace, and the use of saucer magnolia trees (Magnolia soulangeana) to define the perimeter of the walkways/terraces throughout the site. Bryce Park retains integrity with respect to vegetation.

Character-defining Features:

Feature: Linear planting bed on the north side of the northwest terrace

Feature Identification Number: 186658

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Round planting bed on the southwest terrace

Feature Identification Number: 186659

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Semi-circular planting bed on top of the radial retaining wall on the southwest terrace

Feature Identification Number: 186660

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Figure-8 shaped planting bed (comprised of a large circular planting bed overlapping with a smaller circular planting bed) on the central terrace

Feature Identification Number: 186661

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Teardrop-shaped planting bed on the southeast terrace

Feature Identification Number: 186662

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Secondary planting beds along the staircases throughout the site

Feature Identification Number: 186663

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Grassy lawns between terraces, and separating terraces from perimeter sidewalks

Feature Identification Number: 186664

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Saucer magnolia trees (Magnolia soulangeana) planted at regular intervals along walkways throughout site

Feature Identification Number: 186666

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Little leaf linden tree (Tilia cordata) on southwest terrace

Feature Identification Number: 186667

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Flowering dogwood (Cornus florida) on southwest terrace

Feature Identification Number: 186668

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: General use of Christmas Cheer Azaleas (Rhododendron kurum ‘Christmas Cheer’) in planting beds throughout the cultural landscape

Feature Identification Number: 186669

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: General use of Delaware Valley Azaleas (Azalea ‘Delaware Valley’) in planting beds throughout the cultural landscape

Feature Identification Number: 186671

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:

Conditions of the central terrace as of 1981, as represented in a photograph published in the journal Landscape Architecture. (Lockwood et al. 1981).

Existing vegetation conditions on the northwest terrace. (Photograph by the CLI author, March 2019).

Existing vegetation conditions on the southwest terrace, including the little leaf linden tree (top) and the planting bed along the top of the radial retaining wall (bottom). (Photographs by the CLI author: top, March 2019; bottom: November 2018).

Existing vegetation conditions on the central terrace, where the planting plan has changed several times since the period of significance. (Photo by CLI author, November 2018)

Existing vegetation conditions at the southeast corner of the site, at the perimeter of the cultural landscape. (Photo by CLI author, November 2018)

HISTORIC

The first documented small-scale features on the site were part of the gas station, which was first established on the site circa 1921. The gas station, located on the northern section of the site, was served by overhead electrical wires, and a single gasoline pump was located in front of the station shed (north of the station). Additional small-scale features may have been present on the site before the early 20th century, but there is no known documentation of them.

The gas station was later expanded at some point after 1934 and before 1956 (Heaton and Client American Oil Company 1934, ADE-Unit 975; Surveyor's Office D.C. 1956). Small-scale features at the expanded gas station included: two hydraulic car lifts; four temporary wood storage bins; two air pressure tanks; at least one light pole; an oil tank; and two concrete coping and retaining walls, framing the paved area on the northwest and southeast edges of the station (Surveyor's Office D.C. 1956). All of these features were concentrated on the northern half of the cultural landscape, and were extant as of 1956, when a surveyor completed a plan of the site. That survey did not identify any small-scale features elsewhere on the site, outside the boundaries of the gas station.

William Belden's 1962 landscape plan dictated the design of the cultural landscape as a public park. Belden's scheme addressed the site's relatively topography by grading the park into terraces—a design made possible by the presence of a "radial wall" between the southwest and central terraces, immediately southwest of the center of the site. Per Belden's design, the "radial wall" actually encompassed two nested semicircular retaining walls (made of brick) that were oriented in the same direction (facing northeast) and separated by 12" of topsoil. The outer wall was faced with Pennsylvania bluestone in a "full range of available color and size"; pattern of the veneer is irregular. Both of the walls extended 4" above grade at the top of the retaining wall, capped by Pennsylvania bluestone caps (10" wide). The nesting of these walls, and their protrusion above grade, created a semicircular planting bed that was 12" wide and extended around the half-circle footprint of the retaining wall.

