National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Rock Creek Park
Washington, DC



Cultural Landscape Report
Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway

Part I
July 2024

Resource Stewardship and Science
Division of Cultural Resources, National Capital Region

Cultural Landscape Report, Part I

Rock Creek Park

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway

Washington, DC

July 2024

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Preservation Services Program Manager, National Capital Region

Concurred: BRIAN JOYNER Digitally signed by BRIAN JOYNER Date: 2025.01.27 21:10:20 -05'00'

Superintendent, Rock Creek Park

Approved: SAMUEL TAMBURRO Digitally signed by SAMUEL TAMBURRO Date: 2025.02.07 11:03:28 -05'00'

Cultural Resources Division Manager, National Capital Region

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Cultural Landscape Report

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway

Rock Creek Park

Washington, DC



Part I

Introduction ❖ Site History ❖ Existing Conditions

❖ Analysis and Evaluation ❖

Prepared by:

Quinn Evans

U.S. Department of the Interior • National Park Service • National Capital Region • Resource Stewardship and Science • Washington, DC

2024

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Cover Photo: Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway—roadway and Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail facing south toward the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge (QE, 2023).

Title Page: "Workmen carve a new lane for bicycles along the rock creek parkway, removing it from the main roadway" (People's Archive—DC Public Library, 1971).

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Executive Summary

This document contains the Part 1 Cultural Landscape Report (CLR) for the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway study area, managed as a part of Rock Creek Park. The CLR documents the site history, existing conditions recorded in January–March, 2023, and the analysis and evaluation of the cultural landscape relative to National Register criteria. The CLR builds upon previous planning documents, including the 2005 National Register Nomination for the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District and Historic American Building Survey (HABS) DC-697 documentation, and provides park professionals with the background information necessary to preserve significant landscape features while considering contemporary needs and uses.

The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway connects the core of downtown Washington, DC, to Rock Creek Park through Rock Creek Valley, a geologic feature that has provided both a sylvan retreat and a transportation challenge throughout the District's history. Early users of the valley included Indigenous tribes and nations who visited the fertile waters of Rock Creek and the Potomac River for fishing. They were followed by European and European American settlers who were drawn to the port access at Georgetown and the flowing waters of Rock Creek, which could be harnessed to power industry. Beginning in 1889, proposals circulated for the development of the Rock Creek Valley as a parkway connecting the monumental core of Washington, DC, with the newly established Rock Creek Park. After lengthy debate that included the consideration of open and closed (filled) valley proposals, Congress approved the creation of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway in 1913, commencing the design and land acquisition processes. The three decades between congressional approval and final design encompassed the rise of automobiles for transportation and recreation, and the parkway's design therefore integrated vehicular routes, equestrian routes, and pedestrian trails with the valley's natural topography. The parkway opened fully in 1936 and almost instantly became a popular route for commuters as well as recreational visitors. It remains so today.

The cultural landscape of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway requires care and management to protect significant cultural resources and provide a safe visitor experience for motorists and pedestrians alike. Future management of the cultural landscape will require thoughtful consideration and a framework that balances historic, ecological, interpretive, and recreational values. To support future treatment recommendations, this report includes a summary of the 2023

condition of the parkway as well as a landscape analysis identifying those features that contribute to the historic character of the landscape. Historic landscape conditions are compared with existing conditions, and an analysis of these differences forms the basis for the summary of integrity for the cultural landscape.

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Rock Creek Park
Nick Bartolomeo, Resources, Lands, and Planning Manager
Bradley Krueger, former Cultural Resources Program Manager
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Doug Rowley, Supervisory Horticulturalist

National Park Service, National Capital Region
Timothy Layton, ASLA, Historical Landscape Architect, Preservation Services
Julie McGilvray, Preservation Services Program Manager & Technical Representative
Emily Button Kambic, former Regional Historian & National Register Coordinator
Olivia Meoni, Student Conservation Associate

Quinn Evans
Stephanie Austin Redding, Historical Landscape Architect
Kate Ricketson, Historical Landscape Architect
S. Michael Mitchell, Architectural Historian
Adjoa Kennedy, Landscape Designer/GIS Specialist

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Introduction

Chapter Cover: Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway near the P Street access ramp, from the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail, facing north (QE, 2023).

INTRODUCTION

The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway is an integral part of the District of Columbia's park system as envisioned by the Senate Park (McMillan) Commission's 1902 plan to improve Washington, DC. The commission's conception of the parkway drew from earlier proposals that emerged after the establishment of Rock Creek Park in 1890. Parkway proposals in the 1890s and 1900s revolved around the transformation of Rock Creek Valley and applied concepts from the American parkways movement to the landscape therein, connecting the Lincoln Memorial to the National Zoological Park and Rock Creek Park. Leading practitioners in the fields of engineering, landscape architecture, and the arts were consulted in the design process, with design and construction of the parkway occurring over roughly three decades. Opened to through traffic in 1936, the parkway transported visitors through Rock Creek Valley and almost immediately became a busy commuter route between downtown Washington, DC, and the city's northwest suburbs. Since its inception, the parkway has hosted diverse uses such as social gathering, recreational riding, walking, and biking as well as automobile traffic. The parkway cultural landscape contains numerous features from initial construction, including the winding roadway, pedestrian trails, and the natural surroundings of Rock Creek Valley, that distinguish the parkway from the surrounding city.

PROJECT SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this cultural landscape report (CLR) is to document and evaluate the physical landscape associated with the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway to help guide decision making by park professionals regarding the protection and preservation of significant cultural landscape resources associated with the parkway.

> *"For Rock Creek Park represents a very large public investment... It is held in trust for the purpose of securing to the people certain benefits obtainable by no other means."*
>
> Olmsted Brothers, *Rock Creek Park*

A CLR is the primary document used by the NPS to inform long-term management and treatment decisions for its historically significant landscapes. This CLR follows a cultural landscape approach, adhering to federal standards and guidelines including:

- *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Processes and Techniques*[1]

1 Robert R. Page, Cathy A. Gilbert, and Susan Dolan, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Processes, and Techniques* (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resource Stewardship and

- *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*[2]
- National Historic Preservation Act, 1966
- NPS Director's Order 28: Cultural Resources Management
- Archeological Resource Protection Act (ARPA), 1979
- Preservation Brief 36: Protecting Cultural Landscapes
- Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards (ABAAS)
- Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Guidelines (ABAAG)
- Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG)

The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Part 1 CLR is organized into four chapters: a project introduction, a site history that documents the physical evolution of the parkway cultural landscape, existing conditions documentation based on field investigations in January and March, 2023, and an analysis and evaluation of the significance and integrity of the parkway landscape based on National Register of Historic Places criteria.

STUDY AREA BOUNDARIES

The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway runs 3.1 miles from the Lincoln Memorial at its southern terminus to the National Zoological Park at its northern terminus. The segment of the parkway between the Lincoln Memorial and Thompson Boat Center is managed by the National Mall and Memorial Parks and is documented in a separate CLR.[3] The study area for this CLR encompasses approximately 164 acres of parkway landscape managed by Rock Creek Park as a part of Reservation 360, including a 2.25-mile section of roadway, pedestrian and cyclist trails, and the wooded slopes of the Rock Creek Valley (Figure 1-1). The southern study area boundary follows the access road to Thompson Boat Center across Rock Creek before turning north and loosely following the western edge of the creek up the valley. The study area boundary includes a portion of the Dumbarton Stream before passing beneath the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge and crossing the Normanstone Stream. The boundary follows the upper ridge of the valley adjacent to residential development and encompasses Shoreham Hill before passing beneath the Connecticut Avenue (William Taft Memorial) Bridge and Calvert Street (Duke Ellington Memorial) Bridge before terminating just north of

Partnerships, Park Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes Program, 1998).

2 Charles Birnbaum and Christine Capella Peters, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1996).

3 EHT Traceries, Inc., Stantec, *Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Potomac Waterfront Section Cultural Landscape Report* (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2018).

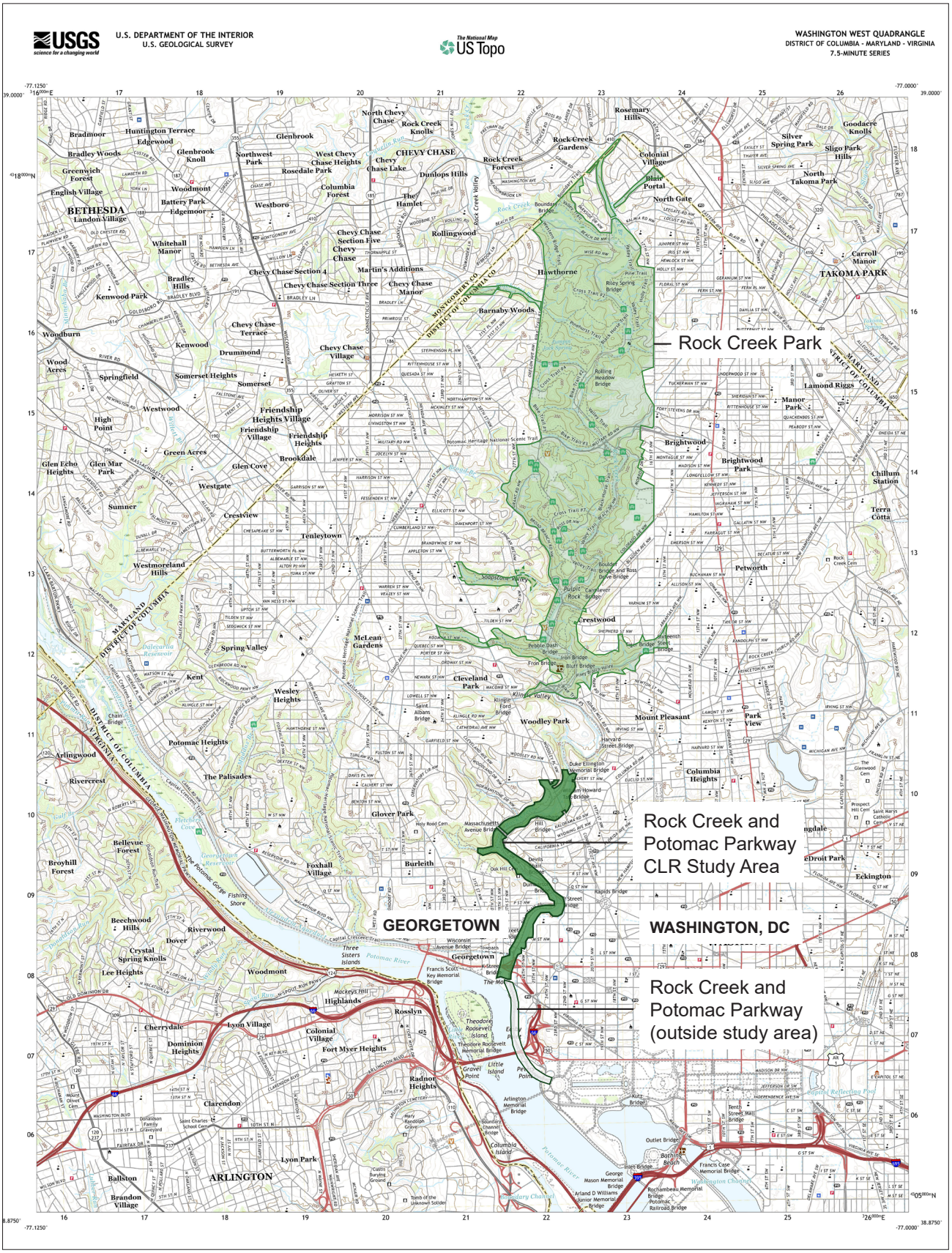


Figure 1-1. Regional location map (Basemap source: USGS, QE, 2023).

the bridge to the National Zoological Park Tunnel and the pedestrian bridge. The eastern boundary of the study area follows the upper ridge of the valley south, a clear delineation between residential and commercial urban development and the forested parkland. South of Pennsylvania and M Streets, the eastern boundary cuts across open mown turf areas around the entrance and exit ramps to the K Street Bridge and returns west at the intersection of the parkway and Virginia Avenue NW.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

Due to the changing character of the study area as Rock Creek Valley deepens from the southern to the northern end, four landscape character areas (LCAs) are used to describe segments of the study area that are distinct in their topography, vegetation, and spatial organization. Due to the linear nature of the study area and the desired level of detail, the four LCAs are captured on five drawing sheets. The LCAs and sheet layouts are described below and illustrated in Figure 1-2.

1. LCA 1 describes the landscape at the southern end of the study area, from the bridge crossing Rock Creek at Thompson Boat Center to the Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge. The landscape in this area is characterized by a wide valley with open slopes to the east and west covered in mown turf and limited specimen trees. The surrounding landscape is characterized by transportation infrastructure as well as commercial and post-industrial development, which is clearly visible from the roadway and Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail. The LCA includes the K Street Bridge, L Street roadway bridge, Whitehurst Freeway ramps, M Street Bridge, and Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge and is illustrated on Drawing EC-1.
2. LCA 2 describes the landscape between the Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge and the P Street Bridge. Slopes on either side of the roadway, trail, and creek are steeper than LCA 1. The east bank is forested with the exception of mown turf at P Street Beach, while the west is maintained in an open condition with sparse canopy trees. The study area is surrounded by commercial, public, and residential properties including the Francis Field recreation areas and the P Street Beach recreational area to the east and Rose Park to the west. A bridge carrying Rock Creek Parkway and an adjacent Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail bridge span Rock Creek where the C&O Canal terminates south of the Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge. LCA 2 is illustrated on Drawing EC-2.
3. LCA 3 extends from the P Street Bridge to the Saddle Club Footbridge and includes the Dumbarton (Q Street) and Massachusetts Avenue Bridges. Within this LCA, the landscape is characterized by steep, wooded slopes and mown turf areas with specimen trees surrounding the roadway and Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail. Rock Creek flows through the valley floor and is visible from both the roadway and pedestrian trails. The Mount Zion/Female Union Band Society and Oak Hill Cemeteries account for much of the western slope of the valley south of the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge and mature forest covers steep slopes on the east bank and west bank north of the Massachusetts Avenue

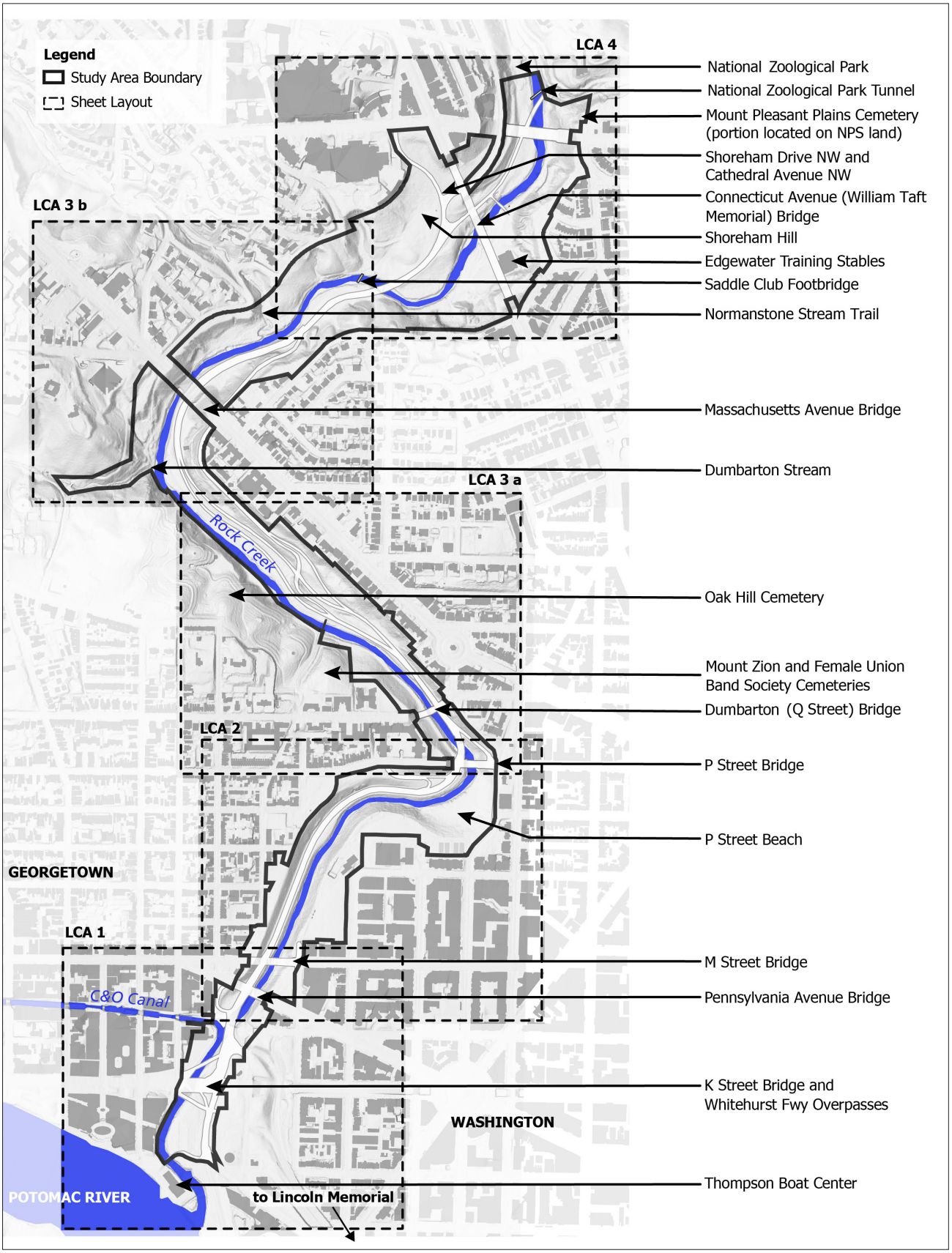


Figure 1-2. Study area and landscape character areas (QE, 2023).

Bridge. A planted median runs between the northbound and southbound lanes of the roadway through much of the area and views to surrounding development are screened through the valley's steep, wooded slopes. Due to the large size of this area, it is illustrated on two drawings: EC-3a and EC-3b.

4. LCA 4 describes the landscape at the northern end of the study area, from the Saddle Club Footbridge to the National Zoological Park Tunnel. The landscape in this area is characterized by steep, wooded slopes and broad, open mown turf areas with large specimen trees. Open areas are frequented by recreational users. Shoreham Drive crosses through the area, running from Calvert Street NW to join Rock Creek Parkway where Cathedral Avenue NW crosses the landscape and Beach Drive has its southern terminus. The Connecticut Avenue (William Taft Memorial) Bridge and the Calvert Street (Duke Ellington Memorial) Bridge span the valley in this area. This part of the study area is surrounded by the National Zoological Park, Mount Pleasant Plains Cemetery, residential neighborhoods, and commercial development focused along Calvert Street NW.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW AND MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

"The real justification for this large park is unquestionably found in the recreative value of its natural qualities—large stretches of forest, the river valley, dark ravines, steep and rolling hills, and occasional meadow lands—and no use or exploitation or development of any sort can ever be right that is not based upon this fundamental conception."

Olmsted Brothers,
Rock Creek Park

Over the last 10,000 years, Rock Creek carved a valley where the rolling slopes of the Piedmont Plateau meet the Atlantic Coastal Plain and the Potomac River. This area, enriched by tidal action as far north as modern-day P Street, attracted Indigenous groups who stayed for short periods to fish and forage.

Following the arrival of European explorers in 1608, Georgetown developed as an important port city. Early patents were purchased by land speculators, and many holdings were managed by tenant farmers. Rock Creek Valley, with its steep and rocky slopes, was not seen as prime land for built development and was mainly forested with areas of pasture, agricultural fields, and orchards. The clear, quick-flowing water of Rock Creek was attractive to multiple industries; in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, industrial activities such as milling proliferated along the creek, with many milling operations located in the flatter areas near the mouth of the creek and the port of Georgetown.

After the Revolutionary War, the Continental Congress sought a location for a federal city to house governmental operations. The location of present-day Washington, DC, was selected in 1791 and military engineer Pierre L'Enfant and his successor surveyor Andrew Ellicott produced a plan for the city the following year, with Rock Creek Valley providing a natural boundary between Georgetown and the federal city. The construction of the Chesapeake and Ohio (C&O) Canal by 1850 increased the connectivity between the District of Columbia and western states, allowing population and industrial production to increase.

Following the Civil War, the cities' populations boomed, and facilities serving Washington's and Georgetown's White and Black populations emerged apace. Churches, schools, and cemeteries occupied lands directly adjacent to Rock Creek Valley, including the Mount Zion and Female Union Band Society, Oak Hill, and Mount Pleasant Plains cemeteries. Church groups and residents of nearby neighborhoods utilized the valley landscape for gathering and recreation. South of P Street, however, increased urbanization and industrialization led to waste dumping in the valley, and water quality plummeted in response to stormwater and sewage contamination. By the late 1800s, the upper Rock Creek Valley was hailed for its scenic beauty while the lower portion of the valley was increasingly identified as an eyesore suffering from pollution.

Washington's expansion beyond the original boundaries of the L'Enfant plan in the late nineteenth century brought interest in its development. Federal legislation established the National Zoological Park in 1889 for the pursuit of animal science and for recreation for Washingtonians, and a site in upper northwest Washington was chosen for its construction. In 1890, Congress established Rock Creek Park as a part of what would become the National Park system, and the zoo opened the following year. Concurrent with the park's establishment, the Washington Board of Trade campaigned for the construction of a parkway through the lower Rock Creek Valley to connect downtown Washington, DC, with the newly established park, zoo, and additional parks ringing the city. A contemporary perspective identifies parts of the proposal as financially and racially driven. Multiple board members had land adjacent to the valley that would increase in value with parkway development, and well-kept African American residences and businesses were unfairly targeted for demolition through planning and design. While the Washington Board of Trade's parkway proposal remained unbuilt, Congress established the Senate Park Commission (also known as the McMillan Commission) in 1901 to study the application of City Beautiful principles to developing Washington, DC. The commission published their report in 1902, and their many proposals involved beautification of the waterfront and an extensive system of parkways, including one through Rock Creek Valley.

While there was broad support for the parkway, its design was heavily debated. In 1908, engineer Major Jay J. Morrow and his assistant Captain E. M. Markham's report of alternatives countered a McMillan Commission-proposed concept to fill the valley and create a series of flat boulevards between the Georgetown area and Washington, DC. The report solidified support for the parkway, and Congress granted authorization in 1913. Design concepts that would survive the decades-long planning and design process included elements of the American parkway movement, such as winding circulation routes separated by transportation type

(vehicular, equestrian, pedestrian), vegetated medians between lanes, picturesque planting design, and the incorporation of impressive architectural elements.

As part of the 1913 authorization, Congress established the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission (RC&PPC) to direct planning, organize land acquisition, and review multiple iterations of design drawings. Construction on the parkway began in 1924, ahead of the completion of the final land acquisition process that lasted until 1931. Early phases of construction included the demolition of homes and businesses in the Herring Hill neighborhood, disproportionately affecting the African American community, and facilitated the removal of waste from other areas of the lower valley. Construction also encroached upon the nineteenth-century Mount Zion and Female Union Band Society cemeteries, appropriating approximately one third of their land area for parkway construction.

By 1936, construction of the parkway under the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks was complete and motorists could travel from the Lincoln Memorial through the valley to the fords across Rock Creek on National Zoological Park property. The original parkway landscape incorporated a winding roadway flanked by bridle and pedestrian trails that navigated the valley's steep slopes. Views to the surrounding city context were screened by topography and a combination of natural and ornamental vegetation. The parkway fulfilled its designed purpose to provide a beautiful and efficient route for city residents to travel between the city's center and Rock Creek Park whether on foot, horse, or by vehicle.

Bridges played an important role in the development of the cities of Washington and Georgetown and serve as a dramatic experiential component of the parkway. The Connecticut Avenue (William Taft Memorial) Bridge was completed in 1906 and at the time was the largest precast concrete bridge in the world, spanning 1068 feet. The Massachusetts Avenue Bridge was completed in 1941, replacing an earthen embankment with a small and dangerous culvert that allowed the creek and roadway to pass through it, and forms an impressive visual arch across the valley. While bridges at the southern end of the valley were less visually impressive due to the shallow depth of the valley in this section, they were known for other technological advances such as carrying water (in the case of the former Pennsylvania Avenue Aqueduct Bridge, now encased in stone cladding). The curved Dumbarton (Q Street) Bridge was completed at considerable expense and incorporates unique decorative elements.

In the 1940s, changes to the parkway landscape included the rechanneling of Rock Creek and straightening of the roadway at P Street. P Street Beach, formed during the parkway's alteration, has since become a beloved place for recreation and gathering, particularly cherished by the city's LGBTQ community. The 1950s marked the end of recreational equestrian use of the parkway, and the bridle trail was paved to improve access for cyclists. A 1950s proposal suggested replacing the parkway with a six-lane expressway that would connect to a proposed Inner Loop freeway to encircle the downtown. Two access ramps were constructed over the parkway at K Street NW, but the project did not proceed. Changes to the parkway in the 1960s included the construction of the National Zoological Park Tunnel in 1966 and subsequent closure of the Zoo fords, as well as daffodil plantings along the parkway as a part of Lady Bird Johnson's Beautification campaign. In 1971, a brief trial of lane closures for bicycle commuters failed due to pressure from automobile commuters. The parkway was so heavily utilized as a commuter route from its inception that one-way traffic patterns were initiated as early as 1937, just a year after the parkway was fully open. Projects on site in the 1980s and 1990s included rehabilitation of historic roadway bridges such as the L Street Bridge and landscape improvements with the removal of the defunct Inner Loop overpasses.

LANDSCAPE ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS

Issues and considerations associated with the study area landscape were discussed during a meeting on site on January 24, 2023, with NPS and project team representatives. They are presented here, organized by landscape characteristic, and relate to both caretaking and maintenance as well as visitor safety within the study area.

Natural Systems and Features

- Water quality is poor along Rock Creek. Combined sewer overflows (CSOs), which carry both stormwater and sewage into Rock Creek during periods of heavy precipitation, were partially remedied in the 1970s but a number remain in the study area and contribute to poor water quality. Remediation efforts resumed in 2010 and will continue until 2030.
- Erosion along Rock Creek and valley slopes is an ongoing issue.
    - Slope stabilization work is occurring in collaboration with volunteers on the east side of Rock Creek south of P Street Beach.
    - Stormwater from a municipal bus depot as well as paved pathways is draining down a slope at the Mount Pleasant Plains Cemetery north of the Calvert Street (Duke Ellington Memorial) Bridge. Howard University conducted an archeological study of the cemetery between 2005 and 2012. Following this study, the NPS undertook a slope stabilization project and in 2022, completed a cemetery management plan. While the cemetery is on NPS land, managing stormwater is difficult because it largely originates outside of park land. Any exposed burials are reburied in the same location and not disturbed. Trails in this area are closed but erosion is still occurring.
- Threatened and endangered species documented in Rock Creek Park (but not specifically in the study area) include:
    - Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*)
    - Hays spring amphipod (*Stygobruomus hayi*)
- Flooding causes debris to flow down Rock Creek, creating dams and damaging structures.
    - Some damage resulted from a sinkhole that developed in the roadway south of the P Street Bridge.
    - Ponding occasionally occurs on the northbound lane between the Massachusetts and Connecticut Avenue (William Taft Memorial) Bridges due to blocked drop inlets.
    - The creek occasionally floods the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail north of the Lyons Mill Footbridge.

Land Use

- Encroachment by private landowners adjacent to the park is an ongoing concern. There have been numerous cases of people undertaking construction activities on federal property.
- Multiple encampments of unhoused persons exist in the study area at the time of this report. NPS is working with the District of Columbia and other federal agencies to humanely address these encampments while ensuring public safety and preservation of cultural and natural resources.

Vegetation

- Invasive species are a significant problem in the Rock Creek watershed. The use of herbicides is an important treatment strategy in the study area, as is manual removal conducted by volunteers. Among the most prevalent and impactful species are:
    - English ivy (*Hedera helix*)
    - kudzu (*Pueraria montana*)
    - Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*)
    - bamboo (*Bambusa spp.*)
    - porcelain berry (*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*)
    - Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*)
- Management plans are needed for areas where vegetation encroachment is impacting historic views and limiting roadway visibility.

Circulation

- The roadway surface will require rehabilitation within five years. The last resurfacing was 20 years ago.
- Guidelines for use and speed on the roadway and the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail would improve user safety and reduce conflicts between user groups. For example:
    - cyclists are permitted on roadway, but there is no shoulder or bike lane, so this creates a very unsafe situation with vehicular traffic, and
    - there are no regulations for speed on the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail, or restrictions on electric bikes (e-bikes).
- The Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail south of P Street narrows to approximately five feet wide in many places, which creates safety concerns and increased conflicts between users.
- In 2024, the National Park Service began an Environmental Assessment for several safety and operational changes on the parkway, including the elimintation of one-way rush hour operations and the widening of the multi-use trail between P Street NW and Pennsylvania Avenue NW.

Buildings and Structures

- Vandalism and graffiti on bridges and other structures is ongoing. There is a collaborative effort between NPS, the city of Washington, District of Columbia Historic Preservation Officer, and the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) to establish best practices for removal and discouragement of future acts on historic structures.
- Waterside Drive NW restrooms, located in the overpass tower, are mothballed, and their condition is degrading with lack of use; recommendations are needed to guide future preservation.

Views and Vistas

- Reestablishing views from the roadway and the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail to the creek is a priority.
    - One area of interest for this is east of Shoreham Hill, where mowing has been reduced and views to the creek are obscured.

Small-Scale Features

- As funding becomes available, the NPS should construct entry signs to the Parkway at Shoreham Hill and Virginia Avenue, as described in the 2020 Rock Creek Park Sign Plan.

TERMINOLOGY

Key terminology utilized throughout this report is provided below for reference.

BCE/CE

BCE (before common era) and CE (common era) are used as a temporal convention for cultural time periods up to CE 1000. After this date, no designation is provided.

Character-defining feature

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

Contributing and non-contributing features

Contributing feature

Significant individual elements or physical characteristics remaining from the periods of significance.