Belden's design also included two types of benches: 39 "standard malleable iron benches," which were placed along the walkways throughout much of the site; and 2 specially-designed steel-frame/wood-slat backless benches.
• The standard malleable iron benches were installed at regular intervals at the edge of the walkways of the southwest, central, and southeast terraces; there were no benches of this type on the northwest terrace. These benches were not designed specifically for Bryce Park. Rather, the notes on Belden's 1962 drawings direct viewers to drawing number NCR [National Capital Region] 48-109, "A Park Bench" (Belden 1962e).
• There were two different designs for the steel-frame/wood-slat backless benches: a rectangular form on the northwest terrace (on the northeast side of the walkway), and a large curved form around the eastern half of the planting bed on the southwest terrace. There were no steel-frame/wood-slat benches on the central or southeast terraces.
Other small-scale features specified by Belden's design included:
• Four luminaire-style light poles, made with a luminaire "to be dark green factory applied finish" and a 14' fluted-metal pole that was painted black (Belden 1962b). The light poles were all installed in relation to the site's staircases: two of the light poles were installed at the bottom of the two staircases in the southwest corner of the park; a third light pole was installed at the bottom of the staircase in the northwest corner; and the fourth light pole was installed at the bottom of the staircase separating the central and southeast terraces.
• An octagonal drinking fountain on the central terrace, west of the planting bed and installed in a notch on the western edge of the walkway. Belden did not provide specifications for this drinking fountain (although his plans did indicate that its footprint was octagonal). Instead, the notes on his 1962 drawings indicate that this was a standard fixture, and direct viewers to drawing number NCR [National Capital Region] 48-317, "Drinking Fountain" (Belden 1962a).
• A semicircular radial steel fence (32 inches tall) atop the retaining wall in the southwest corner (the inner wall of the nested radial walls), separating the southwest terrace from the semicircular planting bed on top of the retaining wall (Belden 1962e).
• Steel edging around the circular planting beds on the central terrace (Belden 1962a).
The retaining wall was in place by 1963. Between 1963 and 1965, the two types of benches were installed, as were the light poles. By 1963 the retaining wall and its steel fence were complete (The Washington Post, June 20, 1963, F1). The water fountain was likely installed by this time as well, although this cannot be confirmed.

In 1965, the park was dedicated in a ceremony on November 17. As part of that ceremony, Princess Margaret of Great Britain unveiled a new commemorative bronze plaque on the northeast face of the Bluestone retaining wall. The plaque measures 18" high and 28" wide. It was inscribed in memory of the park's namesake, James Bryce, and reads as follows:
BRYCE PARK
DEDICATED TO
JAMES BRYCE
VISCOUNT BRYCE OF DECHMONT, O.M.
BRITISH AMBASSADOR TO
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
1907-1913
AUTHOR ● DIPLOMAT ● SCHOLAR
HE DELIGHTED
IN THE PARKS OF WASHINGTON

In 1968, the National Park Service installed a second commemorate plaque in the ground immediately southwest of the little leaf linden tree on the southwest terrace. This bronze plaque measured 6.5" tall x 11" wide; it was installed in a 10.5"x15"x4" concrete base. Its inscription read as follows:
LITTLE LEAF LINDEN
Tilia cordata
PLANTED JULY 11, 1968 IN RECOGNITION
- OF –
MRS. JAMES H. ROWE JR.
NATIONAL CAPITAL PLANNING COMMISSION

Appointed May 8, 1961 by Pres. John F. Kennedy
CHAIRMAN Nov 9, 1961 – July 11, 1968

It is unclear whether the park included any trash cans by the end of the period of significance (1962-1968), as they are not specified on Belden's drawings. However, at least one trash can was in place as of 1988, when a photograph of the southeast terrace indicates that one trash can was located on the north side of the walkway on that terrace, near the top of Staircase C (photograph taken by Nora Stewart and published on the cover of Humanities 9, no. 2 [March/April 1988]). It cannot be confirmed if this trash receptacle dates to the original construction and initial improvements of the park.

In 1980, the National Park Service drew up plans for handrails on the site's staircases to address accessibility concerns; however, these handrails are not in place on the site today and were likely never installed (DeHaven 1980).

The historic conditions of the small-scale features remained very consistent for the remainder of the 20th century. The radial wall, luminaire light poles, steel fence, and commemorative plaques remained in place, in their original locations and with no known alterations. In addition, all 39 iterations of the standard malleable iron benches remained in their original locations, as did both the rectangular and the semicircular versions of the steel-frame/wood-slate benches.

A limited number of minor alterations were made to the small-scale features at Bryce Park after the period of significance. The water fountain was replaced at an unknown date with a newer model; the current water foundation is no longer octagonal in plan. In addition, the trash can on the southeast terrace has been replaced since 1988 (when a photograph of the site was published on the cover of Humanities magazine). A second trash can on the northwest terrace is of a different design and may have also been added to the site after the period of significance, although this cannot be confirmed.

EXISTING
Most of the extant small-scale features at Bryce Park are consistent with Belden's original park design. The retaining wall remains in place, together with the radial steel fence and the commemorative bronze plaque honoring James Bryce. The second bronze plaque commemorating Mrs. James H. Rowe, Jr. also remains in place, in front of the little leaf linden tree on the southwest terrace. In addition, the 39 malleable iron benches remain in their original locations throughout the site, as do the 2 steel-frame/wood-slate benches (the rectangular bench on the northwest terrace and the semicircular one on the southwest terrace). The four luminaire light poles are extant in their original locations. These features are all consistent with the historic design, placement, and quantity of Belden's landscape plan.

There are no handrails on the site's staircases, in keeping with the historic condition during the period of significance. (The 1980 plans developed to address accessibility concerns on the site were likely never implemented.)