Non-contributing feature

Individual features or physical characteristics constructed or emerging after the periods of significance. Non-contributing features are considered compatible when they fit within the physical context of the historic period and do not impact the historic integrity of the property. Incompatible features are those that are not harmonious with the quality of the cultural landscape and, by virtue of their existence, can lessen the historic character.

Missing feature

A historic feature that is no longer present in the landscape. Typically, in its absence, the landscape's historic character is diminished.

Undetermined feature

Features whose contributing status is undetermined indicates that there is insufficient documentation to determine whether or not the feature contributes to the historic character of the landscape.

Cultural landscape

A geographic area (including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein) associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values.[4] The National Park Service identifies four types of cultural landscapes:

Historic site

A landscape significant for its association with a historic event, activity, or person.[5]

Historic designed landscape

A landscape that was consciously designed or laid out by a landscape architect, master gardener, architect, engineer, or horticulturist according to design principles, or an amateur gardener working in a recognized style or tradition. The landscape may be associated with a significant person, trend, or event in landscape architecture or illustrate an important development in the theory and practice of landscape architecture. Aesthetic values play a significant role in designed landscapes.[6]

Historic vernacular landscape

A landscape that evolved through use by the people whose activities or occupancy shaped it. Through social or cultural attitudes of an individual, a family, or a community, the landscape reflects the physical, biological, and cultural character of everyday lives. Function plays a significant role in vernacular landscapes.[7]

Ethnographic landscape

An area containing natural and cultural resources that associated people define as heritage resources, including plant and animal communities, geographic features, and structures.[8]

Cultural landscape report

A cultural landscape report (CLR) is a two part report that documents the history and existing conditions of a cultural landscape, evaluates its significance according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, and provides design and management recommendations for the property. Part One includes the chapters documenting

4 Birnbaum and Peters, *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes,* 9.
5 Birnbaum and Peters, *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes,* 5.
6 Birnbaum and Peters, *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes,* 5.
7 Birnbaum and Peters, *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes,* 5.
8 Birnbaum and Peters, *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes,* 5.

the history, existing condition and analysis of the landscape, while Part Two includes the recommended treatment approach and recommendations.

Ethnographic resource

A site, structure, object, landscape, or natural resource feature assigned traditional legendary, religious, subsistence, or other significance in the cultural system of a group traditionally associated with it.[9]

Feature

The smallest element of a landscape that contributes to its significance and that can be the subject of a treatment intervention. Archeological features are a discrete category of landscape features.[10]

Heritage resource

A tangible entity or practice that is valued by or significantly representative of a culture or that contains significant information about a culture.

Historic character

The sum of all visual aspects, features, materials, and spaces associated with a cultural landscape's history. These qualities are often referred to as character-defining.[11]

Historic Period Plan

A type of drawing that represents the condition of a landscape's physical features at a specific point in history, generated using available historic documentation.

Historic property

Any historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places maintained by the Secretary of the Interior. This term includes artifacts, records, and remains that are related to and located within such properties. This includes properties of traditional religious and cultural importance to Indigenous tribes and nations that meet the National Register criteria.[12]

9 Page, Gilbert, and Dolan, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports,* 132.
10 Page, Gilbert, and Dolan, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports,* 4.
11 Page, Gilbert, and Dolan, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports,* 4.
12 Advisory Council on Historic Properties, 36 CFR Part 800 : *Protection of Historic Properties*, 2004.

Historic significance

The recognized importance a property displays when it has been evaluated, including when it has been found to meet National Register Criteria.[13]

Integrity

The ability of the physical features of the landscape to convey its significance. In order to retain integrity, a landscape must maintain the identity for which it is significant. Integrity is defined by seven aspects or qualities: location, design setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.[14]

Location

The place where the cultural landscape was constructed or the landscape where the historic event occurred.

Design

The combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and a style of the cultural landscape.

Setting

The physical environment of the cultural landscape.

Materials

The physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period(s) of time and in a particular pattern of configuration to form the cultural landscape.

Workmanship

The physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory.

Feeling

A cultural landscape's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.

Association

The direct link between the historic event or person and a cultural landscape.

13 Barbara Little, Erika Martin Seibert, Jan Townsend, John H. Sprinkle, and John Knoerl, *Preservation Brief 36: Protecting Cultural Landscapes, Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes* (Washington, DC: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2000), 8.

14 Page, Gilbert, and Dolan, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports,* 72.

Interpret

The communication of the historic, cultural, and environmental values of a cultural landscape to a visitor through a variety of media.[15]

Landscape characteristics

The tangible and intangible characteristics of a landscape that define and characterize the landscape and that, individually and collectively, give a landscape character and aid in understanding its cultural value.[16] Landscape characteristics used to describe and evaluate the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway cultural landscape are defined in Chapter 3.

Landscape Character Area (LCA)

Areas of the landscape that contain similar physical characteristics, qualities, attributes, and associated cultural landscape features.

National Register of Historic Places

The official list of the nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources.

Period of significance

The span of time for which a cultural landscape attains historical significance and for which it meets National Register criteria.

Statement of significance

Narrative documenting the recognized importance a property displays when it has been evaluated, including when it has been found to meet National Register criteria.[17]

15 Adapted from Birnbaum and Peters, *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*; National Park Service, "Workflows Definitions;" and Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 11th ed.

16 Page, Gilbert, and Dolan, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*, 139.

17 Little et al., *Preservation Brief 36: Protecting Cultural Landscapes, Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes*, 8.



Site History

Chapter Cover: Rock Creek beneath P Street Bridge (People's Archive-DC Public Library, 1930).

SITE HISTORY

This chapter presents an overview of the physical evolution of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway study area landscape. It begins with a chronological account of landscape conditions from the initial formation of the physical landscape to today. Changes to the landscape or its use are presented in the following time spans and illustrated on three historic period plan drawings:

- Before 1700
- Colonial and Early Republic Land Use and Development, 1700–1889
- Establishment of Rock Creek Park and Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, 1890–1936
- Early Modifications and Beautification Efforts, 1937–1972
- National Park Service Stewardship, 1973–Present

BEFORE 1700

This period covers landscape history from geologic formation of the physical landscape through Indigenous use and the arrival of European explorers. It marks a dramatic shift in land use from temporary, cyclical inhabitation by Indigenous peoples to cultivation and development of the landscape by new land owners and tenants arriving from other countries.

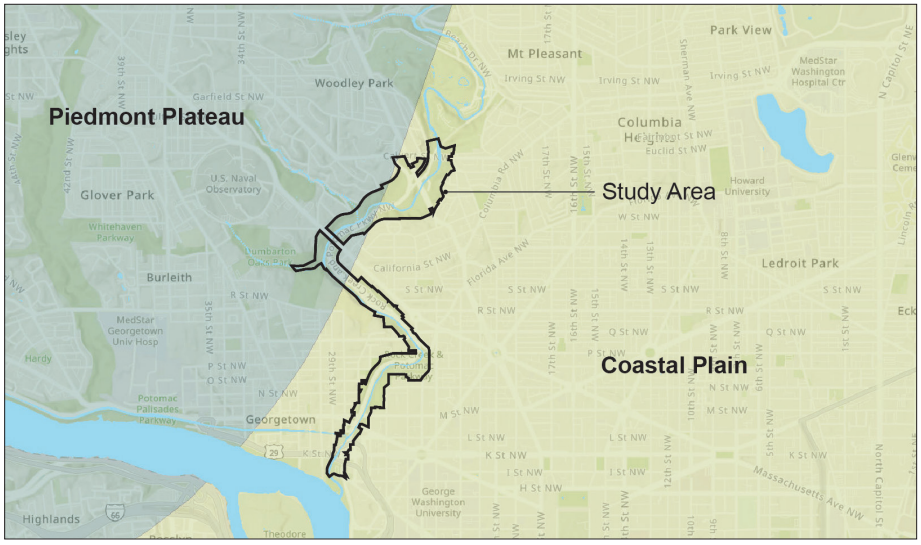


Figure 2-1. The study area overlaid by geologic zones, with the Piedmont Plateau in dark green and the Coastal Plain in light green (Interactive Map of Rock Creek Park, https://exploreNaturalCommunities.org/).

GEOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway study area occupies land between the Piedmont Plateau and Coastal Plain known as the Fall Zone or Fall Line. The Piedmont Plateau is characterized by hilly terrain made up of hard metamorphic and igneous rock compressed under an ancient mountain range (Figure 2-1). The Coastal Plain consists of sedimentary rock and sediments formed from the erosion of the ancient mountain range by rivers. These sediments were deposited in the ocean and redeposited over time as unconsolidated sediments of cobbles, gravel, sand, silt, and clay. In the active floodplains of Rock Creek and the Potomac River, colluvial fans form the base for mixed forest communities.[1]

Over time, Rock Creek has eroded this bedrock to create the dramatic rocky slopes of the valley. The Piedmont bedrock weathers to a fine mineral soil that underlies parts of the study area around and south/southeast of the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge.[2]

INDIGENOUS LAND USE

The waterfalls of the Potomac River provided seasonal fishing and gathering opportunities for Indigenous people, who have been spending time in this area for approximately 10,000 years.[3] Indigenous groups visited Rock Creek Valley sporadically until approximately 4,000 years ago, when people began quarrying stone from bluffs and glacial deposits and longer-term camps became more prevalent. While agriculture was a part of Indigenous life ways at this time (Late Woodland), the archeological record indicates that time spent in Rock Creek Valley may have occurred during seasons where fishing and foraging were more prominent. Artist John White accompanied a 1585 expedition to explore the Virginia area and recorded his impressions of Indigenous villages at that time (Figure 2-2).

A broad range of archeological sites is present within the study area. These sites were likely protected from industrial activities by the volume of fill materials added to development sites.[4]

1 "Coastal Plain Geology: Unconsolidated Sediments," Explore Natural Communities, National Park Service, available at https://www.explorenaturalcommunities.org/parks-places/rock-creek-park/natural-history/physical-setting/geology.

2 "The Fall Zone: Boundary Between Piedmont and Coastal Plain,"Explore Natural Communities, National Park Service, available at https://www.explorenaturalcommunities.org/parks-places/rock-creek-park/natural-history/physical-setting/geology.

3 The Louis Berger Group, *Bold, Rocky, and Picturesque: Archeological Identification and Evaluation Study of Rock Creek Park* (National Park Service: 2008) 3.

4 Berger, *Bold, Rocky, and Picturesque*, 7.

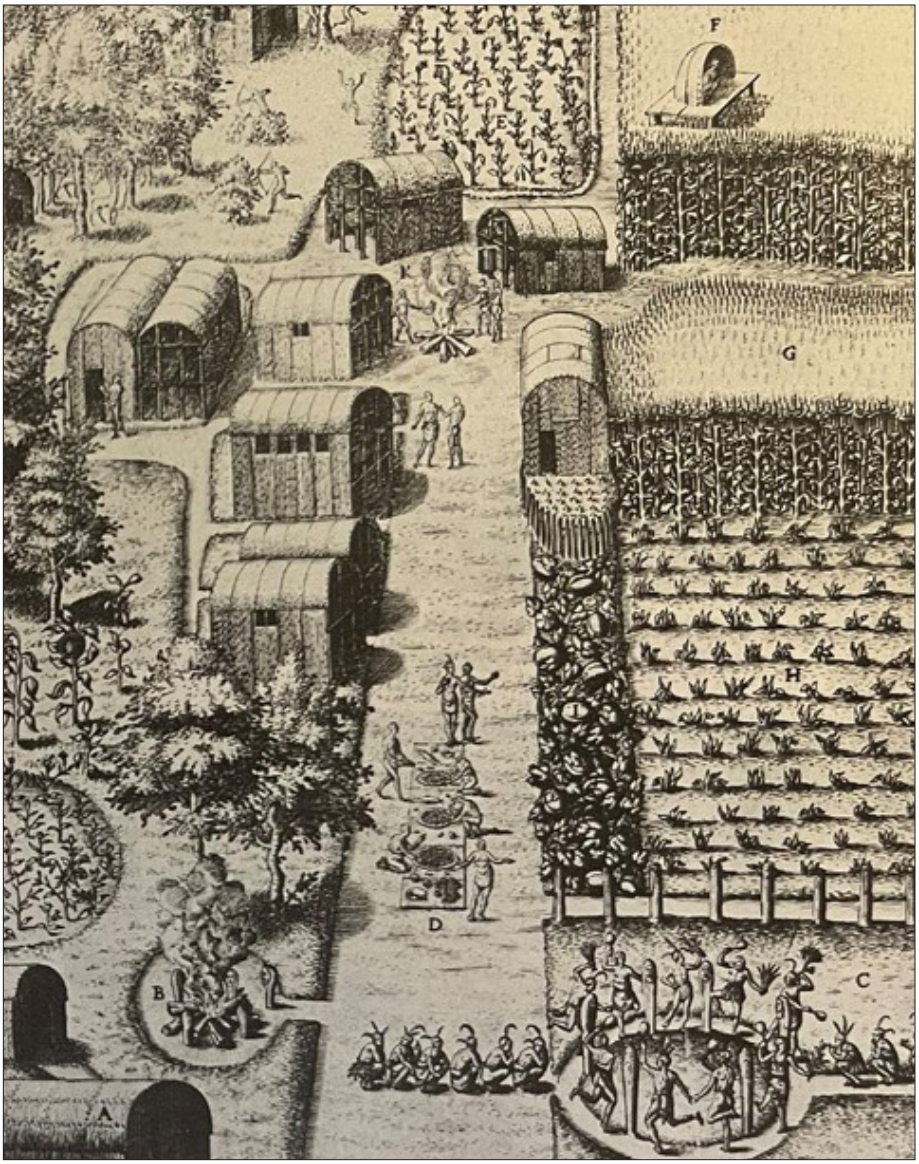


Figure 2-2. A representation of an early Indigenous village along the Potomac River (White, 1585 via Davis, 1999).

EARLY COLONIAL SETTLEMENT

The first Europeans documented near the study area were those accompanying Captain John Smith in 1608 when they explored the Chesapeake Bay and Potomac River as far as the fall line of the Potomac River, just north of the current District of Columbia boundary with Maryland. A map made during the expedition shows numerous Indigenous settlements, including one near the mouth of Rock Creek labeled Nacotchtank.[5] At this time, multiple tribal groups were recorded in the general area, including the Nacotchtanks, Massawomecks, and Piscataways. In 1635, a smallpox epidemic greatly diminished Indigenous populations in the area and by 1673, Nacotchtank was omitted from a map of the area generated by Augustine Hermann.[6] Along with Europeans, Senecas, Susquehannocks,

5 Berger, *Bold, Rocky, and Picturesque*, 14.
6 Berger, *Bold, Rocky, and Picturesque*, 14.

Nanticokes, and Conoys viewed Rock Creek Valley as a beneficial position to hold and war parties from these groups deterred European settlers from the area until the 1680s.[7]

The first land patents claimed along Rock Creek by English settlers occurred in 1688, but development of the land was slow. In 1692, the Maryland Rangers were reformed to defend burgeoning European American settlements from attacks by Indigenous groups in the area who also claimed rights over the land, employing European soldiers as well as Indigenous men to utilize their knowledge of the landscape and hunting skills.[8] Early land grants that fall within the study area include: the Rock of Dumbarton, patented in 1703 and owned by Ninian Beall, a Scottish immigrant who led the Maryland Rangers starting in 1699; Pretty Prospect, patented in 1695; and Widows Mite, patented by John (William?) Langworth.[9]

COLONIAL AND EARLY REPUBLIC LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT, 1700–1889

Development of the landscape in and around the Rock Creek Valley during this period follows the historical narratives of exploration and colonization of the American landscape by Europeans through the Revolutionary and Civil Wars. The study area was strategically located between the port city of Georgetown and the newly planned capital city of Washington. While its dramatic topography north of P Street sheltered it from high-intensity development, the Rock Creek Valley was both a challenge and an oasis to early urban residents as the cities expanded through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

COLONIAL AND EARLY REPUBLIC LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

Many early land patents were owned by wealthy speculators who did not reside on the properties. Owners often leased parcels of land to tenant farmers who would pay landholders in a percentage of the harvest (typically tobacco) and in improvements made to the property.[10] Tenants rarely stayed for prolonged periods and little remains to inform our understanding of their lives, though the archeological record in a broader area of Virginia and Maryland indicates

7 Berger, *Bold, Rocky, and Picturesque*, 17.
8 Berger, *Bold, Rocky, and Picturesque*, 18.
9 The date of this patent is contested but may be 1684. The owner's name has been documented as John (Berger) and William (McNeil). Berger, *Bold, Rocky, and Picturesque*, 26.
10 Berger, *Bold, Rocky, and Picturesque*, 26.

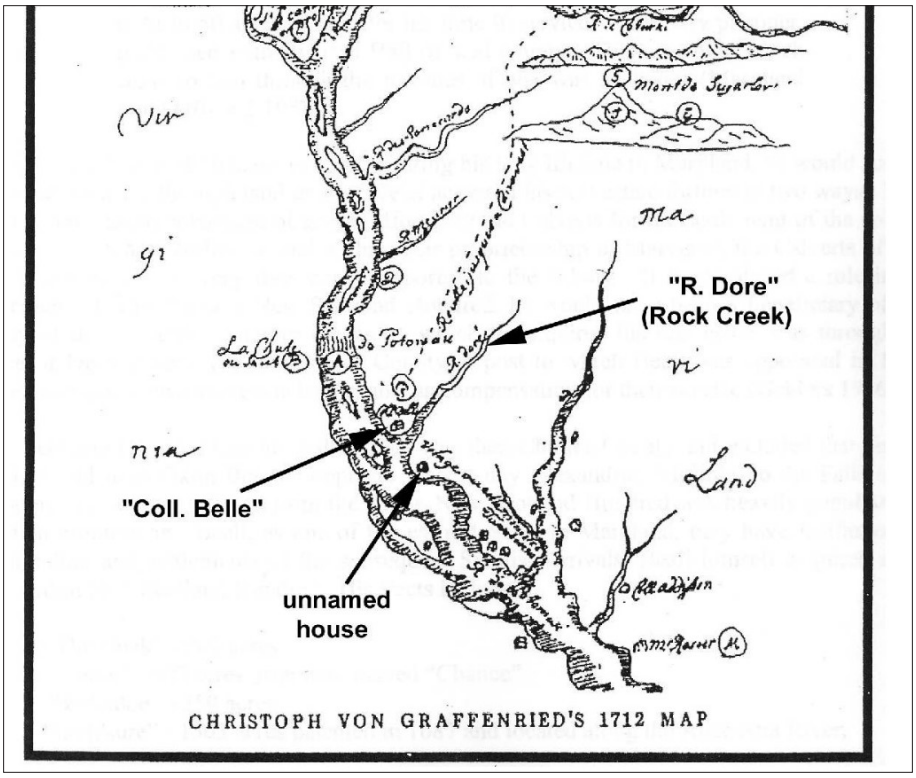


Figure 2-3. An annotated copy of Von Graffenried's 1712 map shows the location of Colonel Belle's residence and an unnamed house at the mouth of Rock Creek (Berger, 2008).

that homestead sites were likely on bluffs above river valleys.[11] Christoph Von Graffenried's map of the area in 1712 marks only two structures at the mouth of Rock Creek, a valuable position for trade as the creek was navigable by large ships up to the location of present-day P Street Bridge (Figure 2-3). In 1714, Thomas Fletchall purchased the Widows Mite patent from Langworth's daughters and built a house along the road that connected Rock Creek to the Anacostia River. His was one of the first dwellings documented in this area.[12]

In 1722, the Treaty of Albany was signed between the Iroquois Five Nations and representatives of the colonies of New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia in an effort to make reparations for the murder of a Susquehannock man named Sawantaeny and to stabilize relationships between colonists and Indigenous groups along the eastern seaboard.[13] Following the treaty, land around Rock Creek and the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers came under more intensive cultivation and commerce increased in the area.[14] As wheat surpassed tobacco in cultivation, mills were needed to process the grain into flour, and Rock Creek's swiftly flowing water provided an ideal setting for milling operations. By 1749, a gristmill was

11 Berger, *Bold, Rocky, and Picturesque*, 27.
12 Priscilla W. McNeil, "Rock Creek Hundred: Land Conveyed for the Federal City" *Washington History* 3, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 1991): 37.
13 Karin Wulf, "A 1722 Murder Spurred Native Americans' Pleas for Justice in Early America," *Smithsonian Magazine*, available at https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/1722-murder-spurred-native-americans-pleas-justice-early-america-180977609/.
14 Berger, *Bold, Rocky, and Picturesque*, 35.

present at Widows Mite on the east bank near the mouth of Rock Creek, and Beall's mill was constructed by 1760.[15] Sixty acres of Beall's land was platted in 1751 to establish "George-Town" (now "Georgetown") on the west side of Rock Creek, and the town of Hamburg, located on the east side, was established in 1768.[16]

LAND ACQUISITION FOR THE CAPITAL CITY

In 1783, following the signing of the Treaty of Paris and the end of the American Revolutionary War, the Continental Congress began to plan for a capital city that would be centrally located within the new nation and be accessible by a navigable waterway. While a location relative to the Delaware River was considered, increased trade by way of the Potomac River, plans for improvements led by Washington's Potowmack Company, and the favorable condition of the land between Rock Creek and the Anacostia for development ultimately led to the designation of the site of present-day Washington, DC, in 1791.[17] That same year, fifteen landowners signed an agreement with President Washington that deeded the holdings required for the new federal city to the public.[18] Prior landholdings and their owners are illustrated in Figure 2-4.

L'ENFANT PLAN

Military engineer Pierre L'Enfant was hired to design the federal city, working in collaboration with surveyor Andrew Ellicott. The three local commissioners appointed to supervise planning and surveying were Thomas Johnson of Frederick, Daniel Carroll of Rock Creek, and David Stuart of Alexandria.[19] During a 1791 survey of the proposed city area, L'Enfant documented the Rock Creek landscape as having "too little level space for the intended city, and he did not like a site dominated by nearby hills as this was," but he reported favorably on the land to the east of Rock Creek.[20] The 1792 plan produced by L'Enfant and Ellicott featured the distinctive network of diagonal axes that intersected the traditional north–south and east–west grid pattern (Figure 2-5). Swaths of public land reinforce the connection between the Capitol and the President's House. A canal connecting Georgetown ports with the deeper water wharves in the Anacostia River was also a part of this initial plan.[21]

15 Berger, *Bold, Rocky, and Picturesque*, 35–38.
16 Eve L. Barsoum, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," January 2005, 8-3.
17 Louis Dow Scisco, "A Site for the 'Federal City': The Original Proprietors and their Negotiations with Washington," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society* 57/59 (1957/1959): 129–31.
18 McNeil, Rock Creek Hundred, 39; Scisco, "A Site for the 'Federal City,'" 123.
19 Scisco, "A Site for the 'Federal City,'" 131.
20 Scisco, "A Site for the 'Federal City,'" 135.
21 Charles LeeDecker, "The L'Enfant Plan," National Park Service, https://www.

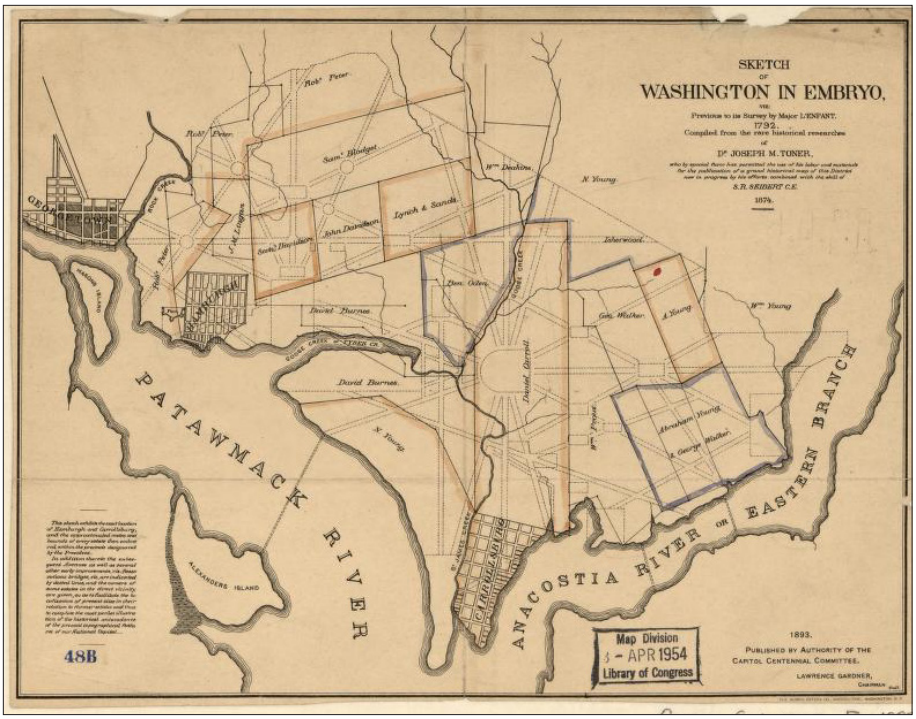


Figure 2-4. A sketch overlaying the L'Enfant plan for Washington with the land ownership prior to 1792 as it was understood by research conducted by historian Joseph M. Toner (Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division).

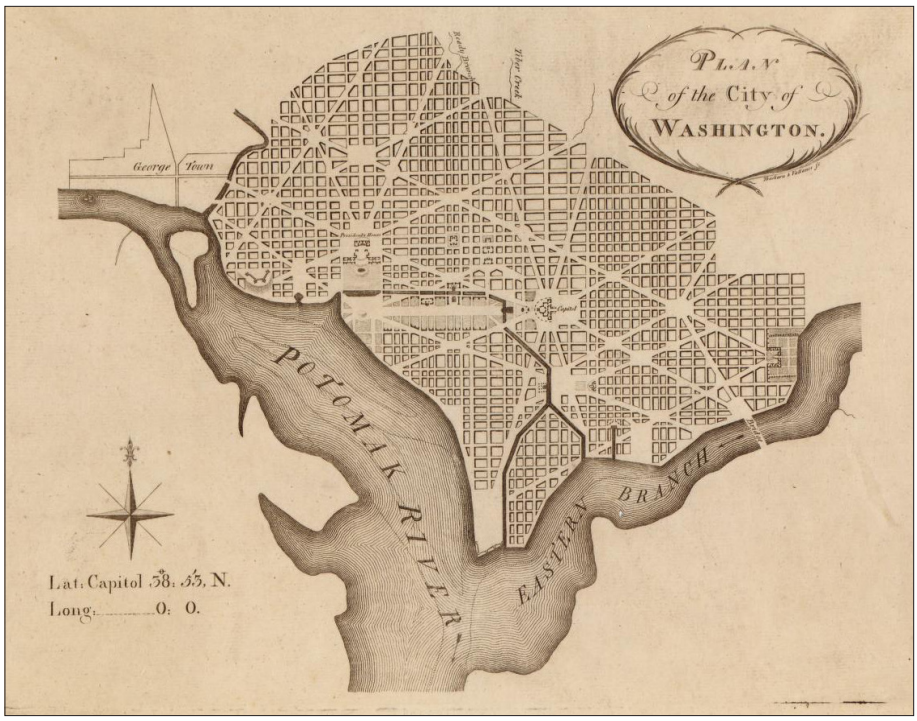


Figure 2-5. L'Enfant plan, as drawn by Andrew Ellicott, of the city of Washington, 1792 (Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division).

EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITY

River and canal-based transportation were foundational considerations for the developing city. George Washington's Potowmack Company completed five skirting canals by 1795 that allowed for navigation around the Potomac River's rapids and falls. Though not ultimately profitable, the Potowmack Company canals led the way for the Chesapeake and Ohio (C&O) Canal, which would connect the growing capital city to goods shipped from western states. The C&O Canal was chartered in 1825 with the aim of creating a single canal route that would run parallel to the Potomac River.[22] The C&O Canal was completed in 1850 and the terminus was located in Georgetown, where Lock 1 drained to Rock Creek just south of Pennsylvania Avenue NW. Boschke's topographical map of the District of Columbia in 1861 illustrates the relationship between the terminus of the canal, the mouth of Rock Creek, and Potomac River access at this time (Figure 2-6).

With the creek navigable by relatively large vessels to modern-day P Street, numerous industries took advantage of this proximity to both the budding federal city and Georgetown with its established trade economy. Historian Tim Davis details that throughout the nineteenth century, "Industrial enterprises located along the lower reaches of Rock Creek included a rope walk, a paint factory,



Figure 2-6. The C&O Canal terminated at Rock Creek south of Pennsylvania Avenue NW, 1861 (Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division).

nps.gov/articles/dc-monumental-core-the-lenfant-plan.htm#:~:text=Pierre%20L%27Enfant%27s%20city%20plan,Capitol%20and%20the%20President%27s%20House.

22 Philip S. Romigh, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, "Chesapeake and Ohio Canal," March 1979.

wagon works, tanneries, lime kilns, a coffin maker, sawmills and lumber yards."[23] Population growth and access to regional markets prompted an increase in wheat production and a boom in gristmills constructed to take advantage of Rock Creek's flow and position, though the addition of the canal terminus in 1830 altered the watercourse significantly and following its completion milling was no longer viable in this part of the creek.[24] The Lyons Mill, constructed at the base of Mill Street in 1780 by Pigman and Crow, was operational until 1875 when flooding and the invention of steam-powered machinery made repairs impractical.[25] Limestone delivered via the C&O Canal was transported to the Godey Lime Kilns (located just east of where the canal entered Rock Creek) for processing between 1833 and 1908.

In addition to industrial activities, the landscape around Rock Creek Valley changed dramatically during this period in response to residential development. Many of the large landholdings patented in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries were divided as population increased. Two notable exceptions were the Linthicum estate, the site of modern-day Dumbarton Oaks, and Kalorama, which occupied much of the east side of the valley between P Street and Connecticut Avenue NW.[26]

Starting in the nineteenth century, infrastructure projects to support the growing urban population began on numerous fronts. The conveyance of potable water, carriages, and human waste were primary concerns to planners and engineers. In 1853, construction began on the Washington Aqueduct with the aim of bringing potable water from the Potomac River above Great Falls into Georgetown and Washington. To span Rock Creek, the Aqueduct Bridge was constructed between 1858 and 1860 at the site of the present-day Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge.[27] At the time, the bridge was one of the largest single-span, iron pipe, arcuated structures in the world and also included a roadbed that would support increased traffic between the cities. Expansion of the aqueduct system in the 1880s and into the twentieth century resulted in the construction of a pumping station on the east side of the Rock Creek Valley that facilitated the movement of water between Georgetown and McMillan reservoirs.[28] The Woodley Lane Bridge was constructed in 1888–89 to provide general access across the valley and specifically

23 Timothy Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, Washington DC: Evolution of a Contested Urban Landscape," *Studies in the History of Gardens and Designed Landscapes* 19, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 130.
24 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway" 131.
25 Eve L. Barsoum, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District" (January 2005), 8-4.
26 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 132.
27 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 8-4.
28 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 8-5.

to convey President Taft from the White House to his estate, Woodlawn, on the west side of the valley.[29]

In 1810, the city of Washington began construction on a storm sewer system to remove waste from its growing neighborhoods. Conduits were designed to drain to the nearest waterway, and as a result, Rock Creek became the outlet for a growing network of pipes. Following the Civil War, Georgetown and its northwest suburbs also constructed a sewer system that overflowed to Rock Creek in numerous places. By 1889, the contamination of Rock Creek from this system was a major public health concern for city residents.[30]

CEMETERY DEVELOPMENT IN THE ROCK CREEK VALLEY

Mount Zion Cemetery

South of Mill Street, the old Methodist Episcopal (M. E.) Burying Ground was deeded to Ebenezer Eliason on behalf of the Montgomery Street M. E. Church on October 13, 1808. The Mount Zion United Methodist Church was formed by the Black members of the Montgomery Street Church in 1816 and is considered the oldest Black congregation in the District of Columbia. The church played an active role in the community, establishing one of the earliest schools for Black children in 1823 and actively hiding enslaved persons as a stop on the Underground Railroad. In 1875, the church purchased a plot of land from local businessman Alfred Pope and constructed a restrained-Gothic-style red brick church, which was dedicated in 1884. The church, at 1334 29th Street NW, was placed roughly three blocks west and three blocks south of the cemetery (Figure 2-7). A 99-year lease of the cemetery from the Montgomery Street M. E. Church (then known as the Dumbarton Street M. E. Church) was signed in 1893, during which time Mount Zion was to manage maintenance and improvements.

Female Union Band Society Cemetery

Directly west of the Mount Zion Cemetery is a plot of land purchased in 1842 for the Female Union Band Society, formed in the same year. The society, whose members pledge to aid each other in sickness and death, was founded by a group of free Black women who maintained the cemetery. Services provided by and to members of the society included a $2 per week stipend when sick and $20 for funeral services should a member pass away. These and other bylaws of the society were published in 1859.[31] Both the Mount Zion United Methodist Church and the Female Union Band Society served the Black population of the

29 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 8-5.
30 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 8-4.
31 Tanya Beauchamp, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, "Mount Zion Cemetery (Methodist Episcopal Burying Grounds; Female Union Band Society Graveyard)," June 1975.



Figure 2-7. Street-level view of Mount Zion United Methodist Church at 1334 29th Street NW in 1969 (Historic American Buildings Survey, photograph by J. Alexander and Jack Boucher, Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division).

greater Georgetown area, with a concentration living in a neighborhood known as Boston, south of M Street and east of Wisconsin Avenue. Centered around "Herring Hill," a high point near P Street, the neighborhood was a thriving and vibrant community that expanded in the years around the Civil War.[32]

Oak Hill Cemetery

Directly northwest of the Female Union Band Society Cemetery, the Oak Hill Cemetery was founded in 1848 by banker W. W. Corcoran and became a resting place for prominent citizens from Georgetown and Washington, DC. The cemetery was only open, however, to the city's White population.

Mount Pleasant Plains Cemetery

The Colored Union Benevolent Association established the Mount Pleasant Plains Cemetery in 1870 where Calvert Street NW meets the Rock Creek Valley. Originally formed as the Free Young Men's Benevolent Association in 1838, the Colored Union Benevolent Association was a Black fraternal organization that was one of among several such groups in Eastern US cities. Members of the group assisted one another in times of sickness, unemployment, and death. The cemetery closed in 1890, at which time the US government acquired some of the

32 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 132.

land and folded it into what would become the National Zoological Park and Rock Creek Park.[33]

The portion of the present-day cemetery between the Calvert Street (Duke Ellington) Bridge and the Zoo Tunnel is owned and managed by the National Park Service. The cemetery boundaries extend into Walter Pierce Park (owned and managed by DC Parks) and the Smithsonian National Zoological Park (owned and managed by the Smithsonian Institution).

EARLY RECREATIONAL USE OF ROCK CREEK VALLEY

The Rock Creek Valley served as a place of gathering and recreation for a diverse array of the District of Columbia's residents during this period. The landscape's picturesque quality invited urban citizens to explore and escape the city. Montrose Park and the Oak Hill Cemetery were destinations for picnicking and public gatherings. "Lover's Lane" near Normanstone Trail was a secluded path that took advantage of the valley's sheltered woodlands and creek views. The area's youth explored the ruins of past industrial activities and utilized the creek's many naturally occurring swimming holes. The Black population celebrated in the landscape known as Jacob's Grove, near modern-day Rose Park, with parades, processions, music, and picnicking near the creek. Baptisms were also held in Rock Creek by the Mount Zion Methodist Church through the early twentieth century. In the 1880s, a large riding stable was located east of Rock Creek near P Street, providing affluent visitors the opportunity to explore informal paths along the creek on horseback.[34]

THE PARK CONCEPT

In the mid-nineteenth century, the urban park movement emerged as a product of an increasingly urban population and a new school of thought of people as products of their environment. Parks provided places of respite from urban life and were seen by proponents as socially and economically beneficial to surrounding areas.[35] Following the authorization of Central Park in New York City in 1853, many American cities sought to emulate its success with parks and boulevards of their own. In the United States, certain designers became synonymous with the park movement, including Andrew Jackson Downing, Frederick Law Olmsted, and Calvert Vaux. Downing's book, *Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening,* educated America's middle and upper

33 *Walter Pierce Cemeteries*, accessed March 14, 2024, available at https://walterpierceparkcemeteries.org/; "African American cemetery," National Park Service, accessed March 14, 2024, available at https://www.nps.gov/places/000/african-american-cemetery.htm.
34 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 133–35.
35 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 8-2.



Figure 2-8. Detail, Albert Boschke, *Topographical map of the District of Columbia*, 1861 (Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division).

classes on the concepts and styles of landscape and advocated for the creation of public parks.[36] His influence is reflected in the works of Olmsted and Vaux, including their design for Central Park and Prospect Park, whose picturesque approaches helped to establish the term "park-way" (later as "parkway") in 1868.[37]

In 1866, Major Nathaniel Michler, a part of the US Army Corps of Engineers, was directed to identify parcels of land for the establishment of a new presidential mansion, the grounds of which might also serve as a park. The following year, Michler reported that the upper valley of Rock Creek would meet all the necessary requirements of fresh water and access to the city, and that a park of up to 2,500 acres might be established in that location.[38] The concept of linking the National Mall and the park in the upper Rock Creek Valley was first documented

36 "Andrew Downing," The Cultural Landscape Foundation, https://www.tclf.org/pioneer/andrew-jackson-downing.

37 LANDSCAPES, *Colonial Parkway Context: History of the American Parkway Movement, National Park Service Design, and Historic Preservation Contexts* (Prepared for the National Park Service, November 1998), 2.

38 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 8-7.

in 1867 and was generally supported in the years following. In spite of general approval, Rock Creek Park was not formally established by Congress until 1890.[39]

LANDSCAPE CONDITION, 1889

Spatial Organization

Spatial organization of the study area in 1889 was primarily determined by the natural topography of the landscape. Rock Creek Valley formed a natural boundary between the emerging federal city of Washington and the established trade center of Georgetown and was used by L'Enfant as a marker of the federal city's limits.

Circulation

Roads dictated by the L'Enfant plan formed the eastern boundary of the study area, with some connecting across the valley via early bridges to roads in Georgetown. Circulation on Rock Creek was open to boats and barges that could navigate the creek between the Potomac River and P Street until 1830 with the development of Potomac Riverfront quay.[40] North of P Street, equestrians followed the creek through the valley on informal bridle paths. Pedestrians made numerous informal paths between settlements on either side of the valley and the creek for recreational purposes. Fords across the creek were present at multiple locations and Park Road followed the alignment of Rock Creek on the east side of the valley. Near the southern boundary, the C&O Canal conveyed commercial transportation to the Potomac River and beyond via the mouth of Rock Creek.

Natural Systems

By 1889, water quality in lower Rock Creek was extremely poor. The combination of industrial activities, outflows from the combined sewer systems on both sides of the valley, and general dumping created a toxic combination south of P Street.[41]

Topography

Topography was a defining feature of the study area landscape. North of P Street, the naturally steep topography limited development outside of the relatively flat valley floor around Lyons Mill. The natural topography of the valley south of P Street was completely obscured by development and dumping.

39 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 8-2.
40 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 8-3.
41 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 8-2.

Land Use

Land uses in the study area in 1889 included transportation, industry, agriculture, and recreation.

Vegetation

Vegetation types illustrated as a part of an 1861 topographic map by Albert Boschke include forest, meadow/pasture, agricultural fields, and orchards (Figure 2-8). In general, the southern part of the study area was developed as part of Georgetown and Washington while the northern part of the study area was a patchwork of forest, pasture, and fields. Orchards were associated with homestead sites such as the Lyons homestead.

Views and Vistas

In general, views to the valley from neighboring developed areas north of P Street were valued for their rustic and sylvan character. Pedestrians and equestrians utilizing the valley's trails enjoyed views of Rock Creek and the surrounding valley. Views south of P Street were dominated by urban and industrial development and the hillsides flanking the creek were cluttered with waste material and dense, woody vegetation.

Buildings and Structures

Buildings and structures within the study area in 1889 were concentrated south of P Street with the exception of the Lyons Mill and homestead at the base of Mill Street and the pumping station and caretaker's cottage near Massachusetts Avenue. Buildings south of P Street included residences and industrial facilities such as the Godey Lime Kilns. A schoolhouse that served the African American community was located near the intersection of 27th Street and Virginia Avenue NW. Bridges present in the study area by 1889 included the K Street Bridge, Aqueduct Bridge (at Pennsylvania Avenue), M Street Bridge, P Street Bridge, Truss Bridge (at Massachusetts Avenue), and Woodley Lane Bridge.

ESTABLISHMENT OF ROCK CREEK PARK AND THE ROCK CREEK AND POTOMAC PARKWAY, 1890–1936

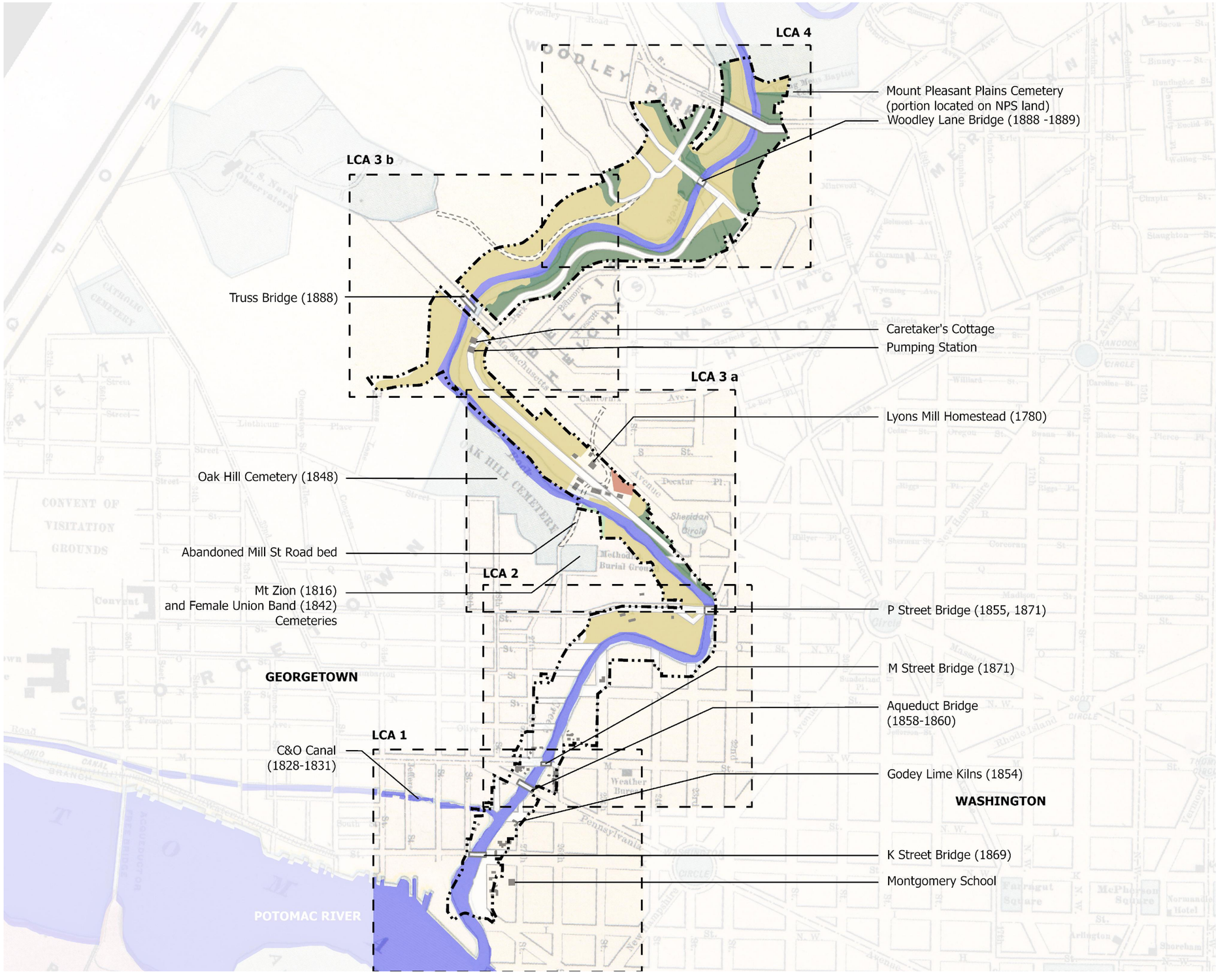
In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, suburban development brought Washington, DC, beyond the L'Enfant plan's boundaries and piqued widespread interest in redeveloping the Rock Creek Valley, which wound through the newly expanded city. After Rock Creek Park was established in 1890, public and private interests proposed various plans for connecting it to the National Mall via a parkway. Congressional approval was secured in 1913, followed by a lengthy design process during the subsequent decades that attempted to balance conservation of the natural surroundings with the need for a contemporary roadway. A contentious land acquisition process ensued that resulted in forced eviction and the demolition of houses in a majority-African American neighborhood and taking nearly one-third of Mount Zion Cemetery. Constructed between 1924 and 1936, the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway constituted a dramatic reshaping of the Rock Creek Valley landscape.

ESTABLISHMENT OF ROCK CREEK PARK

By the late nineteenth century, developers began acquiring lands beyond the L'Enfant plan for new suburban neighborhoods in Northwest DC. These new neighborhoods, such as Kalorama, Woodley Park, Cleveland Park, and Chevy Chase pushed the city north of the Rock Creek Valley. New electric street car lines, such as the Georgetown and Tennallytown (now Tenleytown) electric streetcar line along Wisconsin Avenue and the Rock Creek Railway streetcar line built on Connecticut Avenue in 1892, lured residents who desired to live outside of the urban core but still wanted access to city jobs and amenities.[42]

Establishment of these new neighborhoods brought fresh attention to the adjacent wooded area flanking Rock Creek. As early as 1854, John Fletcher, owner of the Kalorama estate, proposed setting aside 300 acres along the creek to be a public garden and site of a new presidential mansion. Frederick Law Olmsted also promoted the idea of developing Rock Creek into a park but did not make specific plans. Finally, in 1866, the US Senate Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds directed Major Nathaniel Michler of the US Army Corps of Engineers to study the viability of Rock Creek as a public park. Michler proposed selective pruning and removal of trees to create vistas, either improving existing roads or building new roads, introducing new trees and shrubs from different climates, and damming Rock Creek in several places to establish ornamental lakes and ponds. Cognizant of the expense involved in creating parkland along the entire stretch of Rock Creek Valley through the District, Michler instead focused on what he saw

42 Kimberly Prothro Williams, "Cleveland Park Historic District," brochure published by DC Preservation League (2001).



Cultural Landscape Report

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway
Washington, DC

Overall Study Area
Historic Period Plan, 1889

National Park Service
National Capital Region

Sources

1. Park boundaries from National Park Service, National Capital Region, Rock Creek Park, 2022.
2. Vegetation, buildings and structures, and minor roads from 1861 Boschke Topographical Map of DC.
3. Roads from 1898 Rand McNally Map of DC.

Drawn By

Quinn Evans, ArcGIS Pro 3.1.3, 2024

Legend

- CLR Boundary
- LCA Sheet
- Maintained Landscape
- Open Water
- Mixed Forest
- Orchard
- Road
- Road (Minor)
- Bridge
- Building/Structure
- Cemetery

Notes

1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N.
2. 1898 Rand McNally Map of DC shown as background.

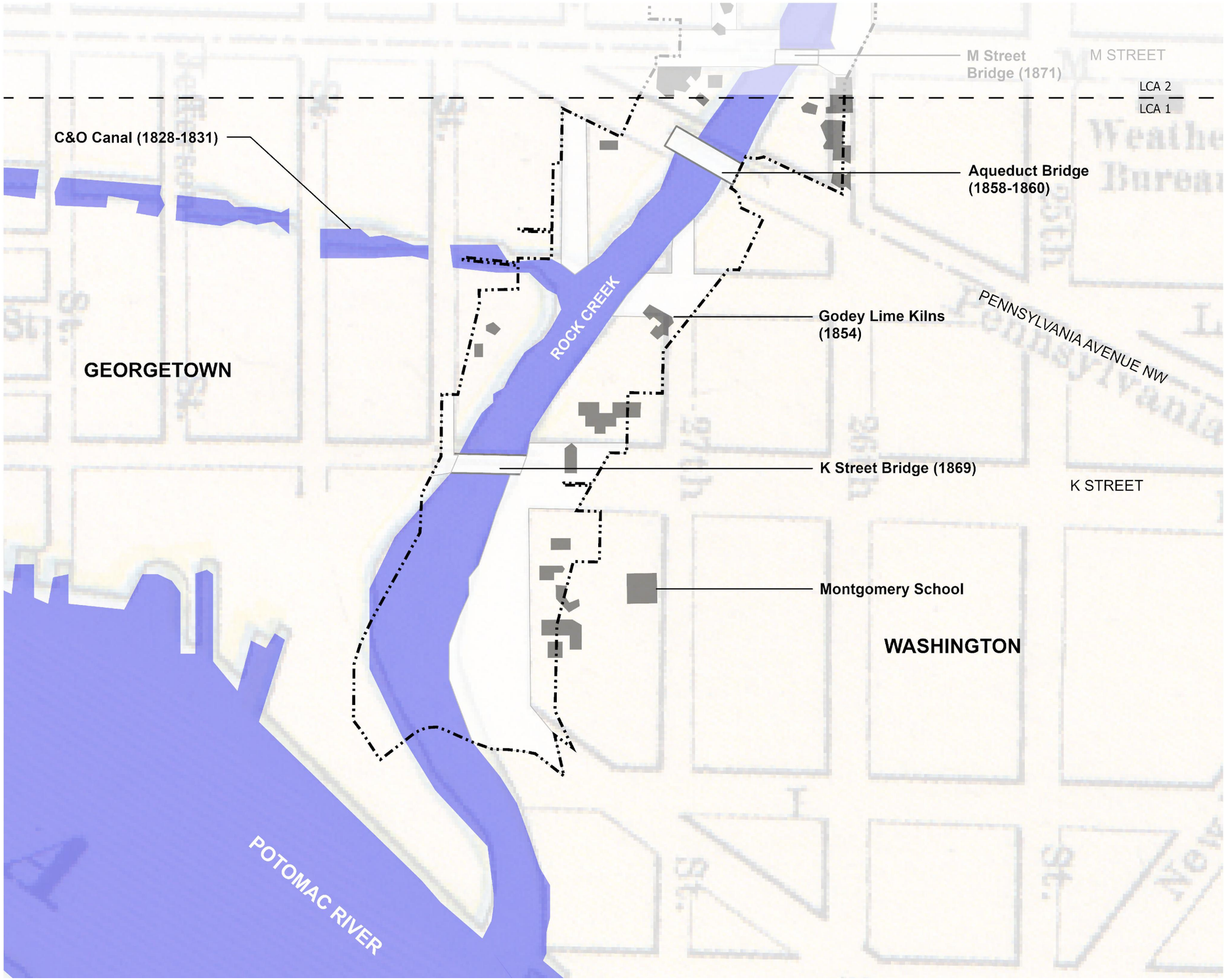
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Feet

Drawing HPP-1 Overall

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Cultural Landscape Report

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway
Washington, DC

LCA 1
From Virginia Ave NW to Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Historic Period Plan, 1889

National Park Service
National Capital Region

Sources
1. Park boundaries from National Park Service, National Capital Region, Rock Creek Park, 2022.
2. Vegetation, buildings and structures, and minor roads from 1861 Boschke Topographical Map of DC.
3. Roads from 1898 Rand McNally Map of DC.

Drawn By
Quinn Evans, ArcGIS Pro 3.1.3, 2024

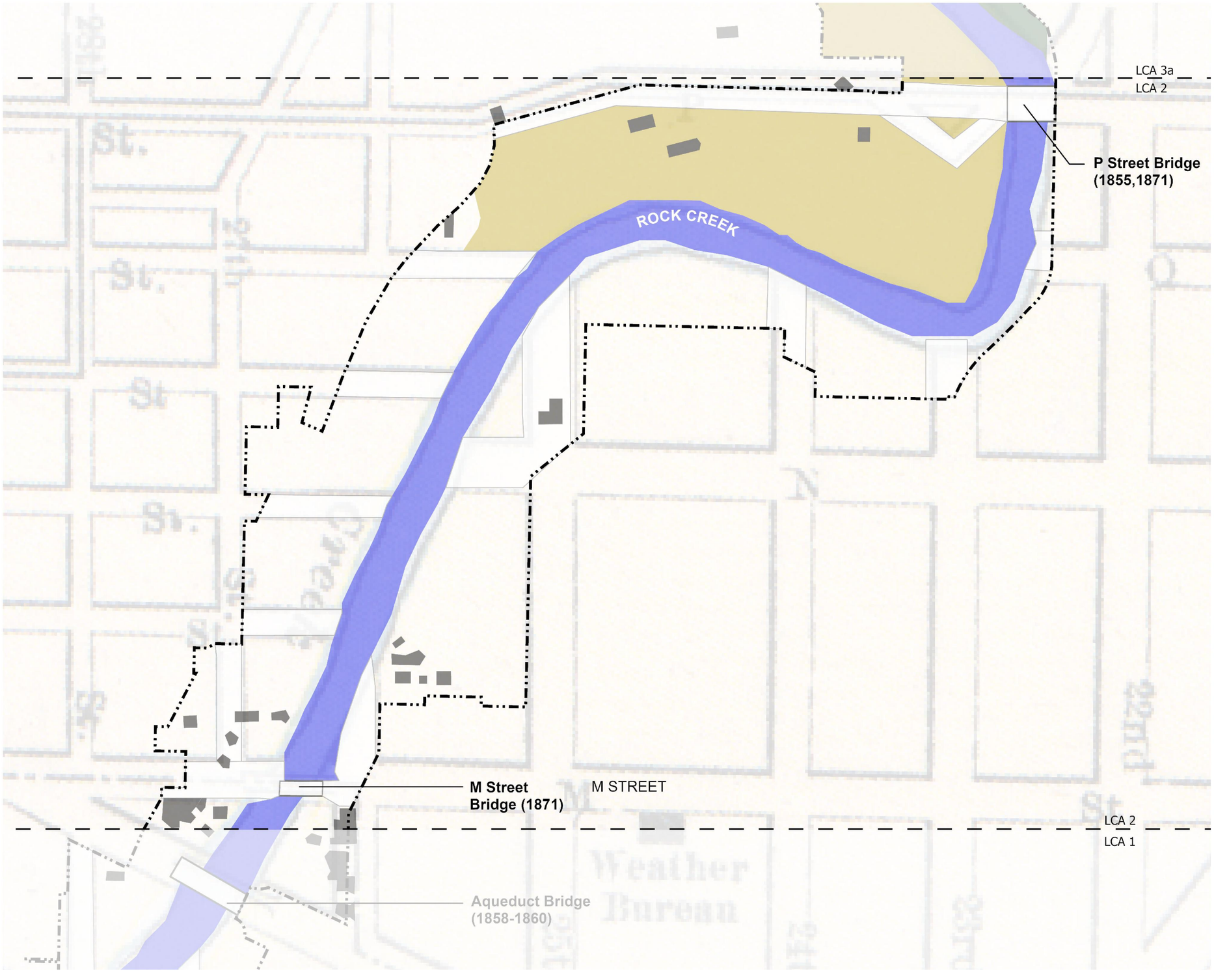
Legend
- CLR Boundary
- LCA Match Line
- Open Water
- Road
- Bridge
- Building/Structure

Notes
1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N.
2. 1898 Rand McNally Map of DC shown as background.

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Drawing HPP1-1

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Cultural Landscape Report

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway
Washington, DC

LCA 2
from Pennsylvania Avenue NW to
P Street NW
Historic Period Plan, 1889

National Park Service
National Capital Region

Sources

1. Park boundaries from National Park Service, National Capital Region, Rock Creek Park, 2022.
2. Vegetation, buildings and structures, and minor roads from 1861 Boschke Topographical Map of DC.
3. Roads from 1898 Rand McNally Map of DC.

Drawn By

Quinn Evans, ArcGIS Pro 3.1.3, 2024

Legend

- CLR Boundary
- LCA Match Line
- Maintained Landscape
- Open Water
- Mixed Forest
- Road
- Bridge
- Building/Structure

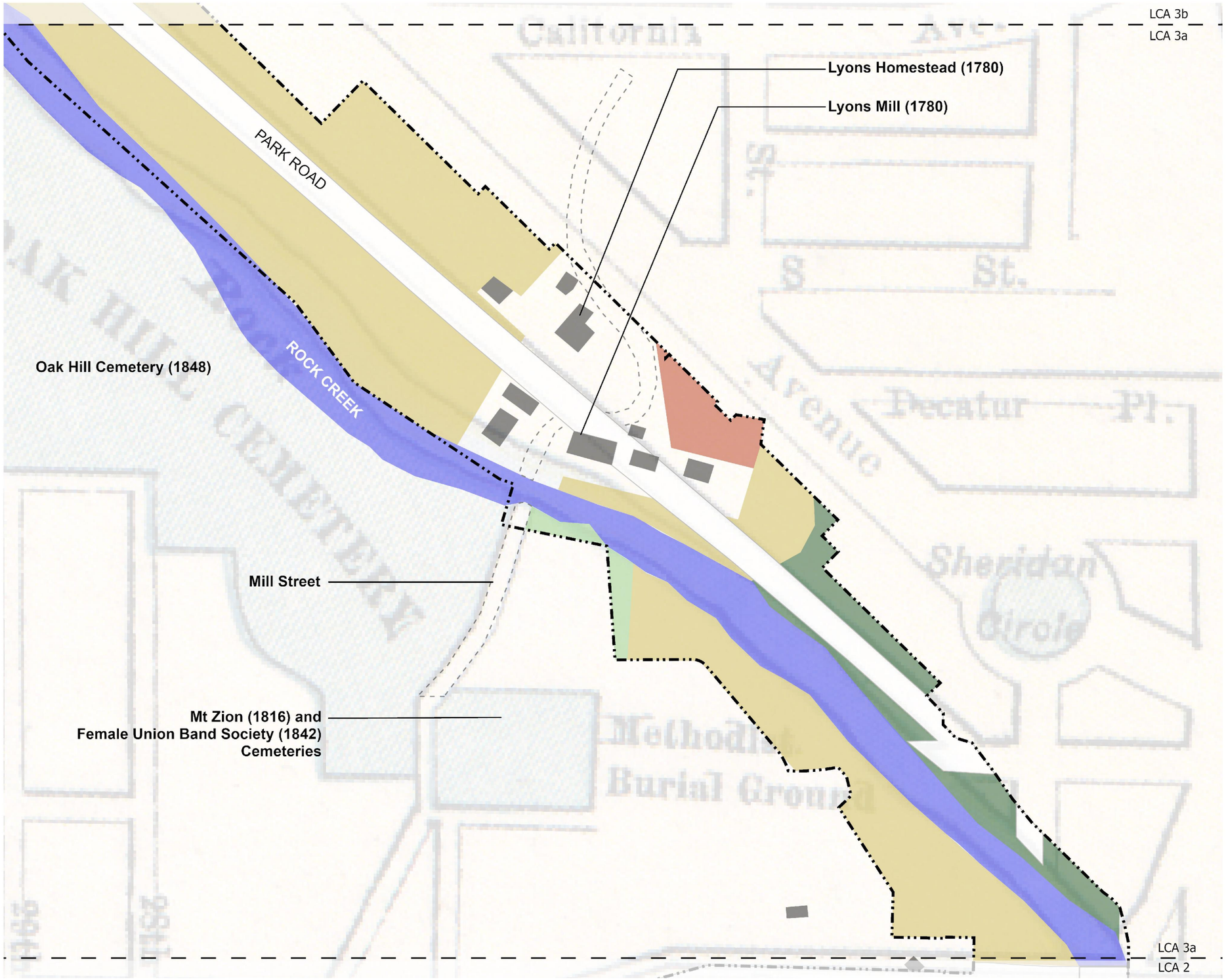
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1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N.
2. 1898 Rand McNally Map of DC shown as background.