The water fountain has been replaced with a later model; it is unclear when this alteration was made. The steel edging around the planting beds on the central terrace was removed at an unknown date; there is no edging material around those planting beds as of 2019. Two trash cans exist on the site today: one on the northwest terrace and a second on the southeast terrace. Both are located on the scored-concrete walkways. The two cans are not of the same design, and neither extant trash can corresponds with the trash can that appears in the 1988 photograph in Humanities magazine. This suggests that both extant trash cans postdate the period of significance, but this cannot be confirmed.

EVALUATION
With the exception of the water fountain and at least one of the trash cans, the extant features date to the period of significance and correspond with Belden's design of Bryce Park. The Bryce Park cultural landscape therefore retains its integrity with respect to small-scale features.

Character-defining Features:

Feature: Bronze plaque commemorating James Bryce

Feature Identification Number: 186675

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Bronze plaque commemorating Mrs. James H. Rowe Jr.

Feature Identification Number: 186676

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Four luminaire-style light poles

Feature Identification Number: 186677

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Standard malleable iron benches (count: 39)

Feature Identification Number: 186678

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Rectangular steel-frame/wood-slat bench (northwest terrace)

Feature Identification Number: 186679

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Curved steel-frame/wood-slat bench (southwest terrace)

Feature Identification Number: 186680

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Radial steel fence

Feature Identification Number: 186681

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Water fountain

Feature Identification Number: 186682

Type of Feature Contribution: Non contributing

Feature: Trash can on northwest terrace

Feature Identification Number: 186683

Type of Feature Contribution: Undetermined

Feature: Trash can on southeast terrace

Feature Identification Number: 186684

Type of Feature Contribution: Undetermined

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:

Existing small scale features at Bryce Park include a non-contributing water fountain (left, top), a bronze plaque to commemorate James Bryce (left, bottom), and luminaire-style light poles that are consistent with William Belden's original design (right). (Photos by the CLI author, November 2018)

Trash cans extant at Bryce Park as of 1988 (left, seen in the background on the cover of Humanities magazine), and 2019 (center and right). (Current photographs by CLI author)

In keeping with William Belden's original landscape design, there are three styles of benches at Bryce Park: standard malleable benches (top), a curved steel-frame/wood-slat bench on the southwest terrace (middle), and a rectangular steel-frame/wood-slat bench on the northwest terrace (bottom). (Photos by the CLI author, November 2018 and March 2019)

HISTORIC
No known buildings or structures existed on the site before the early 20th century. Historic maps indicate that other buildings were constructed in the area around the cultural landscape, as the area developed over the course of the 18th and 19th centuries. However, these developments did not affect the cultural landscape itself.

The construction of a gas station on the northern section of the site in the early 20th century marked the first known structure on the site. At some point between 1910 and 1921, a small shed (and gas tank) was constructed on the site to serve as a filling station for the Penn Oil company. That date range is established based on accounts of a trolley-automobile crash in 1910, which did not indicate any use of the site or any extant buildings or structures, and a photograph taken by the National Photo Company circa 1921. (See the Physical History section entitled “New Construction on the Bryce Park Cultural Landscape Site” for more on these years, including the National Photo Company photograph.) The gas station was a simple one-room gable-roof structure of wood or metal construction, with a corrugated metal roof.

Between 1921 and 1933, two islands with fuel pumps (totaling 5 pumps) were installed in front of the station shed (National Photo Company [between] 1920-1921; Heaton and Client Amoco Oil Company 1933, ADE-Unit 975). This filling station’s shed structure and fuel pump islands remained in place on the site until the National Park Service acquired that portion of the site in 1958. A survey conducted in 1956 indicated that the gas station still included two gas pump islands and a metal office building that occupied a square footprint along Massachusetts Avenue (Surveyor’s Office D.C. 1956). The placement of this building suggests that it was similar to, if not identical to, the original station shed installed circa 1921.

The southern section of the cultural landscape remained relatively undeveloped during these decades. An aerial photograph taken in 1957 appears to show at least two features (perhaps structures) on the site, but the 1956 survey does not indicate any buildings or structures on that portion of the site during this period.

By 1959, the National Park Service had acquired the full site. At some point between 1961 and 1963, the gas station was demolished to clear the site for a new park. William Belden’s designs for the new park did not include any buildings or structures.

EXISTING CONDITION AND EVALUATION
The park does not include any buildings or structures, in keeping with Belden’s original designs for the park during the period of significance.)

Condition

Condition Assessment and Impacts

Condition Assessment: Good

Assessment Date: 08/13/2019

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

Good: indicates the inventory unit shows no clear evidence of major negative disturbance and deterioration by natural and/or human forces. The inventory unit's cultural and natural values are as well preserved as can be expected under the given environmental conditions. No immediate corrective action is required to maintain its current condition.

Stabilization Measures:

Impacts

Type of Impact: Vegetation/Invasive Plants

Other Impact:

External or Internal: Internal

Impact Description: The vegetation in certain planting beds (e.g. the semi-circular planting bed on top of the retaining wall) includes encroaching species that detract from the vegetation plan during the period of significance.

Stabilization Costs

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