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Drawing HPP1-2

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Cultural Landscape Report

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway
Washington, DC

LCA 3
from P Street NW to Saddle Club Footbridge
Historic Period Plan 1889

National Park Service
National Capital Region

Sources

1. Park boundaries from National Park Service, National Capital Region, Rock Creek Park, 2022.
2. Vegetation, buildings and structures, and minor roads from 1861 Boschke Topographical Map of DC.
3. Roads from 1898 Rand McNally Map of DC.

Drawn By

Quinn Evans, ArcGIS Pro 3.1.3, 2024

Legend

- CLR Boundary
- LCA Match Line
- Maintained Landscape
- Open Water
- Mixed Forest
- Orchard
- Road
- Road (Minor)
- Bridge
- Building/Structure
- Cemetery

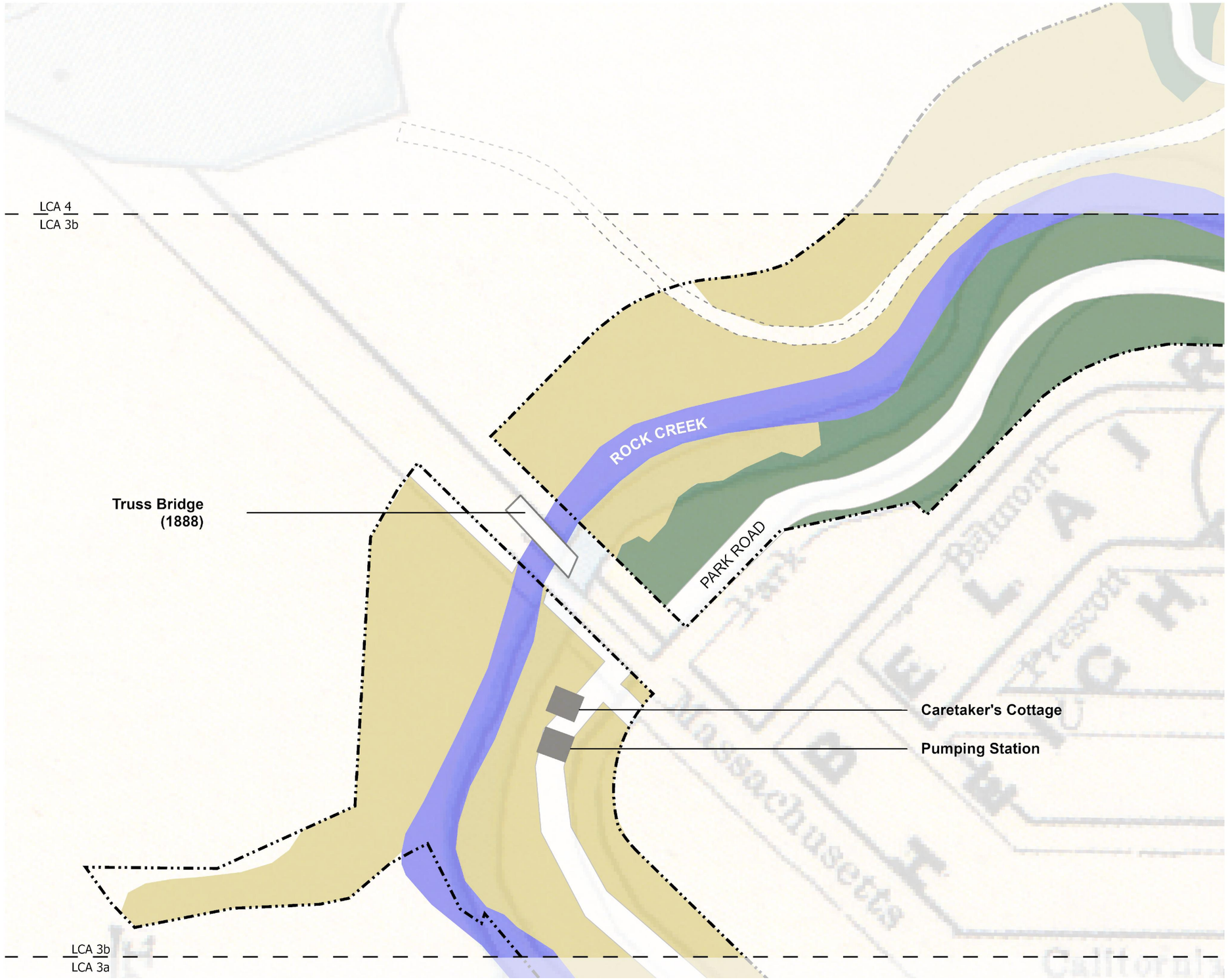
Notes

1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N.
2. 1898 Rand McNally Map of DC shown as background.

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Drawing HPP1-3a

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Cultural Landscape Report

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway
Washington, DC

LCA 3
from P Street NW to Saddle Club Footbridge
Historic Period Plan, 1889

National Park Service
National Capital Region

Sources

1. Park boundaries from National Park Service, National Capital Region, Rock Creek Park, 2022.
2. Vegetation, buildings and structures, and minor roads from 1861 Boschke Topographical Map of DC.
3. Roads from 1898 Rand McNally Map of DC.

Drawn By

Quinn Evans, ArcGIS Pro 3.1.3, 2024

Legend

- CLR Boundary
- LCA Match Line
- Maintained Landscape
- Open Water
- Mixed Forest
- Road
- Road (Minor)
- Bridge
- Building/Structure

Notes

1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N.
2. 1898 Rand McNally Map of DC shown as background.

N 0 100 200 400 Feet

Drawing HPP1-3b

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Cultural Landscape Report

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway
Washington, DC

LCA 4
from the Saddle Club Footbridge to National Zoological Park Tunnel
Historic Period Plan, 1889

National Park Service
National Capital Region

Sources

1. Park boundaries from National Park Service, National Capital Region, Rock Creek Park, 2022.
2.Vegetation, buildings and structures, and minor roads from 1861 Boschke Topographical Map of DC.
3. Roads from 1898 Rand McNally Map of DC.

Drawn By

Quinn Evans, ArcGIS Pro 3.1.3, 2024

Legend

- CLR Boundary
- LCA Match Line
- Maintained Landscape
- Open Water
- Mixed Forest
- Road
- Road (Minor)
- Bridge

Notes

1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N.
2. 1898 Rand McNally Map of DC shown as background.

N 0 100 200 400 Feet

Drawing HPP1-4

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as the more remote and picturesque area north of the present-day National Zoo. Although additional proposals followed Michler's, including some that proposed a Rock Creek Park with a boundary as far south as P Street NW, Congress did not take action on the establishment of a public park. Many members of Congress in the late nineteenth century were resistant to approving federal expenditures that primarily benefitted District residents, and, as a result, proposals languished through the 1880s.[43]

The Washington Board of Trade, established in 1889, promoted the creation of a park and proposed connecting it to the Mall and Washington Monument by way of the lower valley (Figure 2-9).[44] The board produced a report in 1889 that extolled the benefits of transforming the lower Rock Creek Valley from "a most hideously unsightly dumping ditch" and "noisome and repulsive dumping ground" by creating a scenic parkway for carriages, equestrians, and pedestrians (Figure 2-10).[45] By the late nineteenth century, the Rock Creek Valley was a disjointed combination of stretches of wooded park-like settings; stretches of dumped industrial debris and ashes; and a few scattered built features. Steep slopes at the north end of the valley largely retained their wooded character. The valley between Connecticut Avenue NW and Q Street NW remained largely undeveloped, except for a few houses along its eastern bank near Sheridan Circle. A pumping station and caretaker's house were located at the valley's bottom below the Massachusetts Avenue NW line and the remains of the historic Lyons Mill remained across from Oak Hill and Mount Zion/Female Union Band Society cemeteries (Figure 2-11). Circulation included a steep dirt road from the Georgetown area, between Oak Hill and Mount Zion/Female Union Band Society cemeteries, to the mill site. A slightly more graded country road known as Waterside Drive ran along the valley's east side along the approximate current location of the access road, called Waterside Drive NW, to Massachusetts Avenue NW.[46]

Congress formally established Rock Creek Park following a bipartisan effort by Senator Sherman from Ohio and Representative Hemphill from South Carolina to rouse both houses of Congress to action.[47] President Benjamin Harrison signed the legislation into law on September 27, 1890. While the designation of the park provided an invaluable asset to Washington DC's public, select members of the Board of Trade and Congress would personally benefit from landholdings in the vicinity. Planners and legislators alike hoped that the establishment of the park

43 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 136–37.
44 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 8-7.
45 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 146.
46 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 145.
47 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 8-7.

would spur urban and suburban development in adjacent areas, fulfilling the expanded vision of L'Enfant's plan and the outermost suburbs of Washington, DC (see Figure 2-9). The enacting legislation for Rock Creek Park, however, did not include provision for treatment of the valley below the northern boundary of the National Zoo, which congressional legislation established in 1889.[48]

On a national scale, the establishment of Rock Creek Park fit into a land conservation movement begun in 1872 with the designation of Yellowstone as the first "national park" set aside for preservation and public enjoyment.[49] The same day that Congress approved legislation for Rock Creek Park, it also authorized the creation of the country's second permanent national park, Sequoia.[50] Just four days later, General Grant (now Kings Canyon) and Yosemite were approved, situating Rock Creek Park within the early federal park movement, which would eventually form the basis for the National Park Service.[51] Rock Creek Park's enabling legislation established the Rock Creek Park Commission to oversee land condemnation and acquisition. The process was completed in April 1892.[52]

While the Washington Board of Trade members campaigned for the reclamation of the lower Rock Creek Valley by way of a picturesque parkway, many Georgetown-area businessmen argued that the best solution to the polluted section of the valley was to fill it in entirely, putting Rock Creek into a culvert and creating a boulevard that connected Washington, DC, and the Georgetown area at a single elevation. They believed the easy connection and new, valuable land created would best solve the challenge of the lower valley.[53] This concept of open versus closed valley remained a part of park discourse for years to come.

CITY BEAUTIFUL AND AMERICAN PARKWAY MOVEMENTS

Concepts from the nineteenth-century park movement combined with those of social reform to produce the City Beautiful movement, which held that exposure to well-designed civic spaces such as parks, streets, and buildings would encourage pride and productivity in the working classes.[54] Inspired by the temporary White City of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893, architects, landscape architects, and planners in the 1890s–1920s sought to improve cities' appearance through comprehensive planning. The City Beautiful movement applied the balance and harmony of European classical architecture

48 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 137.
49 Barry Mackintosh, *Rock Creek Park: An Administrative History* (Washington, DC: Department of the Interior, 1985), 13.
50 Mackintosh, *Rock Creek Park: An Administrative History*, 13.
51 Mackintosh, *Rock Creek Park: An Administrative History*, 14.
52 Mackintosh, *Rock Creek Park: An Administrative History*, 18.
53 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 8-15.
54 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 8-9.

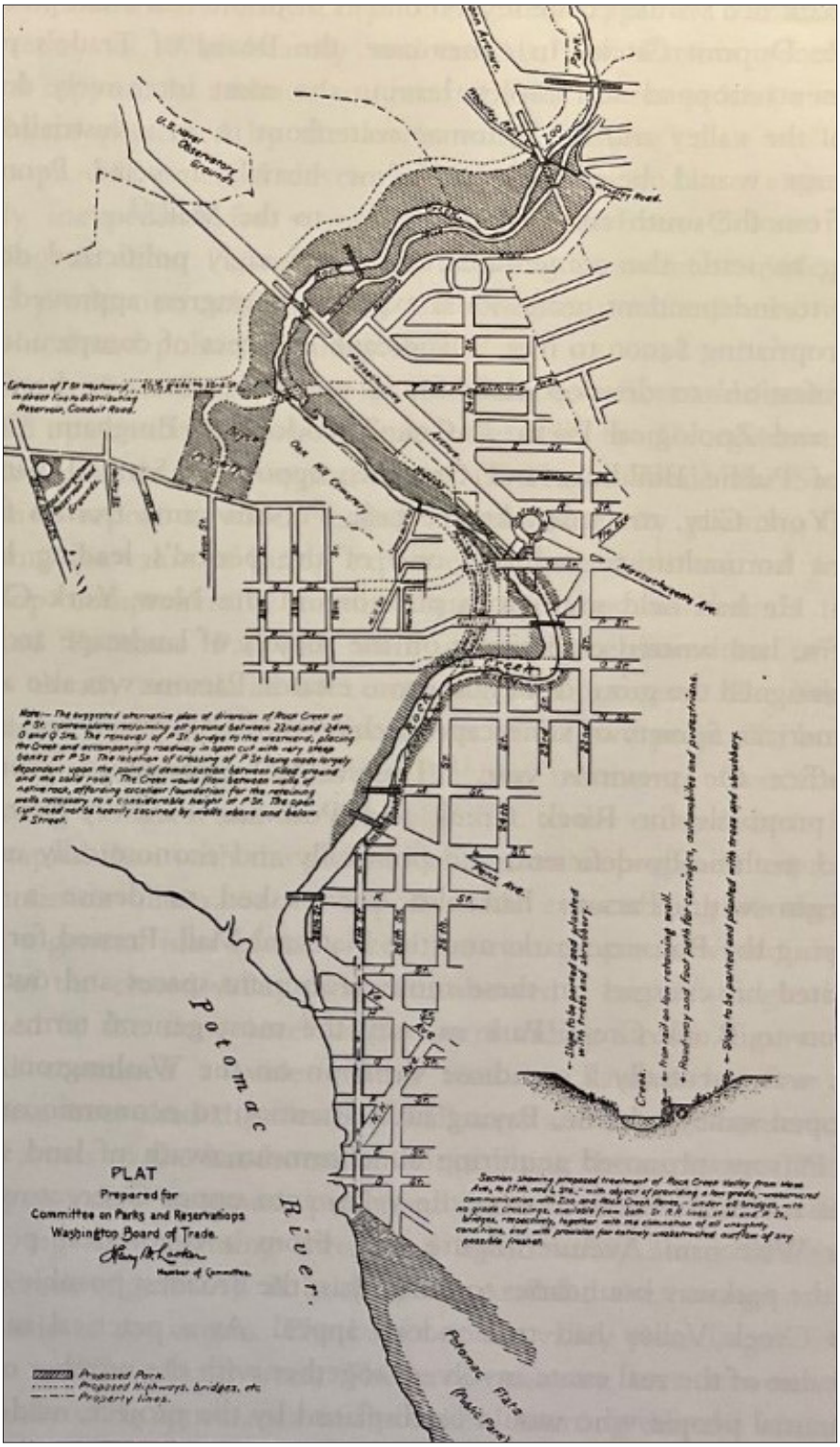


Figure 2-9. The Washington Board of Trade's "Open Valley" plan put forth as a part of their report in 1899 (Park Improvement Papers, 1902 (reprint) via Davis, 1999).

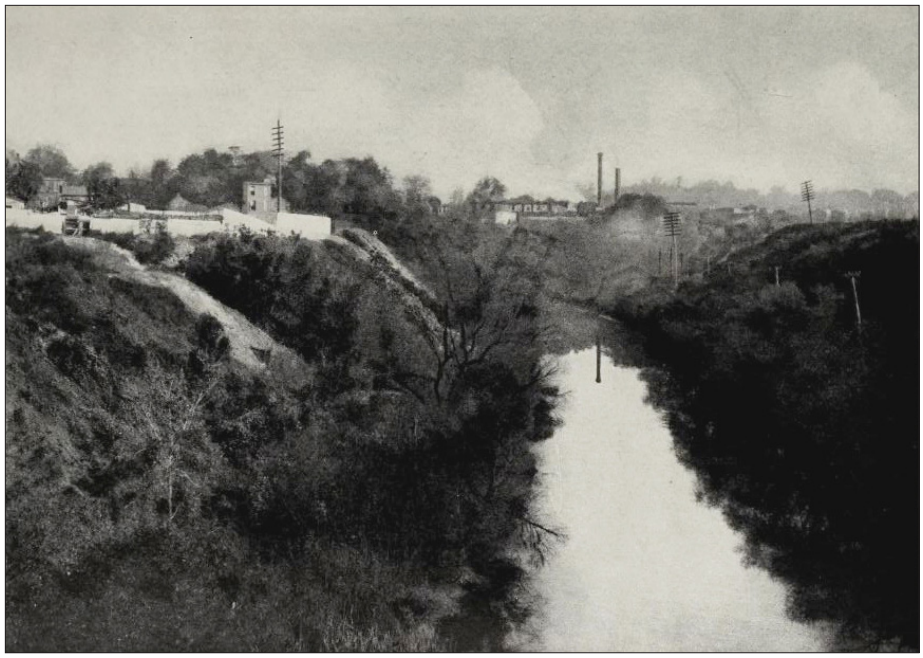


Figure 2-10. The character of the Rock Creek Valley north of M Street c. 1900 was highly industrial and waste and debris were dumped directly into the valley (from Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia, 1902).



Figure 2-11. The caretaker's cottage (foreground) and pumping station (behind) from the Massachusetts Avenue embankment, facing southwest (People's Archive–DC Public Library, 1928).

and planning to American cities. Advocates of the movement emphasized building civic centers, grand boulevards, parks, and parkways.

By the end of the nineteenth century, developing American cities prided themselves on the planning of integrated park systems such as Boston's Emerald Necklace. Integral to these systems was the parkway. First coined in connection with Prospect Park in New York, the term had come to encompass formal and informal roadways connecting parks in the system. According to historian Timothy Davis, the parkway's "primary purpose was to serve as elongated ribbons of greenery, spreading the benefits of park development throughout

the urban landscape and enabling excursionists to travel from park to park or from residential areas and civic centers to suburban pleasure grounds without encountering the dangers and disruptions of crowded city streets."[55] Following the creation of Rock Creek Park in 1890, public opinion suggested that Rock Creek Valley was the ideal corridor to establish such a connection between the city's monumental core and the Zoological and Rock Creek parks to the northwest.

The development of the parkway as a concept is rooted in the nineteenth-century park movement. As the earliest American public parks, the cemeteries of the rural cemetery movement were designed to provide a place of rest and escape from urban life. These cemeteries, such as the Cemetery of the Evergreens in Brooklyn, emphasized vistas from rolling hills and curving drives that provided both circulation to grave sites and picturesque views.[56] Wealthy carriage owners enthusiastically embraced these new parks and the drives within them as opportunities to showcase their vehicles and promenade their new outfits. They began lobbying cities to build parks with similar pleasure drives, without the somber feeling and membership restrictions of cemeteries.

New York City's Central Park, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux (a student of Downing), became the prototype for this new park when it debuted in 1857. The park included a system of winding carriage drives (or parkways).[57] Olmsted wrote that parkways were "for rest, recreation, refreshment and social intercourse. . .designed with express reference to the pleasure with which they may be used for walking, riding, and the driving of carriages."[58] In perhaps the earliest reference to "parkways," Olmsted and Vaux proposed a series of parkway routes in 1868 to connect their new park project, Prospect Park, to other areas in Brooklyn.[59] Olmsted developed the visual language of the parkway to include limitation of abutting property owners' access, grade separation, access ramps, and restriction to one traffic class.[60] He argued that parkways should be restricted to private carriages and should ban wagons and common carriers; interruptions of the parkways by street railways should be minimized; and rows of trees should be placed along the parkways, establishing a narrow, elongated park.

55 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 137.
56 Clay McShane, *Down the Asphalt Path: The Automobile and the American City* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 31–32.
57 McShane, *Down the Asphalt Path*, 33.
58 Frederick Law Olmsted, *Observations on the Progress of Improvements in Street Plans, With Special References to the Park-way Proposed to Be Laid Out in Brooklyn* (Brooklyn, NY: I. Van Anden's Print, 1868), 18.
59 LANDSCAPES, *Colonial Parkway Context*, 2.
60 McShane, *Down the Asphalt Path*, 33–34, 40.

By the late 1880s, the parkway concept was a well-established aspect of US park design and city planning.[61] Other cities began adopting Olmsted and Vaux's planning style and constructed limited-access parkways that connected large suburban parks or permitted an exclusive route for suburban carriage owners to their downtowns. As such, early parkways served a single municipal area. Olmsted was a forceful advocate for low-density suburbs outside of the high-density urban core and developed ways in which cities could establish parks that created class-segregated suburban residential areas. Parkways became a tool for real estate developers to lure wealthy people to suburban land.[62] By the early twentieth century, followers of the influential City Beautiful movement endorsed parkways as a favored urban upgrade. The City Beautiful movement's influence is reflected in cities like Boston and New York, where parkways are critical elements of the urban park systems.[63]

The Bronx River Parkway set in place an influential parkway design template. The parkway was principally shaped by Jay Downer (chief engineer), Herman W. Merkel (consulting landscape architect), and Gilmore Clarke (landscape architect). Although the parkway was originally planned in the 1900s and early 1910s as a pleasant recreational drive for carriages, delays pushed the construction date to 1919. In the years since planning had started, Americans began enthusiastically purchasing automobiles. In response, Downer, Merkel, and Clarke designed the Bronx River Parkway, in contrast to its predecessors, not for carriages but for automobiles travelling at speeds of 25 to 35 miles per hour. As in traditional park design of the time, the designers preserved existing landscape features while also eliminating garbage dumps and other unsightly features, controlling flooding, and installing plantings.[64] Subsequent parkway designs largely followed the Bronx River Parkway precedent, including a single 40'-wide roadway with four travel lanes—two in each direction. Vertical gradients featured a maximum steepness of 8 percent. Reinforced concrete bridges were fitted with low-slung segmental-arched openings and clad with stone to add a rustic quality to otherwise contemporary construction. Plantings of mostly indigenous species created a parklike feeling and framed views.[65]

Among the parkways that followed in this model was New York's Westchester County system, which was an attempt to replicate the success of the Bronx River

61 LANDSCAPES, *Colonial Parkway Context*, 5.
62 McShane, *Down the Asphalt Path*, 33–34.
63 Sara Amy Leach, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Parkways of the National Capital Region, 1913–1965," September 1990.
64 LANDSCAPES, *Colonial Parkway Context*, 13.
65 LANDSCAPES, *Colonial Parkway Context*, 15.

Parkway across the entire county. Many of the same designers involved in the Bronx River Parkway, such as landscape architect Gilmore Clarke and engineer Jay Downer, were tasked with its design. From 1923 to 1933, the Westchester County Park Commission constructed 17,000 acres of parks and parkways, including 160 miles of parkway. Although largely following the successful template of its predecessors, the parkway system included a few variations; the 40' width was increased to 44', and 3" curbs were installed to prevent motorists from driving on marginal lands. The minimum right-of-way for the county system was set to 250' to provide a buffer between the road and private property and allow room for screen plantings.[66]

Increased automobile traffic resulted in more crowded conditions on parkways and ever-increasing speeds. By the 1930s, such issues seemed to illuminate the deficiencies in the classic parkway design. For instance, the 40' width of the Bronx River Parkway was determined to be too narrow, and it had no shoulders on which disabled cars could park, leading to backed-up traffic for miles. Its short radius curves (at 750') were found to be too sharp for fast-moving cars. In addition, automobiles heading in opposite directions on the same highway was a common source of accidents. Although parkway planners and designers installed guardrails in an attempt to minimize accidents, the adjacency of lanes still caused problems at night when the headlights of oncoming traffic could blind drivers heading in the opposite direction.[67]

SENATE PARK COMMISSION

In 1901, Congress established a commission, sponsored by Senator James McMillan of Michigan, to study the ongoing development of Washington, DC, and develop both a systematic plan and a series of comprehensive guidelines that would ensure future development efforts aligned with the beautiful, cosmopolitan city envisioned by President Washington and Pierre L'Enfant in the eighteenth century.[68] The McMillan commission was composed of a multidisciplinary panel of experts including architects Daniel Burnham and Charles McKim, landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens. They were assisted in the writing of their report by Charles Moore, the commission's secretary. As a part of their research, the commissioners traveled to London, Paris, Rome, Vienna, and other European capitals to study parks and architecture.[69] The resulting report, formally named the *Report of the Senate Park Commission: The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia* and informally

66 LANDSCAPES, *Colonial Parkway Context*, 16.
67 LANDSCAPES, *Colonial Parkway Context*, 23.
68 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 144.
69 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 144.

known as the McMillan plan, was published in 1902 and epitomized the aesthetic and social values of the City Beautiful movement. The McMillan plan was implemented in a piecemeal fashion over the next few decades as new public buildings, bridges, and parks were built according to City Beautiful principles.

In addition to proposals for the National Mall, two critical McMillan plan proposals included a system of parkways that would connect both existing and proposed parklands throughout the city and the shifting of the Potomac River waterfront from a place of industry to a place of beauty and recreation. Both pieces would feed into the development of the parkway through Rock Creek Valley.[70]

One proposed parkway would travel along the Potomac River from Arlington National Cemetery to Mount Vernon (the future George Washington Memorial Parkway). Another would extend from West Potomac Park to the newly established Rock Creek Park to end at the National Zoological Park (Figure 2-12). The commission continued the debate over an open versus closed valley for this parkway and prepared study drawings for both options (Figure 2-13). Another parkway (known as Fort Drive) would connect newly established parks to preserve the historic Civil War forts around the District of Columbia.[71] The Commission of Fine Arts (CFA), the lead design review agency in Washington, DC, established in 1910, oversaw the McMillan plan's implementation and championed its ideals. In 1918, CFA called for a permanent system of both local and grand entrance parkways.[72]

The McMillan plan balanced concepts of aesthetic beauty and public health with economic practicalities that supported the creation of the plan's proposed interventions. Restoration of the city's contaminated waterfront was good for tourism and the development of Rock Creek Valley for a parkway would achieve goals of park unification by utilizing land that was too steep for traditional development.[73] As chief author of the Senate Park Commission report's section on parks and parkways, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., proposed a broad, granite-paved quay along the entire riverfront from the mouth of Rock Creek to West Potomac Park. The commission report cited precedents for the quay in European river cities like Paris, Budapest, and Vienna.[74] In spite of general agreement about

70 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 144.
71 Frederick A. Gutheim and Antoinette J. Lee, *Worthy of the Nation: Washington, DC, from L'Enfant to the National Capital Planning Commission*, second edition (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 138.
72 Leach, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Parkways of the National Capital Region, 1913–1965."
73 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 145.
74 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 171.



Figure 2-12. Detail of plate No. 20 from the 1902 Senate Park Commission Report showing the lower Rock Creek Valley connecting the monumental core and Rock Creek Park (Courtesy of the US Commission of Fine Arts).

the route of the future Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, there were varying opinions about the design, funding, and land acquisition of this popular project that would delay the vision of the Senate Park Commission for decades to come.

MORROW AND MARKHAM REPORT OF ALTERNATIVES

By 1906, the debate over open versus closed valley solutions to the parkway had intensified. In an effort to resolve the debate, Congress authorized Major Jay J. Morrow, the Engineer Commissioner, to study the valley's existing conditions and prepare alternative solutions. Captain E. M. Markham was selected to assist Morrow, and in 1908 Morrow and Markham's report of alternatives, or *Report Upon Improvement of Valley of Rock Creek, from Massachusetts Avenue to Mouth of the Creek,* outlined the costs and benefits of four alternatives, three filled and one open. Aligned with the Senate Park Commission, they recommended the open valley option based on the long-term instability of any fill-based solution as well as increased costs of up to $2.6 million over the open valley plan.[75]

The recommended design included provisions for removing fill and debris from the lower Rock Creek Valley to create a naturalistic landscape, building access roads from the surrounding cities, and creating footpaths at different levels throughout the parkway. North- and southbound lanes south of Massachusetts Avenue would be separated by a vegetated median and planted areas would screen the roadway from pedestrian and equestrian trails that ran parallel through the valley.[76] Sensitive to the aesthetics as well as the function of the proposed parkway, Morrow and Markham's plan suggested the replacement of existing iron truss

75 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 8-18. $2.6 million is $237 million in 2024 dollars.

76 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 8-18.

bridges in the lower valley with stone-faced structures, simplified versions of which would carry the proposed roadway over Rock Creek where necessary. The 1908 plans also laid out the roadway to preserve the ruins of the Lyons Mill and proposed a park around the bend in the creek at P Street. A large viaduct was proposed to carry the parkway past the industrialized waterfront.[77]

The plan and cost estimate outlined by the Morrow and Markham in 1908 galvanized support from open-valley concept supporters, the Board of Trade, and, in 1910, the Commission of Fine Arts. Legislation authorizing the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway was signed on March 4, 1913, with the purpose of connecting Potomac Park with the National Zoological Park and Rock Creek Park and resolving public health issues associated with pollution in the lower valley. This legislation created the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission (RC&PPC) to oversee the project and determined that parkway construction would be undertaken by the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds.

SPANNING THE VALLEY

As the debate was raging over the design of the future Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, Washington, DC, and its associated suburbs continued to grow and develop. Transportation connections across the valley became increasingly important. A number of iron-trestle bridges spanned the lower valley at M and P

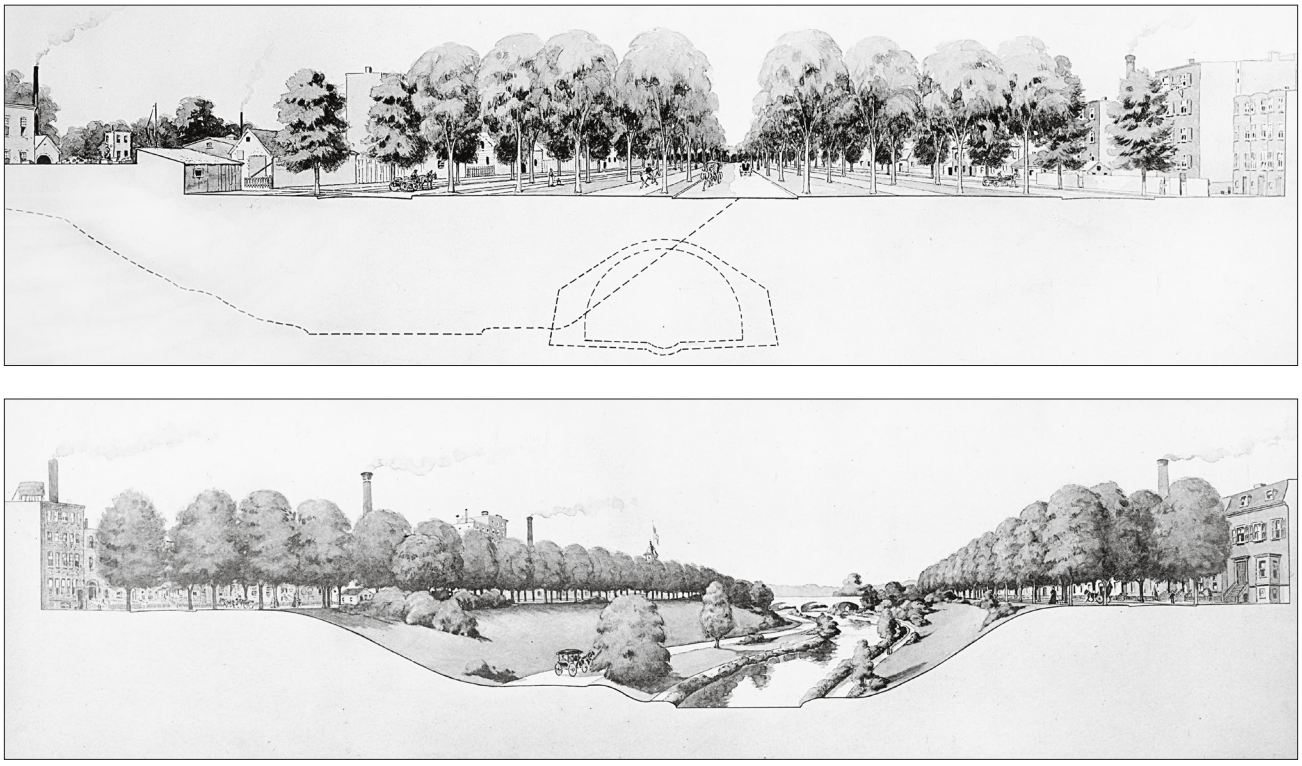


Figure 2-13. Drawings of the closed (top) and open (bottom) alternatives for the lower Rock Creek parkway from the 1902 Senate Park Commission report (Courtesy of the US Commission of Fine Arts).

77 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 8-19.

Streets, but structures spanning the broad and deep upper valley were a greater engineering challenge. In 1901, an earthen embankment was constructed to convey Massachusetts Avenue across the valley. The large berm contained a 50'-wide concrete culvert that allowed Rock Creek to pass through it.[78]

The Connecticut Avenue Bridge, also known as the William Howard Taft Bridge, was constructed by the DC Engineering Department between 1897 and 1906. The bridge was designed by George S. Morison and at the time of completion it was the largest concrete bridge in the world as well as one of the earliest pre-cast concrete bridges in the United States. The bridge is also notable for its decoration, much of which is made of cast-stone utilizing aggregate sourced from the adjacent landscape, and light fixtures designed by sculptor Ernest C. Bairstow in 1906.[79] The cast-stone aggregate was extracted from a quarry known as the Taft Quarry (or alternatively as the Indian Quarry) located west of the bridge's southern end. An additional quarry known as Dumbarton Quarry was located southwest of the Massachusetts Avenue's crossing over the valley. Research to date has not determined whether this latter quarry contributed to features in the study area. The Taft Quarry closed sometime before 1931, and the Dumbarton Quarry at some point also ceased operations.[80]

PLANNING THE ROCK CREEK AND POTOMAC PARKWAY

In order to build a parkway, boosters had to develop a convincing case not only for the utility of a new roadway to the city but also that its construction would not destroy or disrupt areas they deemed important. Rock Creek Valley, by the early twentieth century, included a combination of industrial and residential uses. Much of the creek was dominated by industrial activities or used as a general dumping ground, and it carried overflow from the city's combined sewer/stormwater system into the Potomac River (Figure 2-14). The stretch of the valley between Pennsylvania Avenue and P Street was often used to dispose of street sweepings, ashes, and construction waste. Photographs taken before the parkway's construction depict a narrow creek flanked by tall banks of debris and dense vegetation (Figure 2-15, Figure 2-16, and Figure 2-17). Builders' supply yards and brick sheds populated the area near where the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal met the creek.[81] Politicians and wealthy members of Washington DC's elite

78 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 159; Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 7-16.

79 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 7-18 and 7-19.

80 National Park Service, Natural Resource Program Center, *ROCR Geologic Resources Inventory Report*, Natural Resource Report NPS/NRPC/GRD/NRR—2009/146 (2009), 11; "Capital Entrance Markers Discussed by Garden Club," *Evening Star*, December 12, 1931; *Photographs: Rock Creek Parkway Present Condition* (1915), courtesy of the US Commission of Fine Arts, 21.

81 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 146.

had largely determined that Rock Creek Valley was an eyesore and in serious need of improvement. Senator Elihu Root of New York described the Rock Creek Valley in 1913 as a "cesspool and pesthole."[82] The Senate Park Commission referred to the stretch from Pennsylvania Avenue to Q Street as "shabby, sordid and disagreeable."[83]

South of P Street, between 26th Street and the creek on the eastern edge of the Georgetown area, was a mostly lower-income residential district known as Herring Hill. Historians suggest the neighborhood was named for the fish that were frequently caught in the creek. Herring Hill comprised the largest African American population in Georgetown.[84] A 1903 insurance map from the Sanborn Map Company map outlines the neighborhood's housing stock identified for condemnation for parkway construction (Figure 2-18).[85] The houses were located in two distinct rows, one on the southern edge of P Street and the other on a short diagonal street off of P Street named Old Paper Mill Road (Figure 2-19). The houses on P Street appear to have been mostly brick row houses, while the row houses on Mill Road were frame with wood siding (Figure 2-20 and Figure 2-21). They all appear to be modest, two-story houses in generally good condition.

Brick row houses at 2524 and 2526 P Street NW were embellished with a shared cornice with modillions, while segmental-arched brick soldier courses ornamented windows at 2528 P Street NW. The Sanborn map shows these houses in the middle of the 2500 block (the easternmost block, near P Street's intersection with 26th Street). Photographs show flower and vegetable gardens adjoining some of the houses on Old Paper Mill Road, and one such residence included a maintained set of beehives and advertised for honey (Figure 2-21). A three-story dwelling capped by a low-sloped hipped roof sat at the neighborhood's far eastern end on the valley's banks (Figure 2-22).

Despite the realities of the housing stock's condition, however, the Senate Park Commission insisted that the houses were dilapidated and occupied by a "poor class of residences" to justify their acquisition and demolition.[86] Commission members saw these houses and industrial areas in the valley as obstructions to their parkway project and argued to replace these undesirable buildings with a parkway landscape. Removing elements they associated with the working

82 Mackintosh, *Rock Creek Park*, 53.
83 *Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia*, 86.
84 David H. Mould and Missy Loewe, *Remembering Georgetown: A History of the Lost Port City* (Charleston, SC: History Press, 2009).
85 Note that Sanborn maps have a consistent symbology of building stock materials for insurance purposes: yellow = wood; red = brick; blue = stone.
86 *Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia*, 140.



Figure 2-14. The character of the lower Rock Creek Valley was highly industrial and devoid of the scenic character present in the upper valley, 1915. Photograph looking south near present-day Thompson Boat Center. Note Potomac River in the background (Courtesy of the US Commission of Fine Arts).



Figure 2-15. View of Rock Creek Valley, looking south from P Street, 1915. Note pile of debris in the foreground (Courtesy of the US Commission of Fine Arts).

class would enhance views along a potential parkway and enable users of the parkway to enjoy their experience without being reminded of social inequities.[87] The RC&PPC argued that the condition of the valley "long militated against the occupancy of the region by any but the lowest type of population" and warned of danger to "unaccompanied women and children" to push for the speedy development of the parkway. [88]

The Senate Park Commission and others supporting the parkway effort documented the areas along the valley to make their case. As Timothy Davis

87 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 147.
88 *Report of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission* (1916), 17, 10.

notes, "While these photographs demonstrated undeniable environmental degradation along the creek, their depiction of the neighboring residential district as a crumbling shanty town was deliberately misleading."[89] Paired with the elegant mansions along Massachusetts Avenue in the photographs, the modest row houses stood out as incongruous. Neither the Senate Park Commission nor the RC&PPC ever suggested demolishing the mansions, despite the fact that the locations of the houses on sparsely built-up hillsides would have been ideal for parkland. The tracts, however, belonged to influential real estate developers, whose property values would only increase with proximity to a parkway.[90] Instead, the targeting of this particular neighborhood for condemnation reflected the racist and classist views of planners focused on public improvements for some at the expense of others.

Despite Congress authorizing $1.3 million to acquire land for the parkway in 1913, funds were to be granted through annual appropriations, and, thus, the RC&PPC was forced to plead with Congress to release the money every year. After the RC&PPC submitted the *Report of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission* in February 1916, Congress approved $50,000 to begin the land acquisition process.[91]

Between 1916 and the early 1930s, the RC&PPC acquired many of the necessary properties at well below their assessed value.[92] The commission drew taking lines through DC squares (subdivisions of the city established for taxation purposes) that included partial or whole lots on some of the following squares:

> Square West of 4 (bounded by L, K, and 27th Streets); Square 13 (the western half of the square bounded M, N, and 25th Streets) (Figure 2-23) Square West of 14 (bounded by M and 26th Streets and Pennsylvania Avenue) ; Square 23 partial or complete lots bounded by N and 25th Streets and Rock Creek Valley); Square 35 (bounded by N, 23rd, and 24th Streets); Square 47 (north and south of the intersection of P and 22nd Streets); Square 48 (bounded by P, O, and 22nd Streets); Square 49 (bounded by N, O, 22nd, and 23rd Streets); Square 1217 (bounded by N, Olive, and 27th Streets); Square 1237 (bounded by Dunbarton, N, and 27th Streets); Square 1238 (the western three-fourths of the square bounded by Dunbarton, O, and 27th Streets); Square East of 1263 (bounded by 22nd, 26th, and P Streets and including Paper Mill Road); Square 2197 (west of Rock Creek Drive and north of Massachusetts Avenue); Square 2507 (on Massachusetts Avenue northwest of Sheridan Circle); Square 2510 (bounded by Q, P, and 22nd Streets); Square 2524 (along Belmont Road above Kalorama Circle) (Figure 2-24); Square 2525 (partial or complete lots northeast

89 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 148.
90 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 148.
91 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway,"165.
92 Ulysses S. Grant III to Arthur Capper, January 23, 1926, NARA, RG 42, Records of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission, 1913–1933, General Records of the Executive and Disbursing Officer, 1923–1933, Entry 321, Box 1.



Figure 2-16. West-looking view at corner of Massachusetts Avenue and Waterside Drive NW, 1915 (Courtesy of the US Commission of Fine Arts).



Figure 2-17. View of Dumbarton (Q Street) Bridge looking north from P Street, 1915 (Courtesy of the US Commission of Fine Arts).

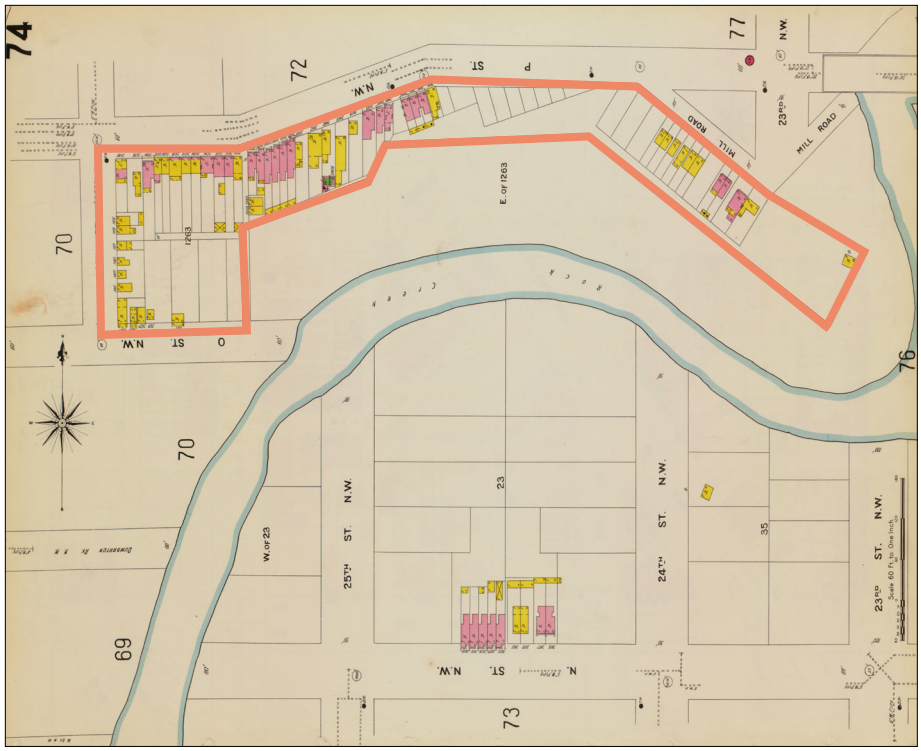


Figure 2-18. 1903 Sanborn map showing neighborhood on P Street and Old Paper Mill Road. Properties taken for construction of the parkway are outlined in orange (Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division).

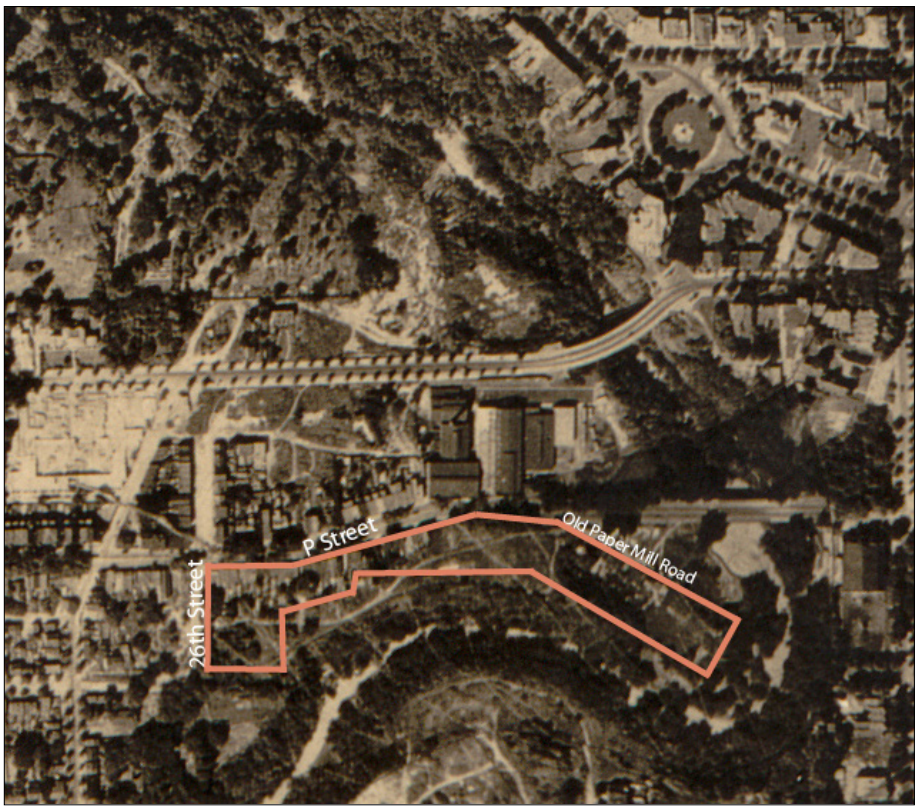


Figure 2-19. Detail of 1922 aerial photograph capturing working-class, predominantly African American neighborhood on P Street and Old Paper Mill Road. The neighborhood is outlined in orange (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).



Figure 2-20. Brick row houses in the 2500 block of P Street, Herring Hill neighborhood, demolished for construction of the parkway, ca. 1910s. Such photographs suggest claims that housing stock was in poor condition were incorrect or misleading (National Capital Region file, People's Archive, DC Public Library).



Figure 2-21. Frame, wood-siding-clad houses on Old Paper Mill Road with adjoining flower and vegetable gardens and honey for sale, ca. 1910s (National Capital Region file, People's Archive, DC Public Library).



Figure 2-22. Three-story frame house on the western valley banks at P Street, 1915. Located the eastern edge of Herring Hill, the house was demolished for parkway construction (Courtesy of the US Commission of Fine Arts).

of the intersection of Belmont Road and Connecticut Avenue); Square 2543 (bounded by Allen Place, Belmont Road, and 20th Street); Square 2547 (immediately northwest of the Calvert Street's Bridge connection to Calvert Street).[93]

From a 1922 aerial photograph, the majority of the acquired squares appear to not include "improved" lots. However, Square West of 14, lot 10, featured a brick and concrete building while lots 804, 805, 807, and 808 had four brick buildings in sum. When condemnation proceedings began for lots on Square West of 14 in 1923, construction was already underway on a building on the site.[94] Square 13, lots 37 and 38, included two brick buildings. Square 47, Lot 1, had a two-story gas station at 2201 P Street NW that included a second-floor residence.[95] Square 49, Lots 802 and 803, featured two brick buildings.[96] The 1903 Sanborn map captures conditions on lots 1217 and 1237 at that time, although additional buildings or structures were likely built on these lots from 1903 until the land acquisition began (Figure 2-25). In 1903, Square 1217 featured four dwellings and an unidentified building. Square 1237 included thirteen residences, a store, and a Baptist church at the southeast corner of Dumbarton and 27th Streets.

The RC&PPC met resistance from many of these lots' landowners. If the commission and landowners could not agree to a price or the land or landowners resisted to sell outright, the commission, aided by the US attorney general, commenced condemnation proceedings cases that went before the Supreme Court of the District of Columbia. Two lot owners in Square East of 1263, Mary Elizabeth Gilhuly at 2308 Old Paper Mill Road and Louise Jones at 2404 Old Paper Mill Road, were among those who resisted the condemnation process. The court ultimately sided with the commission but awarded compensation to the landowners.[97] Some property owners, such as those at lot 10 in Square

93 Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission land acquisition records, NARA, RG 42, Records of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission, 1913–1933, General Records of the Executive and Disbursing Officer, 1923–1933, Entry 321, Box 2.

94 D. L. Weart to Attorney General Harry M. Daugherty, September 18, 1923, Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission land acquisition records, NARA, RG 42, Records of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission, 1913–1933, General Records of the Executive and Disbursing Officer, 1923–1933, Entry 321, Box 2. C. T. Watson to Lt. Col. C. O. Sherrill, December 3, 1924, Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission land acquisition records, NARA, RG 42, Records of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission, 1913–1933, General Records of the Executive and Disbursing Officer, 1923–1933, Entry 321, Box 2.

95 Thomas J. Fisher and Company to George E. Clark, March 31, 1923, NARA, RG 42, Records of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission, 1913–1933, Land Acquisition Records, 1916–1933, Square W23–47, Entry 322, Box 5.

96 C. T. Watson to Lt. Col. C. O. Sherrill, December 3, 1924, Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission land acquisition records, NARA, RG 42, Records of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission, 1913–1933, General Records of the Executive and Disbursing Officer, 1923–1933, Entry 321, Box 2.

97 *Evening Star*, July 18, 1930.

West of 14 (which included a brick building), agreed to sell their property to the commission.[98]

The commission also took land from the Mount Zion Cemetery/Female Union Band Society Cemetery (Square 1289) that bordered the creek. As rendered in a commission map, the parkway's taking line cut through the bottom of Mount Zion Cemetery and then crossed back to the east side of the creek just short of Oak Hill Cemetery (Figure 2-26). The irregular pattern of the taking line shows an intentional decision to take land from one cemetery and not from the other. The taking, which accounted for roughly the northeastern one-third of the Mount Zion Cemetery, was completed in 1929. Racial motivations appear to have again influenced the parkway commission's delineation of taking lines. While Mount Zion Cemetery was historically associated with an African American congregation, Oak Hill Cemetery was open to only prominent White citizens.[99] At some point prior to the parkway commission acquiring part of the cemetery, damp soil on the lower area of the embankment at the Mount Zion Cemetery caused a brick retaining wall to collapse. The collapse of the wall would have caused hillside burials to slide down the embankment to the creek area. The burials were reinterred when work was undertaken for the parkway's construction.[100]

The most challenging piece of the land acquisition puzzle was the industrialized area where the creek met the Potomac waterfront. The C&O Canal Company and Washington Gas Light Company held long-standing rights to the land and challenged the commission's land condemnation authority. Eventually, the Washington Gas Light Company proved slightly more amenable and agreed to a land exchange. The canal company, however, held a congressional charter that the commission knew would withstand legal challenge. The canal company and park commission negotiated a deal in which the canal company would relinquish their rights to the land within the parkway's projected construction area, and the federal government would pay to separate the canal from the creek and build a new canal outlet. The deal, however, collapsed and a years-long legal struggle ensued, despite the fact that the canal ceased operations in 1924.[101]

98 Lt. Col. C. O. Sherrill to US Attorney General Harlan Stone, September 12, 1924, NARA, RG 42, Records of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission, 1913–1933, General Records of the Executive and Disbursing Officer, 1923–1933, Entry 321, Box 2.

99 Timothy Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway: History and Description," Historic American Buildings Survey No. DC-697 (1991–92), 73.

100 Wende Nichols, "Mount Zion Cemetery/Female Union Band Cemetery (Old Methodist Burying Ground)," Historic American Landscape Survey No. DC-15 (2008), 8.

101 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 165.

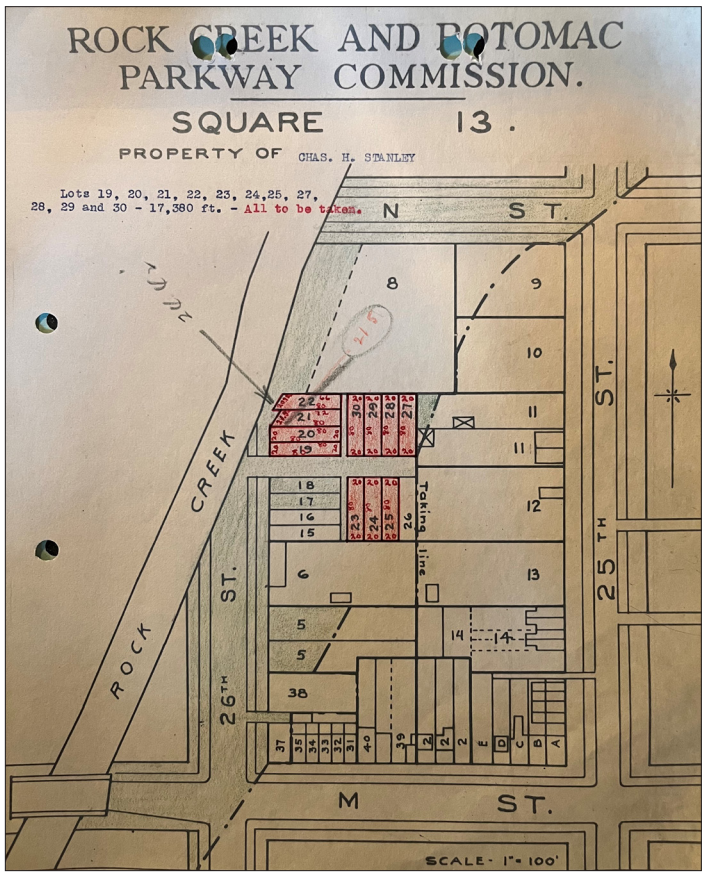


Figure 2-23. Map showing property acquired for building the parkway in Square 13 of Washington, DC. Taking line is denoted in the middle of the map (NARA, Record Group 42).



Figure 2-24. Map showing property acquired for building the parkway in Square 2524 of Washington, DC. Taking line is denoted in the middle of the map (NARA, Record Group 42).

By February 1923, the parkway commission had acquired only 82 percent of the land required for the parkway. The *Washington Evening Star* mocked the parkway commission for their slow progress. A 1924 headline read "Suit, virtually dead of age, blocks Rock Creek Project/wilderness stands in city/while most of defendants in case have died or moved away."[102] The paper similarly criticized the condition of the valley and the adjacent housing stock. The valley remained, according to the newspaper, "a wilderness of weeds, dumped trash, broken street curbings."[103]

> *"It is the extraordinary combination of this circumstance with the proximity of the valley to a great city that gives to the Park its unique value. This is the value which was first preserved by Act of Congress for the benefit of all people. It is now and always will be the only value that can justify the maintenance of this great natural park."*
>
> Olmsted Brothers, Rock Creek Park, 5

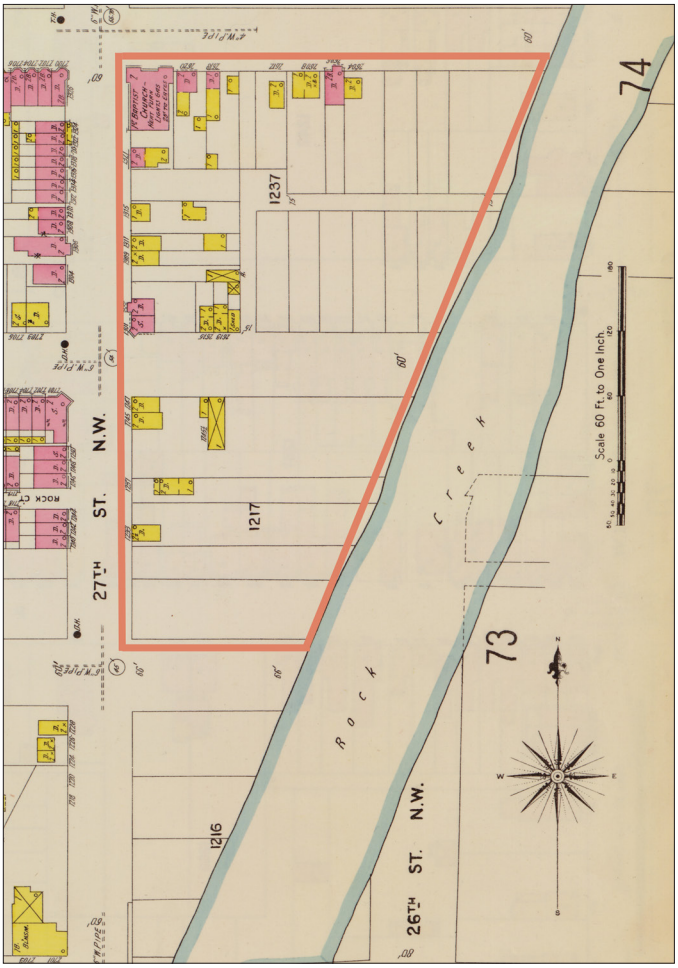


Figure 2-25. 1903 Sanborn map shows buildings on lots 1217 and 1237 that were demolished for the parkway's construction. All of the buildings contained within the red outline (i.e., all buildings east of 27th Street) were razed (Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division).

In 1925, Congress authorized the final installment of the $1.3 million appropriation. Several expensive tracts, however, remained to be acquired, and some preliminary grading, bridle path construction, and brush-clearing was the only work undertaken on the parkway. Congress approved more money but stipulated that it come entirely from funds appropriated to the District of

102 "Suit, virtually dead of age, blocks Rock Creek Project/wilderness stands in city/while most of defendants in case have died or moved away," Evening Star, December 14, 1924.

103 "Suit, virtually dead of age, blocks Rock Creek Project/wilderness stands incity/ while most of defendants in case have died or moved away," Evening Star, December 14, 1924.

Columbia.[104] This approval gave the commission the final funding necessary to complete land acquisition. By June 1927, the commission acquired 83.11 acres of the total 93.76 acres needed.[105] The commission acquired the last outstanding parcels in February 1931.[106]

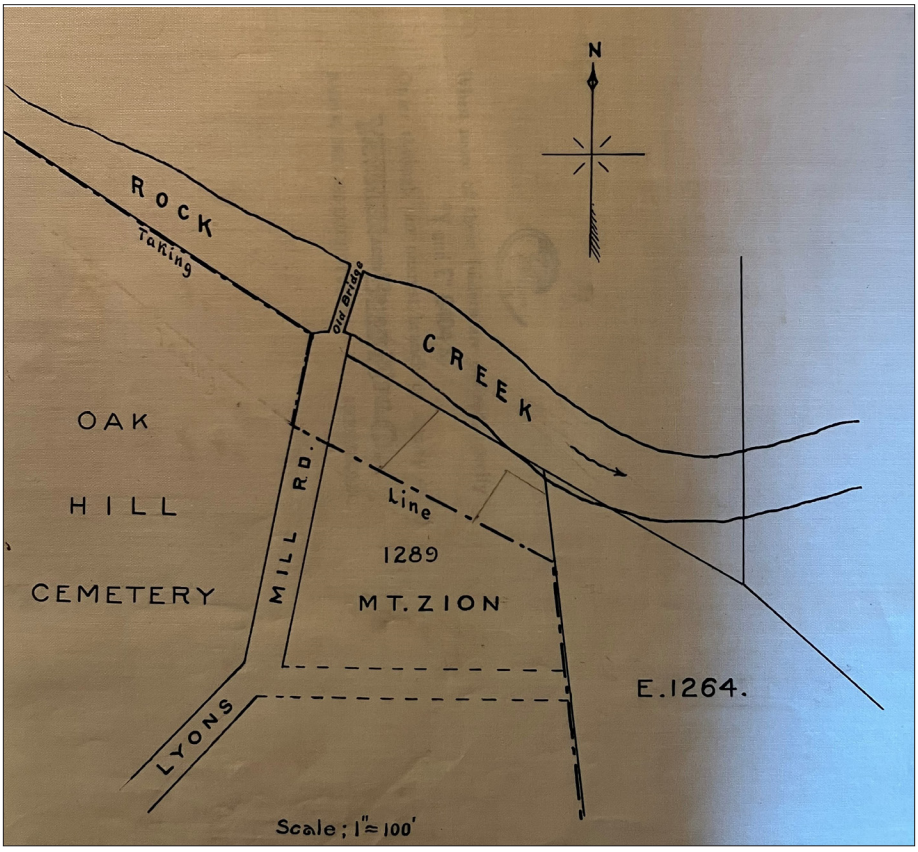


Figure 2-26. Map of condemnation line through Mt. Zion Cemetery. A significant portion of land was taken from the historically African American Mt. Zion Cemetery while the historically white Oak Hill Cemetery was left intact (NARA, Record Group 42, Textual Records)

104 Letter, Ulysses S. Grant III to Brig. Gen. H. M. Lord, April 30, 1926, NARA, RG 42, Records of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission, 1913–1933, General Records of the Executive and Disbursing Officer, 1923–1933, Entry 321, Box 1.

105 Letter, Ulysses S. Grant III to Brig. Gen. H. M. Lord, April 30, 1926, NARA, RG 42, Records of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission, 1913–1933, General Records of the Executive and Disbursing Officer, 1923–1933, Entry 321, Box 1.

106 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 166.

DESIGNING THE ROCK CREEK AND POTOMAC PARKWAY

While the RC&PPC acquired the necessary land, the additionally contentious design process for the parkway was also taking place. Professional rivalries and institutional politics shaped much of the parkway's design. Pragmatic civil engineers and budget-focused politicians regularly conflicted with the aesthetic goals of architects and landscape architects.[107] As Timothy Davis writes, the parkway's design process "involved much more than altruistic urban improvement impulses and the straightforward refinement of aesthetic judgements."[108]

The ultimate design of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway was the result of many contributors over many years, making it difficult to assign authorship of the parkway's design in any conventional sense. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., however, was perhaps the one individual most responsible for the form the parkway took. Olmsted wrote the original language describing the parkway proposal in the McMillan plan and remained heavily involved as both a member of the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA), the federal design review agency established in 1910 to continue the Senate Park Commission's work, and as an unpaid consultant.[109] Engineers and landscape architects with the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds and US Army Corps of Engineers were responsible for producing the drawings. Both CFA members and RCP&PPC executive officers, drawn from the Corps of Engineers, also exerted influence over the parkway's design. CFA included among its members three original Senate Park Commission members, including Olmsted and Charles Moore.[110]

In 1916, landscape architect James G. Langdon and other employees of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds produced drawings to guide property acquisition. Langdon had worked in the Olmsted office earlier in his career and had experience in parkway design through his work on the Riverway section of Boston's Emerald Necklace.

The 1916 design featured a number of changes from the 1908 and 1902 plans and proposed a single tree-lined roadway along the Potomac riverfront until below the creek junction; border roads extending from the riverfront to Q Street (adjusted to avoid disturbing Oak Hill Cemetery and the large houses near Sheridan Circle) and from Massachusetts Avenue to the Zoo; additional access from Connecticut Avenue; access via Lover's Lane; omission of a drive along the creek's west bank; and reintroduction of original valley contours between P and M Streets (Figure

107 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 166.
108 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 166.
109 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 167.
110 Barsoum, Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 8-21.

2-27). Perhaps the most radical revision in the 1916 design was the elimination of the Potomac Quay, resulting from the decline of the economic role of the waterfront.[111]

Langdon and the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds extended border roads to Connecticut Avenue and placed additional entrances for access to exclusive surrounding neighborhoods. The plan reduced potential conflicts with parkway neighbors by eliminating routes through Oak Hill Cemetery and separating the mouth of Rock Creek from the C&O Canal entrance, and the plan also proposed a new crossing between N and O Streets to replace the existing M Street Bridge from 1871.[112]

In September 1924, RC&PPC director Lt. Col. Clarence Sherrill approved a new set of plans for the proposed parkway drawn by landscape architects Irving W. Payne and Thomas C. Jeffers. The plan included a number of significant simplifications from the 1916 design. After the RC&PPC reached an agreement with the Washington Gas Light Company, they were allowed to route the parkway drive on the east side of Rock Creek. The 1924 plan removed a Georgetown-area access road from Lover's Lane, an access point that dated to early project planning. The revision was perhaps due to financial constraints or the political influence of career diplomat Robert Woods Bliss and his wife Mildred Barnes Bliss, who were prominent landowners in Georgetown. The 1924 plan proposed a bridge across the valley at N Street rather than the O Street Bridge proposal from the 1916 plan and the parkway crossed to the east of the creek north of Q Street rather than farther north at Lyons Mill Road.[113]

The landscape architects and engineers made further revisions to the parkway design in 1933. Pressure from Georgetown residents resulted in the removal of the N Street Bridge in favor of a bridge at M Street. The location and alignment of access roads were also reconfigured.[114]

Overall, landscape architects, engineers, and parkway commissioners attempted to balance both the rising popularity and speeds of automobiles with preserving and restoring the valley's natural character as influential figures including Olmsted advocated. The final parkway plans departed significantly from the Senate Park Commission report. Designers adapted the 1908 Morrow and

111 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 8-22; Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 173–74.
112 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 179.
113 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 8-24; Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 179.
114 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 179.

Markham plan to streamline picturesque elements to accommodate 30 mph automobile speeds. The overall feel of the final design was heavily influenced by the need for efficient traffic flow. Thomas Jeffers stated in 1934 of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway: "Its real purpose is to provide a pleasant and speedy way of travel between Potomac Park and Rock Creek Park." He compared it with Beach Drive and the link through the zoo, suggesting that those routes remain low speed and un-straightened.[115] Throughout the various revisions, border roads were eliminated, access road quantity was reduced, and splitting the parkway into separate paths for northbound and southbound traffic between the Dumbarton (Q Street) Bridge and Massachusetts Avenue took advantage of the natural grade.

CONSTRUCTING THE ROCK CREEK AND POTOMAC PARKWAY

Construction of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway commenced before final design and land acquisition. The construction of the parkway was initially the responsibility of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, a department of the US Army Corps of Engineers, which oversaw all District parks. In 1925, Congress abolished the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds and replaced it with the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks (OPBPP). The RC&PPC divided the parkway into three sections: Section 1 extended from the Lincoln Memorial to K Street, Section II from K Street to P Street, and Section III from P Street to the northern terminus at the junction with Beach Drive near Connecticut Avenue (Figure 2-27).

In 1924, the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds oversaw demolition of factories and twenty houses in the Herring Hill neighborhood. Other houses in this area were extant until the 1930s pending the resolution of court cases over land acquisition. Several houses on government-owned land along Pennsylvania Avenue and P, M, and Dumbarton Streets were still occupied in the early 1930s.[116] The creek's west bank at the confluence of Rock Creek and the Potomac River was still in industrial and commercial use and detracted from the desired pastoral experience of parkway.[117] Olmsted objected to this character, writing to Charles Moore in 1925:

> "Whether north bound or south bound, users of the parkway will make the transition in this locality from the open broad river bank scenery to the self-contained sylvan scenery of the creek valley or vice versa, and considering the strength and persistency of first impressions this is probably the worst place on the whole line to permit ugly commercial structures and uses to intrude conspicuously on the scenery of the parkway."[118]

115 Quoted in Mackintosh, *Rock Creek Park: An Administrative History*, 81.
116 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 181.
117 Mackintosh, *Rock Creek Park: An Administrative History,* 63.
118 Mackintosh, *Rock Creek Park: An Administrative History*, 63.

Work began concurrently on the parkway's northeast portion because the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds determined less effort was required. By 1926, workers cleared, graded, and planted sod and honeysuckle in the portion of the parkway between Calvert Street and Massachusetts Avenue and added fifty-seven rustic benches and thirty-six picnic tables. Numerous species identified as invasive today were incorporated into planting plans in the 1930s and 1940s, likely contributing to the persistence of vines such as Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), and kudzu (*Pueraria montana*). Planting plans include the following plants:

Section II – Planting List, 1936, 844-80551
Porcelain berry, Asiatic bittersweet, Kudzu, Sweet Autumn Clematis, Chinese Fleecevine (knotweed genus)

Detail Planting Plan, Section III, 1943, 844-80738
Common buckthorn and glossy buckthorn
Asiatic bittersweet

Detailed Planting Plan, Section II, 1944, 844-80569
Japanese honeysuckle, Sweet Autumn Clematis
Two other Lonicera
Two Euonymus
Elaeagnus
Japanese barberry

In 1926, workers initially built a two-lane causeway through a conduit that allowed Rock Creek to pass under the 1901 embankment at Massachusetts Avenue. The Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, however, recognized that this solution could only be temporary as they expected the causeway to flood often. This anticipated frequent flooding, they reasoned, would necessitate the appropriation of funds for an overpass bridge to replace the enbankment/causeway and allow room for the parkway's full four-lane width to run under it.[119]

Insufficient congressional appropriation consistently hindered parkway construction and slowed progress in the 1920s. Nevertheless, workers building the parkway achieved key milestones. In 1929, workers realigned Rock Creek north of Massachusetts Avenue to allow the parkway to pass around rock outcrops. They embellished the roadway with gutters, curbs, wooden post-and-rail guardrails, and light posts.[120]

Beginning in 1926, planning began on a bridge to span the parkway at M Street between 26th and 28th Streets. The design of the bridge was the work of David V. McComb, engineer of bridges in the DC Office of the Engineer Commissioner,

119 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 8-22.
120 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 182.

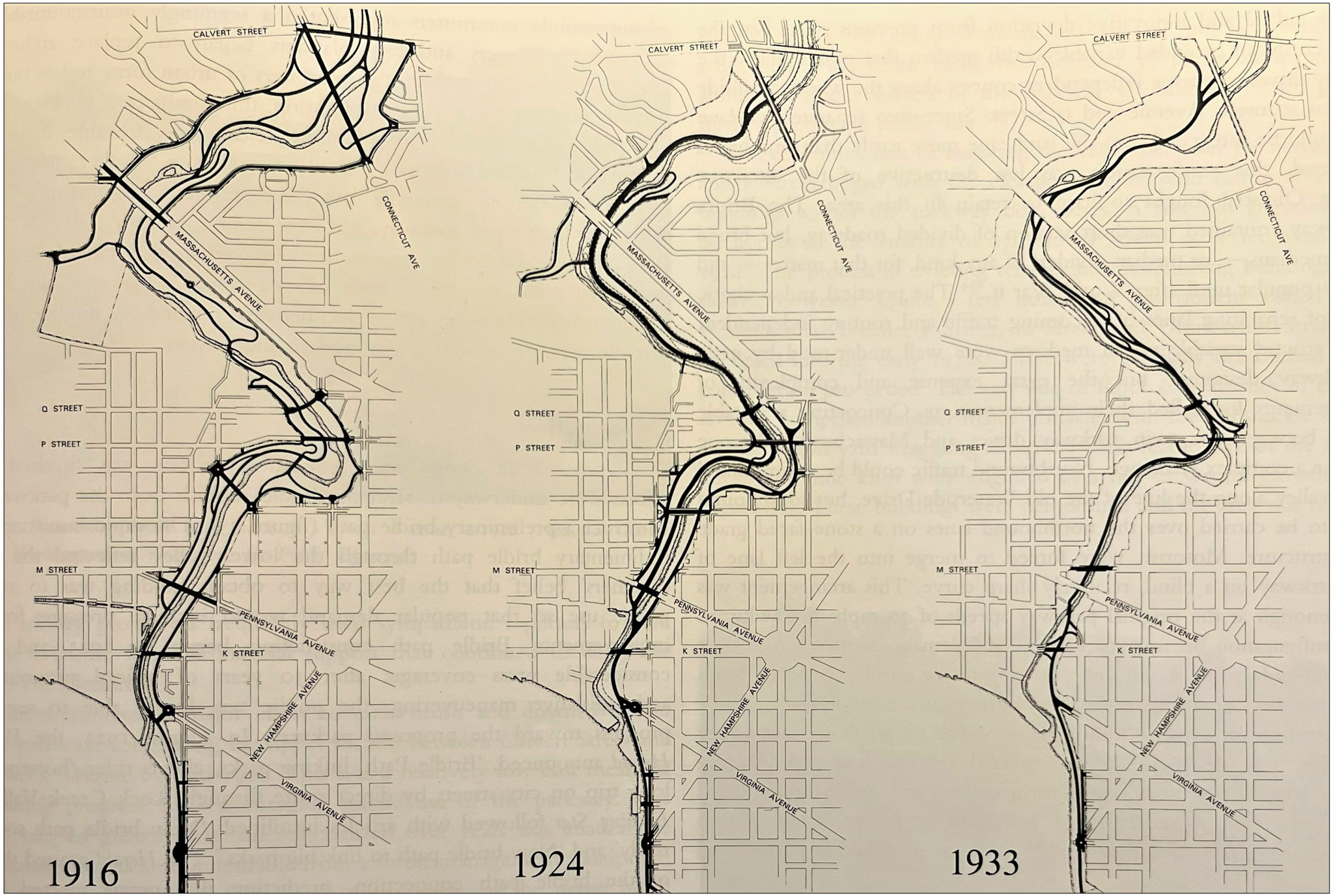


Figure 2-27. Comparison of the three major stages of the design process (drawing by Dorota Pape-Siliwonczuk, Historic American Buildings Survey, 1992).

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and the staff in his division (Figure 2-28).[121] McComb and his staff designed a flat steel-girder bridge encased in concrete and ornamented with channeled abutments and piers. CFA chair Charles Moore harshly criticized the bridge's design. Testifying before Congress in 1929, Moore complained, "The M Street Bridge is not a park bridge; it is an ugly service bridge of a type unfitted for park purposes. This steel girder bridge is not in accordance with the views of the commission; it is not in accordance with the views of Congress."[122] The DC Board of Commissioners proceeded with construction of the bridge without CFA approval. When it opened in May 1930, the M Street Bridge was the only bridge on the parkway to feature a flat (non-arched) opening.[123]

Parkway construction had progressed by June 1930 to permit northbound vehicular travel from Massachusetts Avenue to the zoo ford. A February 3, 1931, photograph captures grading underway north of the Dumbarton (Q Street) Bridge and coping was installed on the parkway at Waterside Drive NW on October 12, 1931 (Figure 2-29 and Figure 2-30, respectively). In October 1931, the RC&PPC reached an agreement with the C&O Canal Company to allow the construction of the roadway bridge (known as the L Street Bridge) that conveyed the roadway over Rock Creek where it meets the canal. In 1932, the Waterside Drive NW Overpass and Tower, which included a comfort station and park police lodge, were completed (Figure 2-31 and Figure 2-32).[124] The overpass and tower were built of reinforced concrete structure faced with stone cut from nearby Maryland quarries.[125] The K Street to Lincoln Memorial portion (Section I) also opened in 1932. A photograph from August 2, 1933, captures grading in process on the parkway between P and M Streets (Figure 2-33). The parkway section between P and K Streets (Section II) proved especially difficult to regrade and landscape because it had been subjected to dumping debris and ashes for many years before parkway construction began.[126] Despite the fact that the L Street Bridge was completed in 1933, it was unused for several years until the parkway's completion.

Beginning in 1933, President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs provided a boost in both funding and labor to the project. In late 1933, the short-lived Civil Works Administration (CWA) employed laborers to work on the parkway (Figure 2-34). The CWA was a job creation program established to rapidly create

121 Traceries, "M Street Bridge," Historic American Engineer Record No. DC-37, 9.
122 "Rock Creek Park Bridges Held Ugly," *Evening Star*, January 16, 1929.
123 Traceries, "M Street Bridge," Historic American Engineer Record No. DC-37, 3–9.
124 Mackintosh, *Rock Creek Park: An Administrative History,* 62.
125 *Report ofthe Director of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds* (1932), 19 and 33.
126 Timothy Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," Historic American Buildings Survey No. DC-697, 100.

mostly temporary manual labor jobs for millions of unemployed workers. After the Roosevelt administration ended the CWA in spring 1934, the Public Works Administration (PWA) granted the RC&PPC funding totalling $265,000 for road and trail construction, planting honeysuckle, seeding grass, and landscaping work between K and P Streets. The newly formed Works Progress Administration (WPA) provided labor for the project.[127]

As part of the parkway construction work, the PWA also constructed the Lyons Mill Footbridge and Saddle Club Footbridge in 1934. The Lyons Mill Footbridge is a concrete footbridge defined by a broad segmental arch that crosses Rock Creek via the abandoned roadbed of Old Paper Mill Road. The footbridge's concrete deck rests on square-cut ashlar stone and features concrete railings.

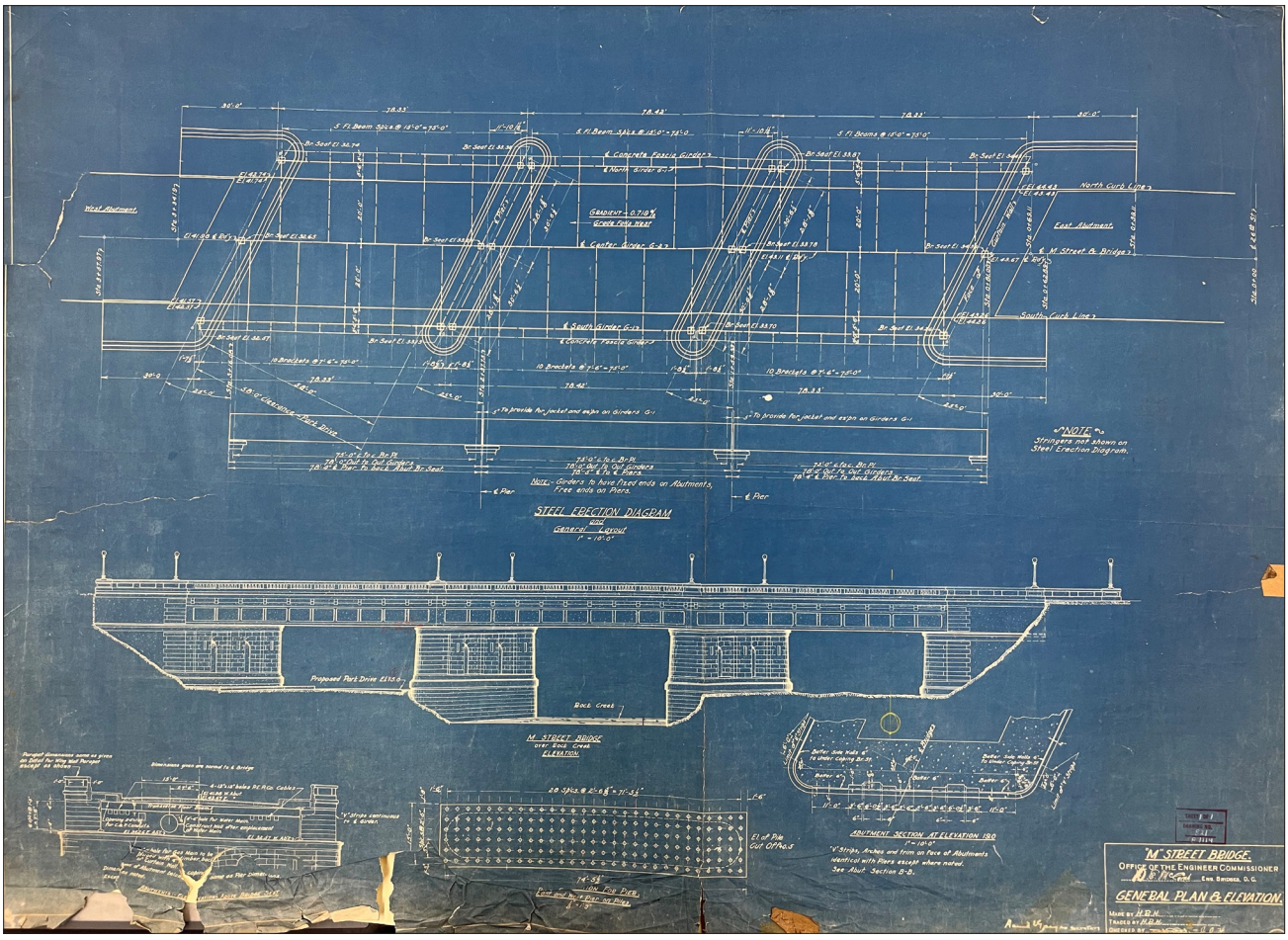


Figure 2-28. Plan and elevation, M Street Bridge, February 28, 1928 (NARA, Record Group 328, Cartographic and Architectural Records).

127 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 8-26.

The footbridge's eastern stone abutment is a remnant of the Lyons Mill complex. The footbridge measures 88' long and 10' wide.[128] Planting designed in 1934 to accompany this section of the parkway is illustrated in Figure 2-37. The presence of historic specimen trees and the proliferation of vines listed for soil stabilization are the only indicators of what may have been realized from the plan. Overall, it is unconfirmed if planting plans from the parkway represent work completed. The Saddle Club Footbridge spans Rock Creek at the base of Shoreham Hill. It is an arched concrete footbridge, 100' in length and 10' in width, that incorporates three arched spans and coursed ashlar wing walls. Wooden railings were installed along the footbridge's edges.[129]

Roosevelt's administration also abolished both the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks and the RC&PPC in August 1933 and transferred their responsibilities to the Office of National Parks, Buildings, and Reservations in the Department of the Interior. This new agency was a reconfiguration of the National Park Service, which dated to 1916, to include greatly expanded responsibilities such as administering areas formerly under the Forest Service and War Department and numerous sites in and near Washington, DC. The administration restored the original name, National Park Service, but maintained its expanded responsibilities in 1934.[130]

Laborers continued work between K and P Streets (Section II) throughout 1934 and 1935. The Godey Lime Kilns, sited on the east side of the parkway south of L Street, were the only historic structures retained as a parkway feature in this section. Workers graded and removed fill in the valley between Pennsylvania Avenue and P Street in spring and summer 1935. The section of roadway between K and P Streets (Section II) was the last section to be completed in late October 1935. Two bridges were constructed at P Street—one that brought P Street across the valley and the other to bring the parkway over the creek. The former was completed in October 1935, and the latter was finished in June 1936. Finishing work on the P Street bridge in 1936 brought the project to completion and meant that the full parkway was open for continuous driving from the National Mall to Rock Creek Park (Figure 2-35 and Figure 2-36).[131]

128 Amy Ross, "Lyons Mill Footbridge," Historic American Engineering Record No. DC-35 (1992).
129 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 7-17.
130 Mackintosh, *Rock Creek Park: An Administrative History*, 70.
131 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 8-26.



Figure 2-29. Parkway construction, looking north from Q Street Bridge, February 3, 1931 (National Capital Region file, People's Archive, DC Public Library).



Figure 2-30. Curbs and gutters on parkway at Waterside Drive NW, looking northwest, October 12, 1931 (National Capital Region file, People's Archive, DC Public Library).



Figure 2-31. The Waterside Overpass and tower are captured in this image of post-parkway construction work, February 1, 1938 (National Capital Region file, People's Archive, DC Public Library).



Figure 2-32. View of Waterside Overpass during parkway construction, June 24, 1932 (National Capital Region file, People's Archive, DC Public Library).



Figure 2-33. Grading on parkway section between K and P Streets, looking east, August 2,1933 (National Capital Region file, People's Archive, DC Public Library)



Figure 2-34. CWA laborers working on the parkway section between K and P Streets, looking east, December 4, 1933 (National Capital Region file, People's Archive, DC Public Library).



Figure 2-35. View of recently completed parkway, section north of Q Street (Section III), November 1937 (National Capital Region file, People's Archive, DC Public Library).



Figure 2-36. View of recently completed parkway, section between K and P Streets (Section II), November 1935 (National Capital Region file, People's Archive, DC Public Library).

LANDSCAPE CONDITION, 1936

Spatial Organization

Spatial organization in the study area in 1936 was defined not only by the valley topography and the path of Rock Creek, but also by the newly constructed roadway and retaining walls that facilitated vehicular traffic through the parkway.

Circulation

By 1936, the roadway was complete and vehicular traffic could traverse the study area, connecting to Rock Creek Park to the north via the zoo fords and to the Lincoln Memorial via the portion of the parkway that followed the shores of the Potomac River. A sidewalk was formalized on the east side of the roadway and a bridle path with a gravel surface ran along the roadway's west side.

Natural Systems

Rock Creek's water quality was poor in the 1920s and 1930s as a result of civic and institutional sewage and stormwater from highly developed urban and suburban neighborhoods entering the creek by way of combined sewage overflows. As early as the 1930s, discharged sewage from the Walter Reed Army Hospital on upper 16th Street NW flowed into Rock Creek, while the National Bureau of Standards on Connecticut Avenue NW regularly disposed of chemicals into the creek. A 1934 NPS study determined that the combined sanitary and storm sewers were overcharged during rains, resulting in their contents also spilling into the creek.[132]

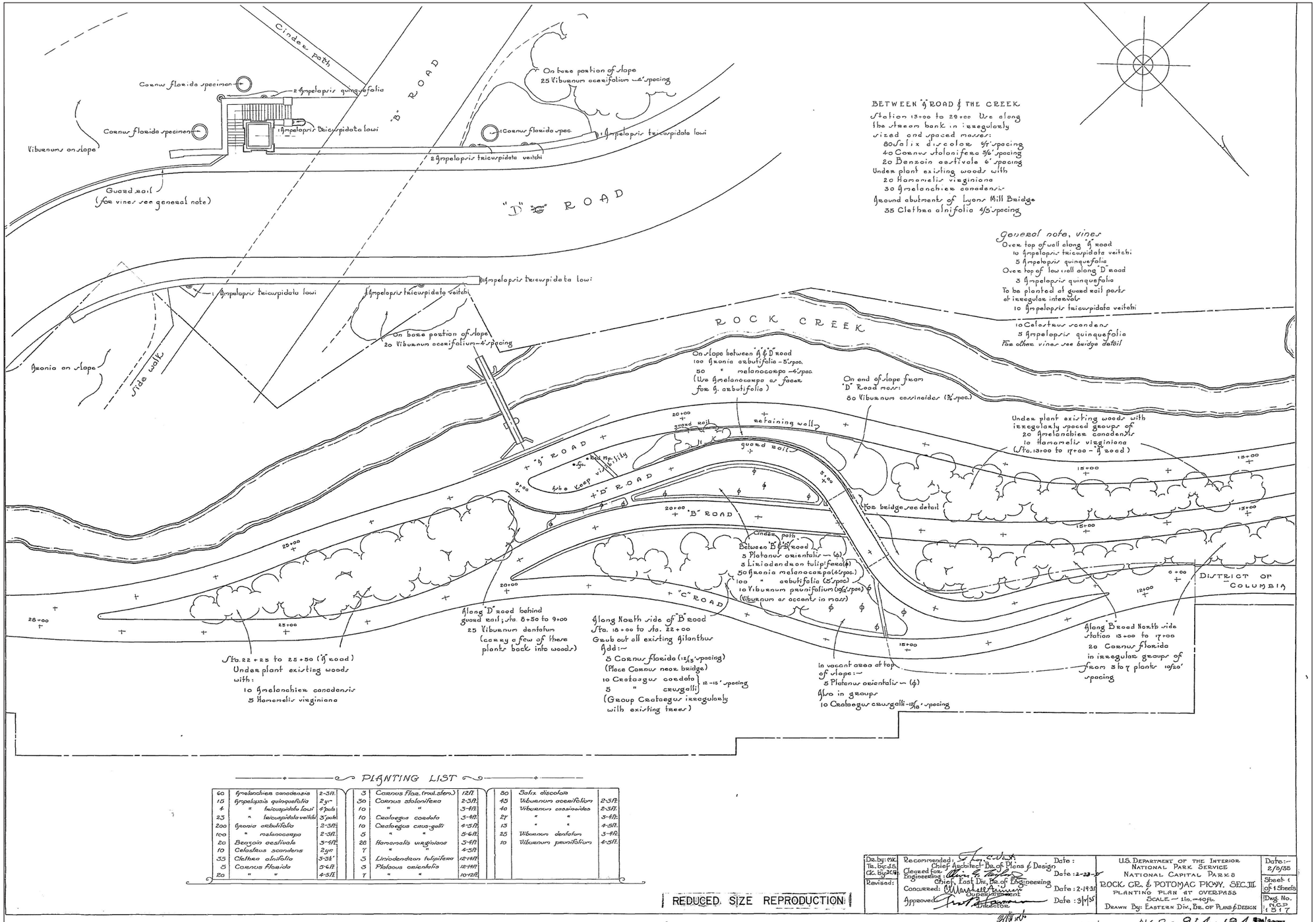
Topography

Topography north of P Street was largely unaltered by the construction of the parkway. In fact, roadway construction between Q Street and Massachusetts Avenue integrated a vegetated median in order to minimize changes to the natural topography of the valley floor. Topography south of P Street was generated through the addition and shaping of fill material to create a naturalistic groundplane.

Land Use

By 1936, primary land uses in the valley included transportation, recreation, and administrative. Residences were removed from the study area during parkway construction.

132 Mackintosh, *Rock Creek Park: An Administrative History*, 76–77.



PLANTING LIST

60	Amelanchier canadensis	2-3ft.	3	Cornus Flo. (mul.stem.)	12ft	80	Salix discolor		
15	Ampelopsis quinquefolia	2yr	30	Cornus stolonifera	2-3ft.	45	Viburnum acerifolium	2-3ft.	
4	" tricuspidata lowi	4 pots	10	" "	3-4ft.	40	Viburnum cassinoides	2-3ft.	
23	" tricuspidata veitchi	3 pots	10	Crataegus cordata	3-4ft.	27	" "	3-4ft.	
200	Forsythia arbutifolia	2-3ft.	10	Crataegus crus-galli	4-5ft.	13	" "	4-5ft.	
100	" melanocarpa	2-3ft.	5	" "	5-6ft.	25	Viburnum dentatum	3-4ft.	
20	Benzoin aestivale	3-4ft.	28	Hamamelis virginiana	3-4ft.	10	Viburnum prunifolium	4-5ft.	
10	Celastrus scandens	2yr	7	" "	4-5ft.				
35	Clethra alnifolia	3-3½'	3	Liriodendron tulipifera	12-14ft.				
5	Cornus Florida	5-6ft	3	Platanus orientalis	12-14ft.				
20	" "	4-5ft.	7	" "	10-12ft.				

REDUCED SIZE REPRODUCTION

De. by: RWL	Recommended: Chief Architect, Br. of Plans & Design	Date:	U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE NATIONAL CAPITAL PARKS ROCK CR. & POTOMAC PKWY. SEC. III PLANTING PLAN AT OVERPASS SCALE — 1in. = 40ft. DRAWN BY: EASTERN DIV., BR. OF PLANS & DESIGN	Date:— 8/19/35
Tr. by: LS	Cleared for Engineering: Chief, East Div., Br. of Engineering	Date: 12-23-35		Sheet 1 of 1 Sheets
Ck. by: JCT	Concurred: Superintendent	Date: 2-1935		Dwg. No. NCP 1917
Revised:	Approved: Director	Date: 3/4/35		

844/80709 NCP-91.4-194

Figure 2-37. Planting Plan for Section II of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway including proposed trees, shrubs, and vines. It is uncertain how much planting, if any, was installed per plans (NPS Archives, 1934).

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Vegetation

The valley north of P Street was described by numerous entities as sylvan, pastoral, and possessing of many of the characteristics that recommended Rock Creek Park for preservation prior to the construction of the parkway.[133] Beech and oak forests covered much of the hillsides between Massachusetts and Connecticut avenues.[134] Mown turf and honeysuckle were added to pockets of early recreational development, followed by detailed planting plans developed for more highly disturbed areas that included canopy and understory trees, shrubs, perennials, ground covers, and vines.

Views and Vistas

Views within the study area changed most drastically south of P Street, where removal of waste material and regrading dramatically reshaped the valley landscape. The roadway provided a new experience for parkway users and framed views of the valley and bridges that spanned it. North of P Street, the embankment supporting Massachusetts Avenue interrupted continuous views of the surrounding landscape for parkway visitors.

Buildings and Structures

By 1936, many buildings had been removed from the study area to realize the vision of a pastoral, naturalized parkway through the city. Residences and industrial buildings were removed primarily south of P Street, and the pumping station and caretaker's house as well as Lyons Mill remnants were also removed in the vicinity of Mill Street. Parkway structures added during this time include roadway and pedestrian bridges as well as the Waterside Drive NW Overpass and Tower structure. Bridges present in the study area by the end of this period include: K Street Bridge, Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge, M Street Bridge, P Street Bridge, Dumbarton (Q Street) Bridge, Connecticut Avenue (William Howard Taft) Bridge, and the Calvert Street (Duke Ellington Memorial) Bridge.

133 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 145.
134 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 145.

EARLY MODIFICATIONS AND BEAUTIFICATION EFFORTS, 1937–1972

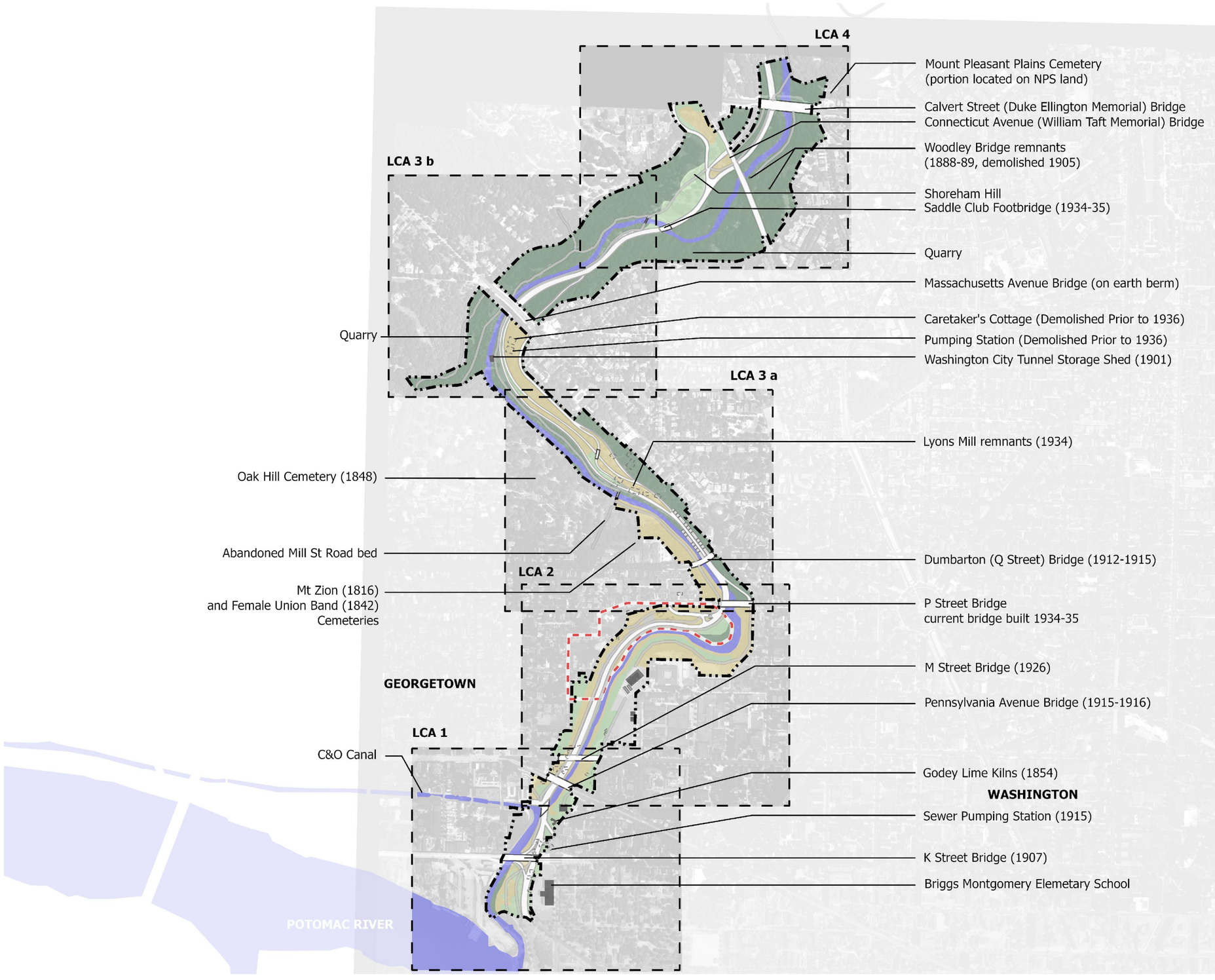
Accommodation for automobiles progressively influenced the parkway's design in the 1920s and 1930s, and the increasing quantity and speed of automobiles influenced management and design in the parkway's early years of use. Between 1920 and 1924, automobile registration in the District of Columbia increased by over 100 percent and again doubled by the mid-1930s.[135] The population of DC's northwest suburbs grew substantially during this same period.[136] The combination of these factors enhanced the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway's importance as a commuter route and influenced alterations.

In 1937, parkway officials established a one-way policy for peak commuting hours in response to the heavy traffic volume between northwest DC suburbs and suburban Maryland and downtown DC. The action effectively solidified the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway as a commuter route. To maintain the parkway's park qualities, however, National Capital Park and Planning Commission chair Frederick Delano lowered the speed limit from 30 mph to 22 mph.[137]

The first substantial post-opening project on the parkway was the rechanneling of Rock Creek at P Street in 1940. The creek was straightened and moved several hundred feet west so that it ran closer to the roadway (Figure 2-38). The area leftover from the previous wide bend, initially designed as an ornate landscaped space, became a grassy park known as the P Street Beach. By 1950, thousands of Washingtonians used the "beach" for recreational activities, especially sunbathers during the summer months (Figure 2-39).[138]

Two bridges were added to the parkway shortly after its 1936 opening. Completed in 1941, the K Street Bridge, an overpass carrying traffic from the Georgetown area to downtown, replaced an older bridge that increased parkway traffic had already strained. This improved the parkway's efficiency as a commuter artery (Figure 2-40).[139] The new bridge was faced with gneiss veneer. The Massachusetts Avenue Bridge was finished the same year. The bridge replaced the 1901 embankment and culvert, through which parkway builders had placed two parkway lanes (Figure 2-41).

135 District of Columbia Department of Highways, *Twenty-four Years of Progress in Highway Development, 1924-1948*, mimeographed report (1948), 39–47.
136 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 188.
137 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 8-27.
138 "The Heat's On," *Evening Star*, June 25, 1950; James G. Deane, "Rock Creek Parkway Additions Would Doom "P Street Beach," *Evening Star*, February 27, 1952.
139 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 192.



Cultural Landscape Report

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway
Washington, DC

Overall Study Area
Historic Period Plan, 1936

National Park Service
National Capital Region

Sources

1. Park boundaries from National Park Service, National Capital Region, Rock Creek Park, 2022.
2. Aerial imagery from 1922, 1942, 1951.
3. NPS Archives, Drawing numbers: 844_80773; 844_80538; 844_80141; 844_80709; 844_80551; 844_80538; 844_80170A; 844_80170; and 844_80569.

Drawn By

Quinn Evans, ArcGIS Pro 3.1.3, 2024

Legend

- CLR Boundary
- LCA Sheet
- Trails
- Wall
- Maintained Landscape
- Mixed Forest
- Mown Turf
- Open Water
- Road
- Developed, Medium Intensity
- Rock Outcrop
- Bridge
- Buildings/ Structures
- Buildings Demolished prior to 1922
- Buildings Demolished for Parkway Construction
- Recreational Feature

Notes

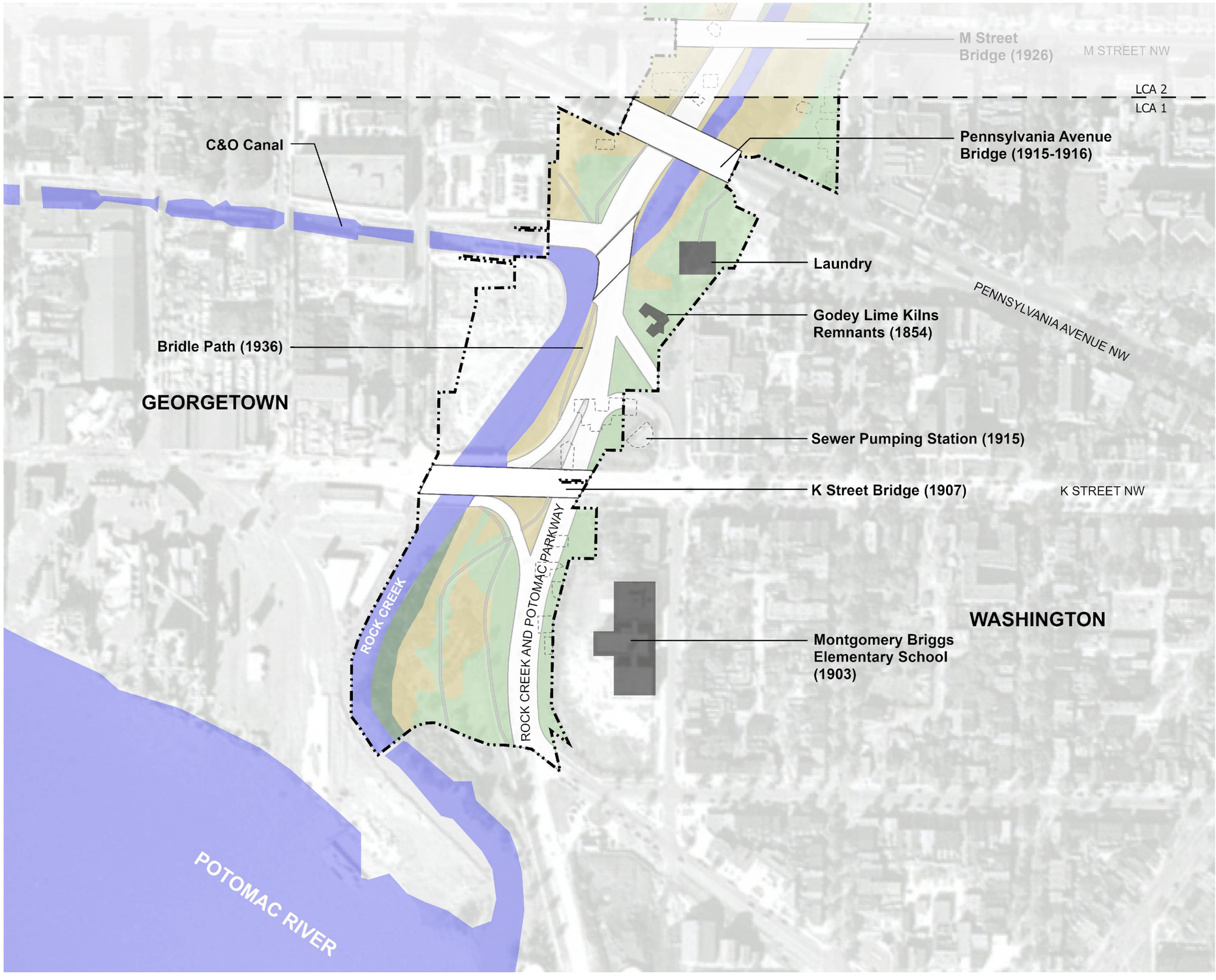
1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N.
2. 1951 Historic Aerial shown as background.

N

0 425 850 1,700
Feet

Drawing HPP-2 Overall

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Cultural Landscape Report

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway
Washington, DC

LCA 1
from Virginia Ave NW to Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Historic Period Plan, 1936

National Park Service
National Capital Region

Sources

1. Park boundaries from National Park Service, National Capital Region, Rock Creek Park, 2022.
2. Aerial imagery from 1922, 1942, 1951.
3. NPS Archives, Drawing numbers: 844_80538, 844_80141, and 844_80551.

Drawn By

Quinn Evans, ArcGIS Pro 3.1.3, 2024

Legend

- CLR Boundary
- LCA Match Line
- Trails
- Maintained Landscape
- Mixed Forest
- Mown Turf
- Open Water
- Road
- Bridge
- Buildings/Structures
- Buildings Demolished Prior to 1922

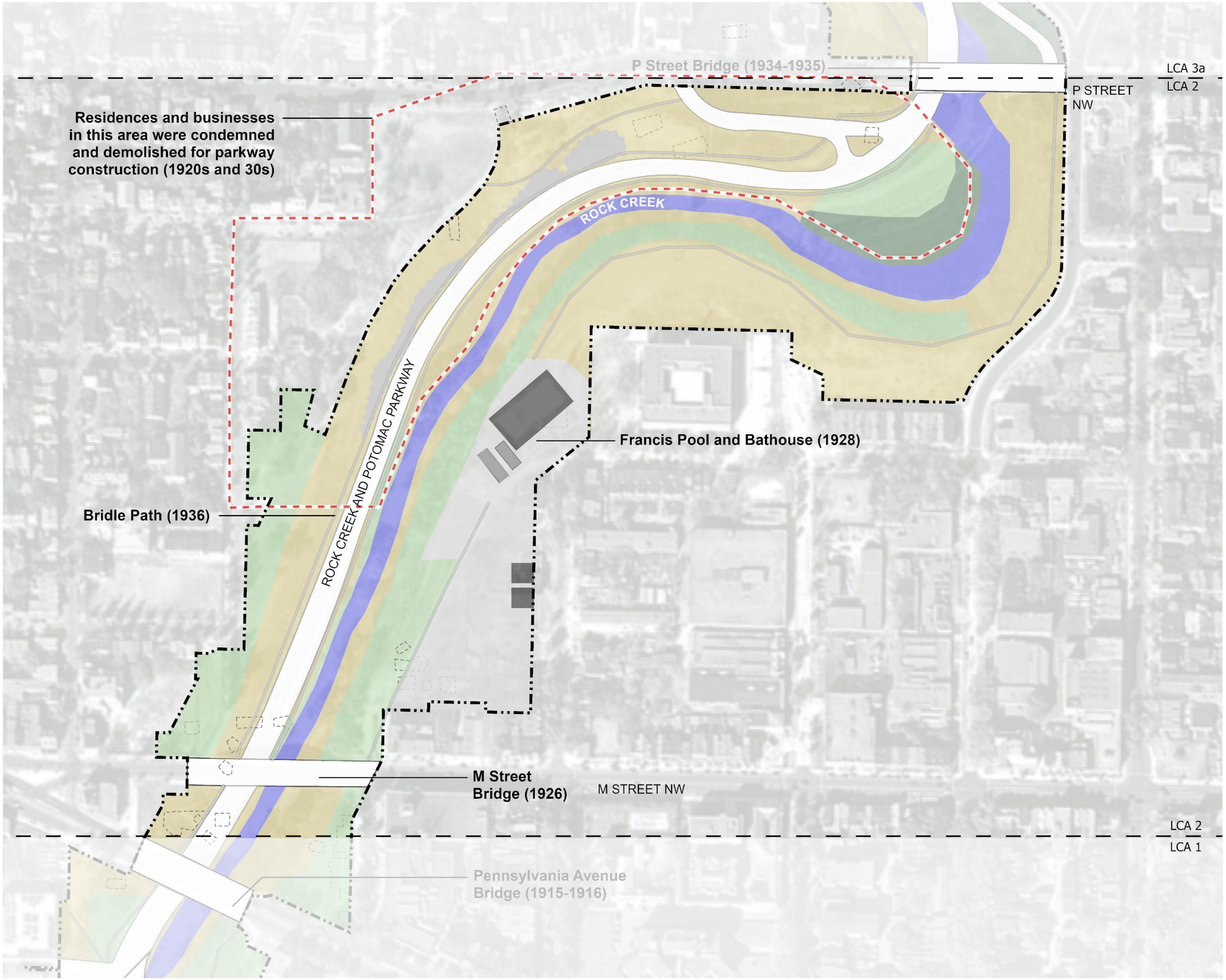
Notes

1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N.
2. 1942 Historic Aerial shown as background.

N 0 100 200 400 Feet

Drawing HPP2-1

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Cultural Landscape Report

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway
Washington, DC

LCA 2
From Pennsylvania Avenue NW to P Street NW
Historic Period Plan, 1936

National Park Service
National Capital Region

Sources

1. Park boundaries from National Park Service, National Capital Region, Rock Creek Park, 2022.
2. Aerial imagery from 1922, 1942, 1951.
3. NPS Archives, Drawing numbers: 844_80141; 844_80551; and 844_80569.

Drawn By

Quinn Evans, ArcGIS Pro 3.1.3, 2024

Legend

- CLR Boundary
- LCA Match Line
- Trails
- Maintained Landscape
- Mixed Forest
- Mown Turf
- Open Water
- Road
- Developed, Medium Intensity
- Rock Outcrop
- Bridge
- Buildings/Structures
- Buildings Demolished Prior to 1922
- Buildings Demolished for Parkway Construction
- Recreational Feature

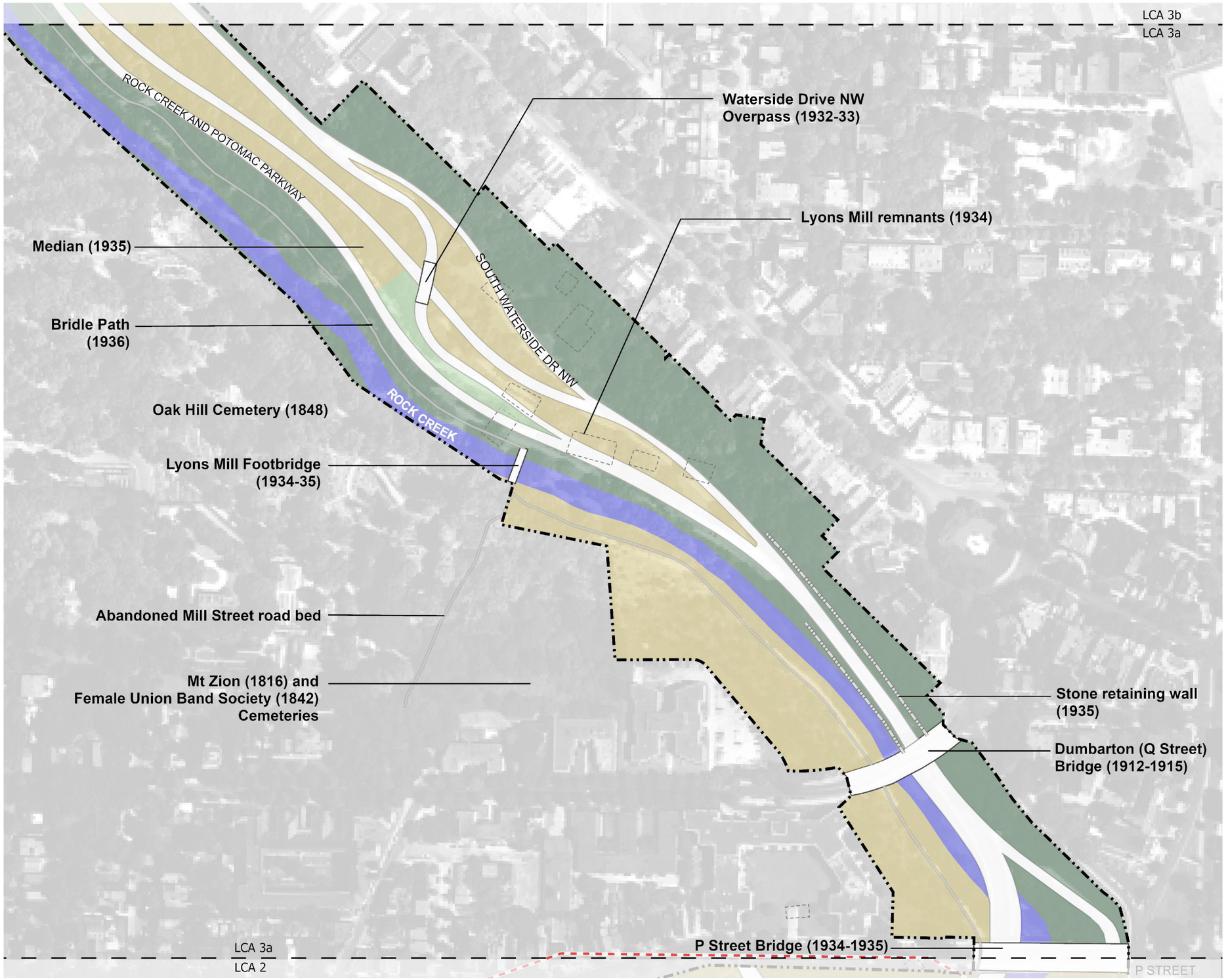
Notes

1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N.
2. 1942 Historic Aerial shown as background.

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Drawing HPP2-2

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Cultural Landscape Report

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway
Washington, DC

LCA 3
from P Street NW to Saddle Club Footbridge
Historic Period Plan, 1936

National Park Service
National Capital Region

Sources

1. Park boundaries from National Park Service, National Capital Region, Rock Creek Park, 2022.
2. Aerial imagery from 1922, 1942, 1951
3. NPS Archives, Drawing numbers: 844_80709; 844_80551; and 844_80738.

Drawn By

Quinn Evans, ArcGIS Pro 3.1.3, 2024

Legend

- CLR Boundary
- LCA Match Line
- Trails
- Wall
- Maintained Landscape
- Mixed Forest
- Mown Turf
- Open Water
- Road
- Bridge
- Buildings Demolished Prior to 1922
- Buildings Demolished for Parkway Construction

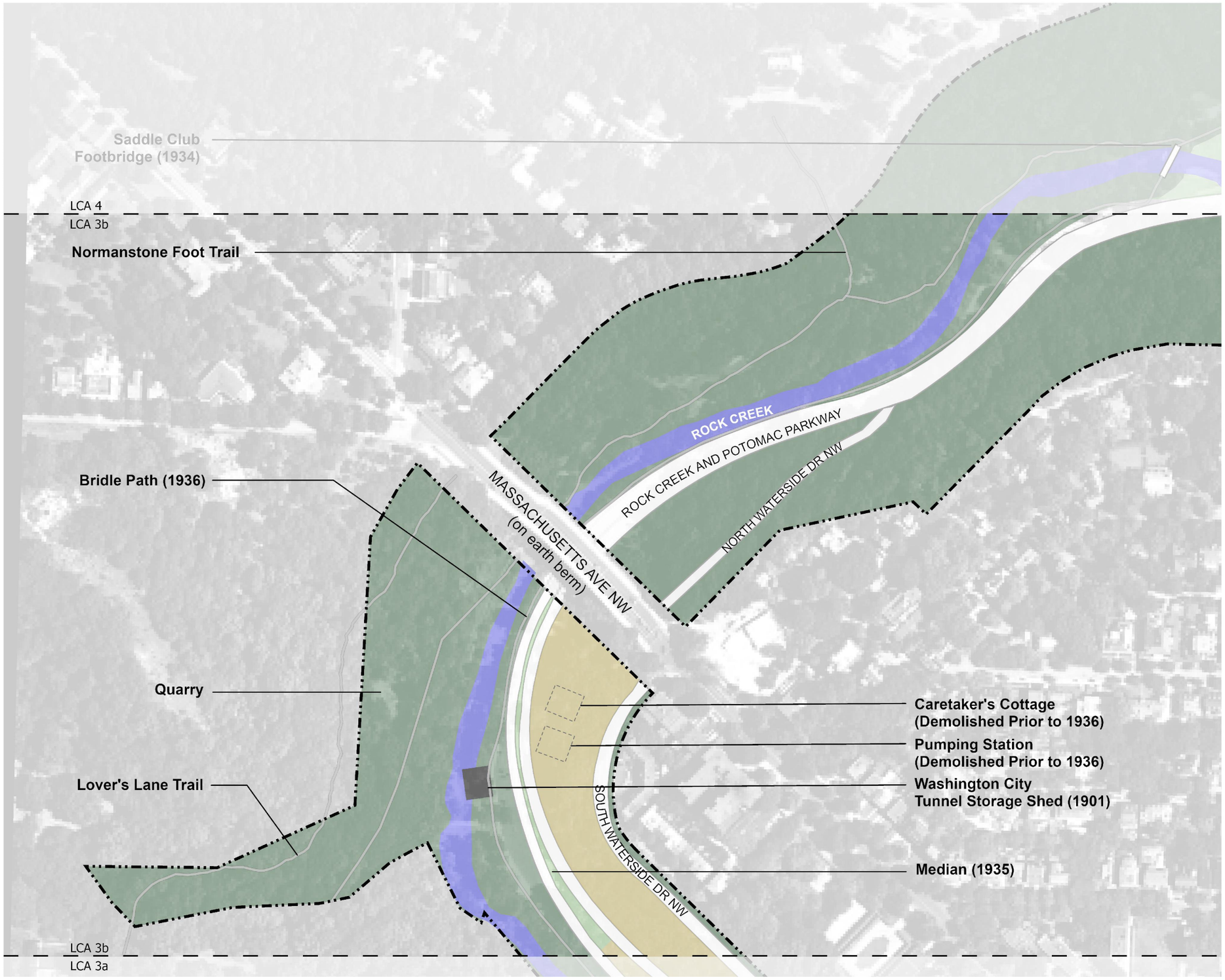
Notes

1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N.
2. 1951 Historic Aerial shown as background.

N 0 100 200 400 Feet

Drawing HPP2-3a

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Cultural Landscape Report

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway
Washington, DC

LCA 3
from P Street NW to Saddle Club Footbridge
Historic Period Plan, 1936

National Park Service
National Capital Region

Sources

1. Park boundaries from National Park Service, National Capital Region, Rock Creek Park, 2022.
2. Aerial imagery from 1922, 1942, 1951.
3. NPS Archives, Drawing numbers: 844_80709.

Drawn By

Quinn Evans, ArcGIS Pro 3.1.3, 2024

Legend

- CLR Boundary
- LCA Match Line
- Trails
- Maintained Landscape
- Mixed Forest
- Mown Turf
- Open Water
- Road
- Bridge
- Buildings/Structures
- Buildings Demolished Prior to 1922

Notes

1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N.
2. 1951 Historic Aerial shown as background.

N 0 100 200 400 Feet

Drawing HPP2-3b

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Cultural Landscape Report

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway
Washington, DC

LCA 4
from the Saddle Club Footbridge to National Zoological Park Tunnel
Historic Period Plan, 1936

National Park Service
National Capital Region

Sources
1. Park boundaries from National Park Service, National Capital Region, Rock Creek Park, 2022.
2. Aerial imagery from 1922, 1942, 1951.
3. NPS Archives, Drawing numbers: 844_80773.

Drawn By
Quinn Evans, ArcGIS Pro 3.1.3, 2024

Legend
- CLR Boundary
- LCA Match Line
- Trails
- Maintained Landscape
- Mixed Forest
- Mown Turf
- Open Water
- Road
- Bridge
- Buildings/Structures

Notes
1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N.
2. 1951 Historic Aerial shown in this drawing.

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Drawing HPP2-4

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In the 1940s, the National Park Service enhanced the parkway's park setting with small neighborhood parks including Rose Park at 26th and O Streets NW, a public swimming pool at 25th Street NW, and tennis courts, located south/southwest of P Street Beach.[140]

Ever-increasing commuter traffic on the parkway and on other roads in the Washington, DC, metropolitan region after World War II prompted a number of proposals to either build new roads or increase capacity on existing roads. A 1946 report commissioned by the DC Board of Commissioners called for converting the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway into an expressway. A 1948 DC Highway Department study similarly proposed rebuilding all of the District's highways. The National Capital Park and Planning Commission's 1950 comprehensive plan advocated replacing the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway with a six-lane expressway. [141] The expressway would connect to a proposed "Inner Loop" freeway that would encircle the downtown and extend across the Potomac north of the Georgetown area.[142]

In 1952, the newly renamed National Capital Planning Commission proposed doubling the length of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway into Maryland to alleviate congestion on the roadway. The area at the parkway's northern terminus was especially bottlenecked. District planners proposed to extend the parkway around the zoo and continue it into Montgomery County. Planners advocating highway building also apparently did not appreciate the affinity some Washingtonians had come to feel for P Street Beach as their proposal would have "obliterated" the beach by widening the roadway south of Massachusetts Avenue NW.[143]

Strong public opposition to such a dramatic transformation of the parkway ultimately defeated the proposals.[144] A 1952 *Evening Star* article responded to plans for modifying the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, which was already reported to be "too crowded." The newspaper article's author, James G. Deane,

140 In 1972, NPS transferred parts of Rose Park to the DC government. NPS also transferred jurisdiction of the land that includes the pool, but retained jurisdiction over the land on which the tennis courts sit.

141 James G. Deane, "Rock Creek Parkway Additions Would Doom 'P Street Beach,'" *Evening Star*, February 27, 1952.

142 See J. E. Greiner Company and De Leuw, Cather & Company Consulting Engineers, *Transportation Plans for Washington* (Prepared for the DC Board of Commissioners, 1946); National Capital Park and Planning Commission, *Washington Present and Future: A General Summary of the Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital and Its Environs* (US Government Printing Office, 1950).

143 James G. Deane, "Rock Creek Parkway Additions Would Doom 'P Street Beach,'" *Evening Star*, February 27, 1952.

144 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 8-28.



Figure 2-38. Photograph of project that rechanneled Rock Creek just below P Street NW. Looking south, ca. 1940 (National Capital Region file, People's Archive, DC Public Library).



Figure 2-39. Sunbathers enjoying the P Street Beach, a grassy park space east of the parkway's bend at P Street (*Evening Star*, February 27, 1952).

outlined a number of issues with the parkway, which he determined was already obsolete and not able to accommodate contemporary traffic needs. DC planners, the *Evening Star* noted, were initially prepared to sacrifice the well-used P Street Beach for the new highway.[145]

As part of the post-war ethos of highway building, however, the District government constructed an elevated expressway along the Georgetown

145 James G. Deane, "Rock Creek Parkway Additions Would Doom 'P Street Beach,'" *Evening Star*, February 27, 1952.



Figure 2-40. View of K Street Bridge, looking northeast, ca. 1941 (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).



Figure 2-41. Massachusetts Avenue Bridge under construction while the 1926 culvert remains intact beneath it, looking northeast, ca. 1940 (Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division).

waterfront from Rock Creek to the Francis Scott Key Bridge. Constructing what became known as the Whitehurst Freeway required altering the K Street Bridge where the freeway met K Street NW. The K Street Bridge became integrated into a complex structure that would accommodate traffic from the freeway. The original K Street Bridge access ramps completed in 1941 were demolished as part of the project, and the Whitehurst Freeway was completed in 1949.[146] Planners envisioned that the freeway would connect to a concurrently planned

146 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 192, no. 157; Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 7-9.

"Inner Loop," a highway that would wrap around downtown Washington. Two access ramps to the unbuilt "Inner Loop" freeway were built over the parkway at K Street but never used after the concept was abandoned.[147] Multiple buildings were demolished in the construction of the ramps and freeway, including the Robert Peter House, visited by George Washington in 1799.[148]

A group of sculptures designed by James Earl Fraser named the *Arts of War* and the *Arts of Peace* were erected at either side of the roadway's intersection with Lincoln Circle in 1952. The sculptural groups provided an architectural connection between the District's park system and the formal components of the National Mall. CFA approved the design in 1933 but the required funding to cast them was not appropriated. After World War II, the government of Italy cast the sculptures in an act of reconciliation.[149] While the sculptures are important to note as the southern terminus of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, they are located outside this project's study area.

Water quality in Rock Creek was also a major problem in the 1950s. A 1954 article by Bernard Frank of the US Forest Service published in *American Forests* described the state of Rock Creek as "foul-smelling, mud-laden, debris-choked" and blamed overdevelopment of the watershed and poor stormwater and sewage controls for the creek's condition.[150]

By the late 1950s, concern about the frequency of accidents on the parkway's P Street curve resulted in safety-related changes. In 1957, the roadway's curves between P and K Streets were widened slightly and straightened (Figure 2-42 and Figure 2-43). Curtin and Johnson, a Washington, DC, paving firm, carried out the work.[151] The 1957 straightening and widening project required closing several lanes of traffic and prompted complaints from commuters now dependant on the parkway's access to downtown Washington, DC.[152]

In the mid-1950s, plans to build equestrian stables in Rock Creek Park impacted the CLR study area. Despite the enduring popularity of horseback riding in the park, the closest stable was the Edgewater Riding Academy, which was

147 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 8-28.
148 Frank Leone, "Funkstown - The Highway that Ate Foggy Bottom," Foggy Bottom Association, accessed September 26, 2023, available at https://www.foggybottomassociation.org/post/funkstown-the-highway-that-ate-foggy-bottom.
149 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 8-27.
150 Bernard Frank, "Our Capital's Rock Creek Mess," *American Forests (*August 1954), 20–21, 44–45.
151 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," Historic American Buildings Survey No. DC-697, 133; Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 210.
152 "Parkway project to start Monday," ***Wa****shington Post* (July 20, 1957).



Figure 2-42. Aerial view of Section II, between K and P Streets NW, 1942 (NARA, Record Group 328).



Figure 2-43. Aerial view of Section II, between K and P Streets NW, after 1957 widening and straightening project, 1973. Straightened section indicated in orange (NARA, Record Group 328).

located outside of the park at 26th and D Streets. Rising interest in building a stable within the park became more urgent in 1956 when the Edgewater Riding Academy was condemned for construction of the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bridge. In March 1957, NPS proposed building the stable along the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway as part of the Mission 66 program, an expansive federal initiative to improve national park facilities in anticipation of the National Park

Service's fiftieth anniversary in 1966. NPS selected a site just northeast of the Connecticut Avenue (William Howard Taft) Bridge.[153]

Plans were concurrently underway for a new bridle trail connecting the proposed Edgewater Stables with the training ring located at Shoreham Hill by way of a ford under the Shoreham Road Bridge. Proposed in 1957, the trail extended north past the study area boundary and drawings included details for a standard stone headwall for culverts along the trail's length (Figure 2-44). The stables and trial were completed in 1959. Edgewater Stables was closed in 1970 for construction of Washington's Metro transit system (which would pass beneath Rock Creek at that point) and reopened in 1979 as a US Park Police facility.[154]

Another Mission 66 project in the CLR study area was the Thompson Boat Center. The boat center emerged from NPS plans to enhance the area surrounding the creek's juncture with the Potomac River. In 1956, NPS announced plans to construct a water sports facility as part of its Mission 66 program. William Haussmann, an NPS architect with the Eastern Office of Design and Construction, designed the boathouse that was sited just north of the creek mouth. Designed and constructed between 1959 and 1960, the boathouse was true to the Mission 66 design vocabulary as it combined rustic materials such as stone and brick cladding with a modernist palette of ribbon windows, liberal use of modern materials like metal, and an overall austere treatment of the façades. A parking lot and approach road for the boathouse were planned and constructed concurrently. Originally opened as the National Capital Water Sports Center in September 1960, Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall renamed the facility the Harry T. Thompson Boat Center in 1961 in honor of the park superintendent who lobbied fiercely for its construction.[155]

The completion of a tunnel beneath the National Zoological Park in 1966 realized a long-running goal of connecting the parkway and Rock Creek Park (Figure 2-45). The zoo was situated on hilly ground that created a natural barrier between the upper and lower portions of the Rock Creek Valley. Until this point, parkway motorists trying to access Beach Drive had to enter the zoo grounds and cross two fords that were part of its road system. The nighttime closure of the zoo and difficulty passing through the fords during high water compounded the problem.

153 "An Administrative History-Equestrian Use," Rock Creek Park, National Park Service, accessed October 12, 2023, available at https://www.nps.gov/rocr/learn/historyculture/adhi4d.htm.

154 "An Administrative History-Equestrian Use."

155 "An Administrative History-The Mouth of the Creek," Rock Creek Park, National Park Service, accessed October 12, 2023, available at https://www.nps.gov/rocr/learn/historyculture/adhi4i.htm.

Officials associated with planning agencies and the zoo recognized the problem as early as 1933, but World War II and other projects assigned a higher priority delayed the implementation of any solutions.

In 1960, the National Park Service and zoo officials approved designs for a 750' long, two-lane-wide tunnel that would run under the zoo administrative building. The National Park Service agreed to provide a fence to screen the parkway and an entrance at Harvard Street for the zoo. The National Zoological Park Tunnel and a connected road bridge directly to the south opened in August 1966. The tunnel follows a curved path that complements the character of the parkway and each end of the tunnel's vault is embellished with archivolts of granite voussoirs and rough-faced ashlar along adjacent retaining walls. Glazed ceramic tiles clad the tunnel's vaulted interior.[156] Fords within the Zoo property that had been used since the parkway's initial construction were ultimately removed to improve fish migration in Rock Creek.

The longstanding water quality in Rock Creek showed improvements by the mid-1960s. The US Geological Survey and the Federal Water Pollution Control Administration (which was later absorbed into the US Department of the Interior) conducted detailed studies that monitored water quality in the creek. The Washington, DC, city government repaired some defective sewers. The National Zoological Park implemented a major program to halt the discharge of animal waste into the creek. The Soil Conservation Service of the US Department of Agriculture built two dams upstream in Montgomery County. Following the dams' construction, Lakes Needwood and Frank (for the deceased Bernard Frank) behind the dams would collect silt and curb flood damage downstream. Montgomery County also adopted new grading and sediment controls for land development. In 1967, the US Department of the Interior issued a publication

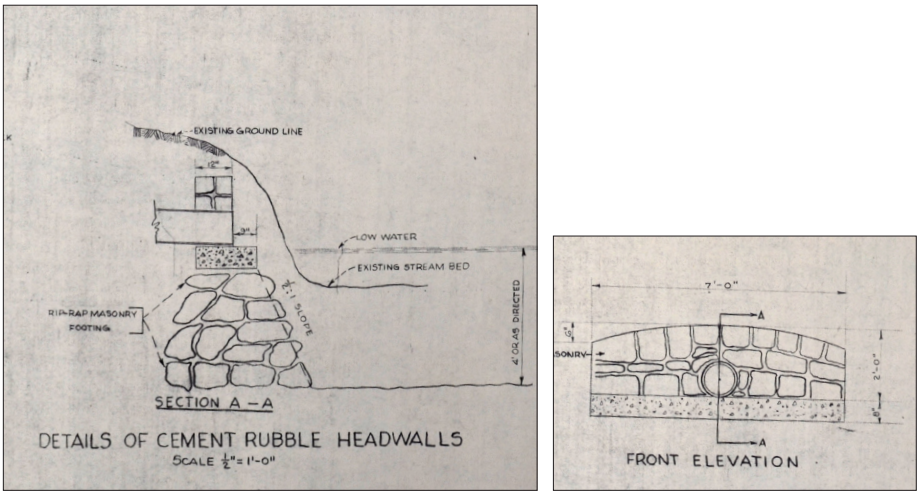


Figure 2-44. Details of a standard culvert headwall design (Rock Creek Park Archives, 1957).

156 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 7-21.

titled *The Creek and the City: Urban Pressures on a Natural Stream--Rock Creek Park and Metropolitan Washington* that called for stronger enforcement of existing anti-siltage and pollution measures and more efforts to remove trash and debris from the stream. It is not clear whether this advice was adopted.[157]

Beginning in the mid-1960s, Claudia "Lady Bird" Johnson's Beautification campaign brought a significant revision to the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway landscape. During her time as first lady from 1964 to 1969, Lady Bird Johnson (1912–2007) used her prominent public role to advocate for environmental legislation, conservation efforts, and projects to improve physical conditions on the nation's highways and in cities scarred by urban renewal programs. Johnson identified Washington, DC, as the ideal location for implementing her ideas for environmental improvements and aesthetic enhancements (Figure 2-46). Johnson assembled a coalition that included Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall, local philanthropists, architects, landscape architects, planners, neighborhood groups, and numerous private citizens to a nationwide public relations campaign to promote the Beautification program.[158] The Beautification program's first efforts focused on environmental improvements including expanding Washington DC's mass transit system, renovating historic buildings, improving water quality, and



Figure 2-45. Secretary of the Interior Stewart Udall dedicates the National Zoological Park Tunnel, August 1966 (National Park Service, Rock Creek Park).

157 Mackintosh, *Rock Creek Park: An Administrative History*, 77–78; *A Special Report to the Nation: The Creek and the City: Urban Pressures on a Natural Stream--Rock Creek Park and Metropolitan Washington* (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, 1967).

158 "Beautification: A Legacy of Lady Bird Johnson," National Park Service, accessed May 1, 2023, available at https://www.nps.gov/articles/lady-bird-johnson-beautification-cultural-landscapes.htm#Note5.

bringing nature into the urban core. She also engaged community and school groups to reduce litter in urban neighborhoods.

Johnson's efforts included enhancing unimproved city squares, rehabilitating parks, drafting design standards and guidelines, and establishing visitor facilities. As part of this project, Johnson worked with the National Park Service to install plantings in unimproved areas of the urban core and along parkways and select avenues. Johnson intended the plantings to establish a high contrast of color with the surrounding environment. She advocated, in her words, "masses of color where the masses pass."[159] From the mid-1960s until 1971, the National Park Service planted approximately 200,000 daffodils along the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, with a high concentration of informal massings located on the western bank south of P Street (Figure 2-47, Figure 2-48, and Figure 2-49). In 1966 and 1967, NPS planted hundreds of daffodils on the western valley bank below Rose Park.[160]

In the 1960s and 1970s, Washingtonians increasingly used areas along the parkway for recreation. Since the parkway's opening in 1936, increased widening of the roadway encroached on the right-of-way and diminished some of the parkway's recreational aspects. With threats of an expressway destroying the parkway diminished in the midst of a turn in national public opinion against



Figure 2-46. First Lady Lady Bird Johnson shown planting pansies with members of her Beautification campaign team (Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library and Museum/NARA).

159 Lady Bird Johnson, quoted in "Beautification: A Legacy of Lady Bird Johnson," National Park Service, accessed May 1, 2023, available at https://www.nps.gov/articles/lady-bird-johnson-beautification-cultural-landscapes.htm#Note5.

160 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 7-12, 7-23.

highway construction, NPS instead faced pressure from interest groups aiming to severely reduce the presence of automobiles in Rock Creek Park.[161] This push was concurrent with a nationwide increase in the popularity of bicycling and organized bicycling groups in the 1960s. In 1971, NPS converted one lane of the parkway into a bicycle commuter lane to accommodate recreational and commuting cyclists while maintaining automobile use (Figure 2-50). Although the bicycle lane experiment proved popular among cyclists, traffic congestion increased and automobile commuters quickly expressed their displeasure. The experiment only lasted one week. To appease cyclists, however, NPS paved the bridle trail along the valley floor's west side from Connecticut Avenue to Virginia Avenue (Figure 2-51).[162]

Park management closed the Waterside Drive NW Overpass tower (which included the comfort station and park police lodge) to the public in the 1970s due to safety concerns.[163] In 1972, the National Park Service transferred some areas originally within the parkway boundaries to the city of Washington, DC. NPS transferred a portion of Rose Park totaling 90,407.22 square feet. NPS also transferred jurisdiction of the land that included the public swimming pool at 25th Street NW and portions of Francis Field north of Francis Junior High School at 2425 N Street NW. NPS, however, retained jurisdiction over the tennis and basketball courts east of Francis Junior High School.[164]

LANDSCAPE CONDITION, 1972

Spatial Organization

Spatial organization in 1972 follows the linear alignment of Rock Creek through the valley. Vertical space in the study area was structured by mature forest along the slopes of the valley and new structures such as the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge and Whitehurst Freeway overpasses.

Circulation

Changes to circulation by 1972 include the straightening and widening of curved road areas throughout the study area, the relocation of Rock Creek south of P Street, and the paving of the bridle path for cyclists and pedestrians.

161 For context on the highway revolts of the late 1960s and early 1970s, see Robert R. Gioielli, *Environmental Activism and the Urban Crisis: Baltimore, St. Louis, Chicago* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press 2014), 73–103.

162 "Rock Creek Park Road System," Historic American Engineering Record No. DC-55, 150–51.

163 Barsoum, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District," 7-15.

164 Transfer of jurisdiction, letter of March 15, 1971, Plat S. 0. 70-292, Recorded on November 7, 1972, Office of the Surveyor District of Columbia, Book 158, Page 34; Transfer of jurisdiction, letter of February 16, 1971, Plat S. 0. 70-290, Recorded on October 18, 1971, Office of the Surveyor District of Columbia, Book 158, Page 11.

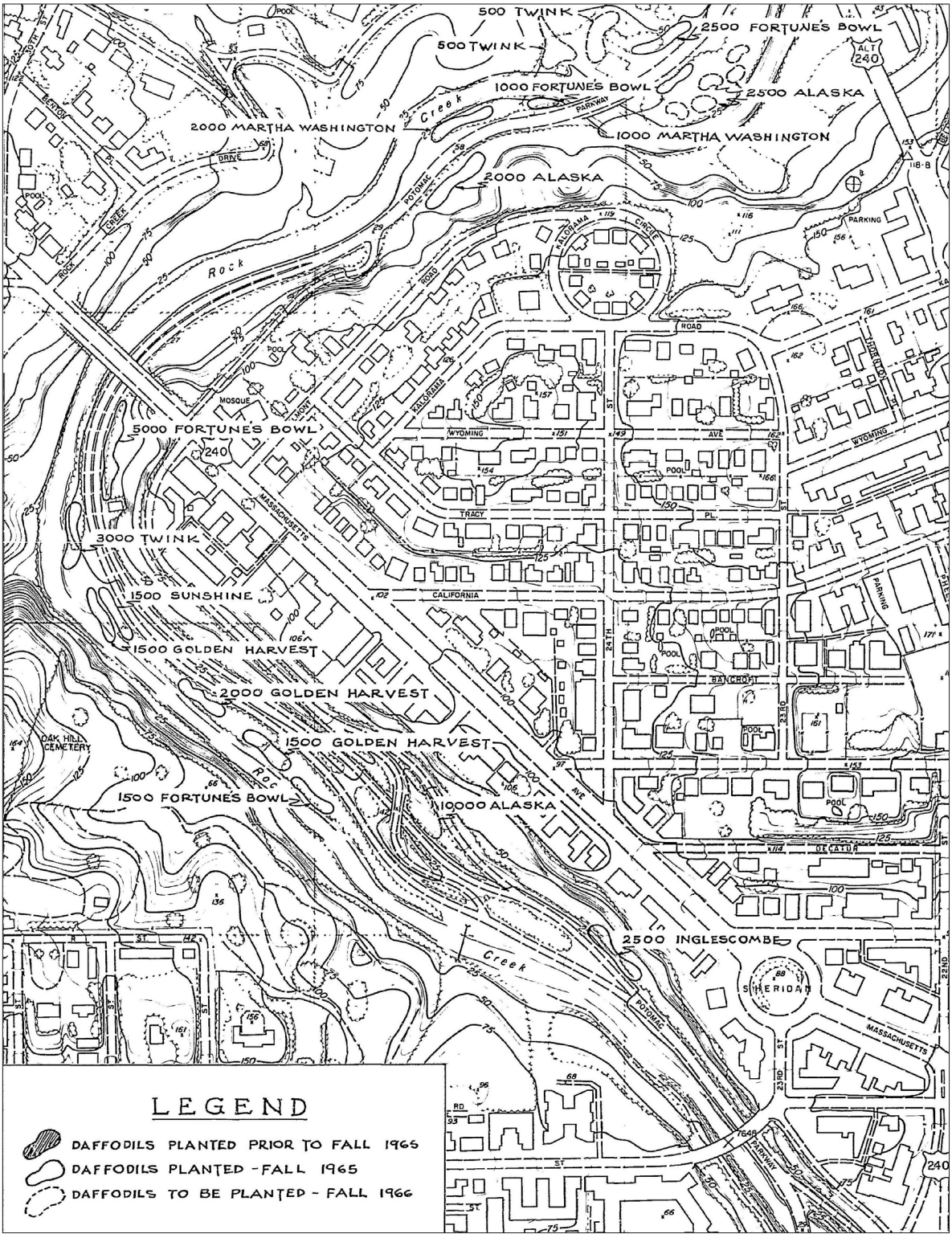


Figure 2-47. **Beautification program daffodil planting plan from Q Street NW north to Rock Creek Valley east of Connecticut Avenue (William Taft Memorial) Bridge, 1966 (National Park Service).**



Figure 2-48. Daffodil planting plan from First Lady Lady Bird Johnson's Beautification project on the parkway, showing the project area from the mouth of Rock Creek north to P Street NW,1966 (National Park Service).

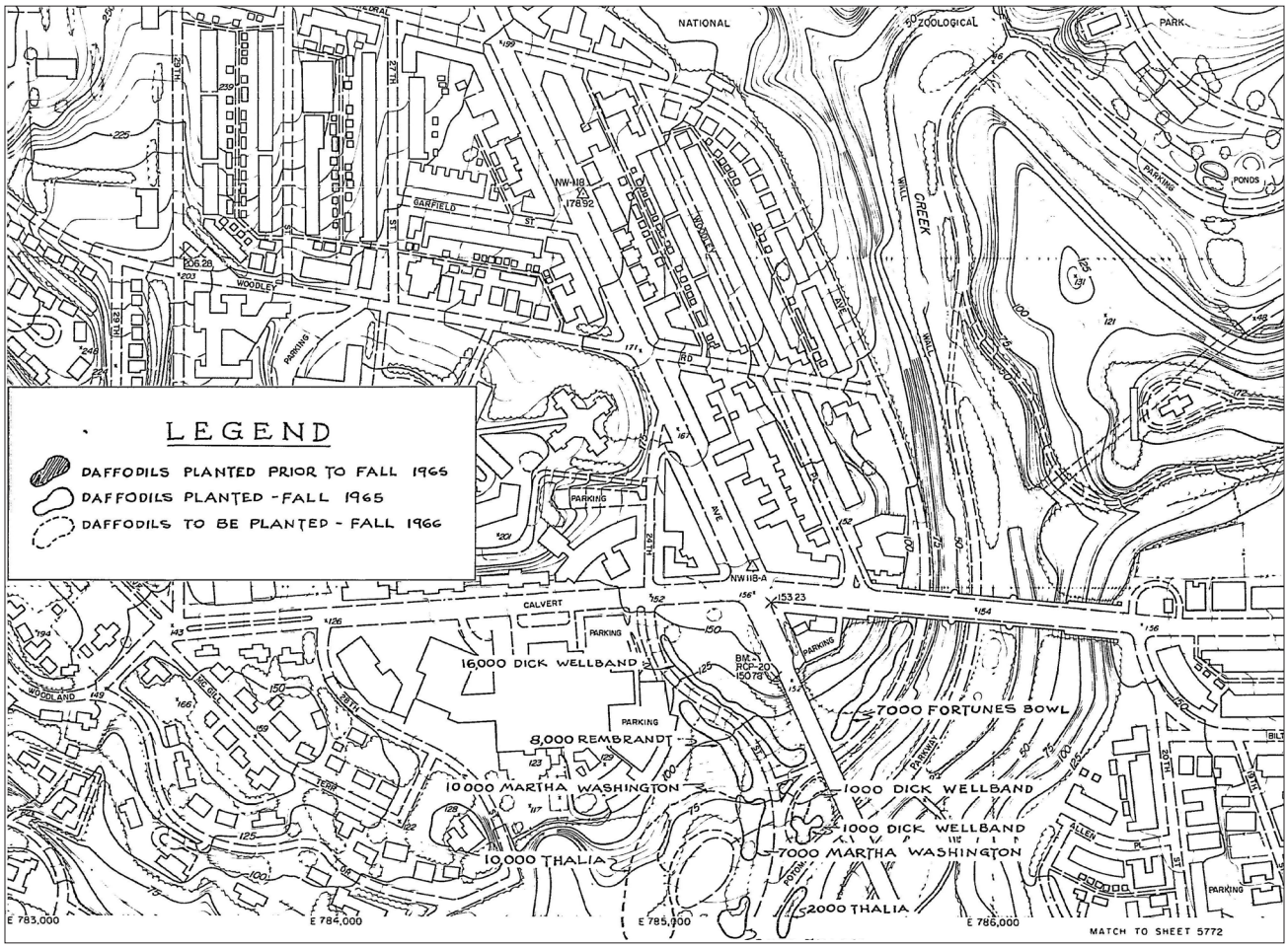


Figure 2-49. Beautification program daffodil planting plan on parkway east and west of Connecticut Avenue (William Taft Memorial) Bridge, 1966 (National Park Service).

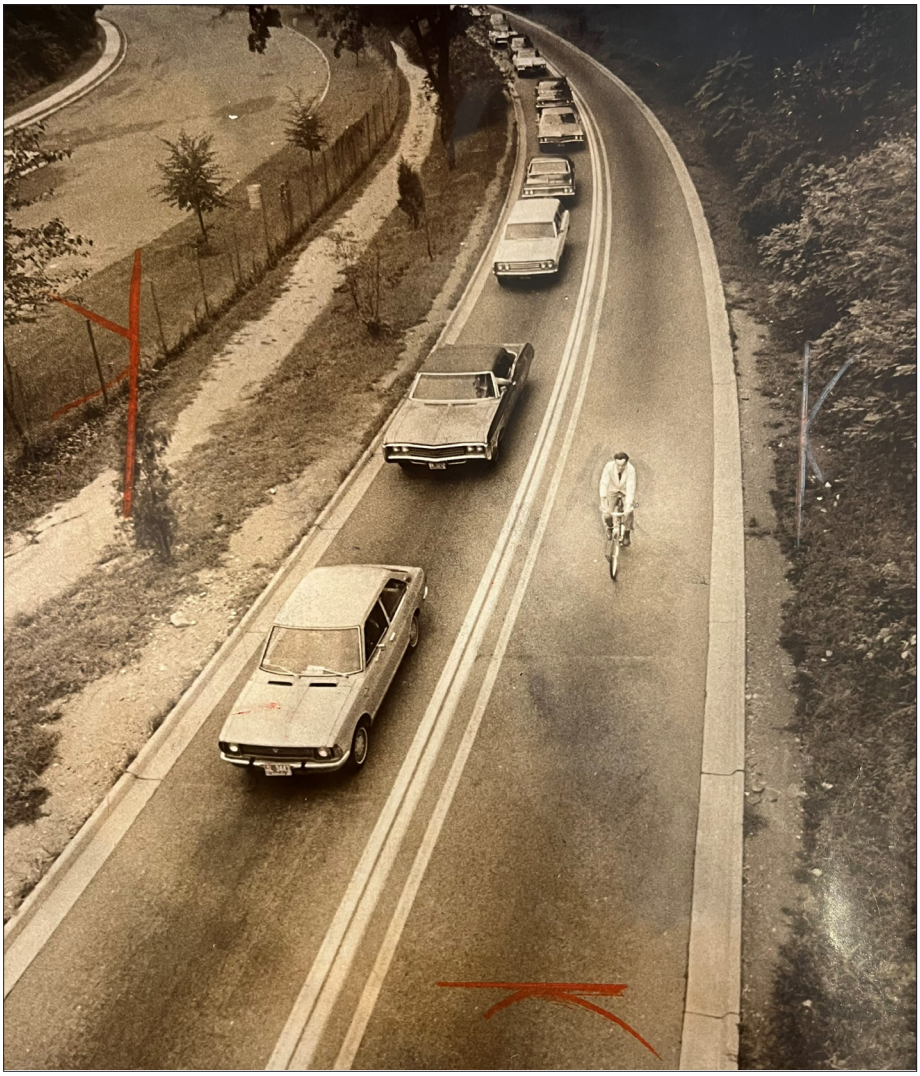


Figure 2-50. In 1971, NPS attempted a week-long bike lane experiment that extended through the parkway. This photo shows a cyclist riding on Beach Drive. (Evening Star Photograph Collection, DC Public Library).



Figure 2-51. To accommodate cyclists after the abandoned bicycle lane experiment, NPS paved a portion of the bridle path for bicycle use (Evening Star Photograph Collection, DC Public Library).

Natural Systems

While Washington, DC, attempted to update the network of pipes that discharged effluent from the aged combined sewer and stormwater system into Rock Creek, the project proved complicated and costly and was never completed. Water quality in Rock Creek continued to be poor.

Topography

Topographic changes by 1972 include the regrading of the earthen berm or embankment that once supported Massachusetts Avenue across the valley and regrading associated with the construction of freeway ramps around K Street.

Land Use

By 1972, primary land uses in the valley included transportation, recreation, and administration. Administrative uses were limited to the Edgewater Stables complex, used by US Park Police, after the closing of the tower at the Waterside Drive NW Overpass.

Vegetation

Vegetation in the study area in 1972 was a combination of remnant intentional plantings from the construction of the parkway, volunteer and invasive vegetation in less managed areas, mature forest, and mown turf. Some vegetation depicted on the 1930s planting plans, if planted, would have aggressive tendencies and invaded at the expense of other vegetation. Specific examples include Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), Amur peppervine (*Ampelopsis brevipendunculata*), and Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*). With limited funding and personnel, some ornamental areas waned under Park Service care and were converted to mown turf for ease of management. Daffodils planted as a part of Beautification efforts were a feature of the parkway in springtime.

Views and Vistas

Views in 1972 were altered primarily around the Whitehurst Freeway, where buildings were removed in anticipation of the construction of the Inner Loop and other roadway developments.

Buildings and Structures

New buildings and structures in the study area by 1972 include the Francis Pool and Bathhouse and N Street Tennis Courts and Edgewater Stables, which transitioned from a public riding stable to a facility used by the US Park Police. The ramps constructed to connect the Whitehurst Freeway to the unbuilt Inner Loop remained.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE STEWARDSHIP, 1973–PRESENT (2024)

By the 1970s, the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway was firmly established as a critical commuter route, and bicyclists and other recreation-minded Washingtonians continued to lobby for its adaptation to a wider range of uses. The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway cultural landscape had become important to a diverse population who called the parkway their own. In the decades that followed, NPS implemented further upgrades to make the areas along the parkway more amenable to recreational uses and oversaw critical upgrades to infrastructure.

P STREET BEACH AND THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY

The P Street Beach became an increasingly valued space to Washington, DC's LGBTQ+ community during this period. Since at least the early 1950s, the beach was a popular spot for sunbathing, and in the 1960s and early 1970s it became a favorite location for informal concerts. By the 1970s, the P Street Beach and a wooded hillside below P Street Beach known locally as the "Black Forest" became explicitly queer spaces for gathering and celebration but were also used for cruising and sexual activity.[165]

In 1972, the P Street Beach was the location of the city's first unofficial Pride celebration. Official celebrations began in 1975 and included both the beach and the grounds of the nearby Francis Junior High School.[166] As Timothy Davis writes, "This may not have been the fate envisioned by Morrow and Markham when they forecast that the area would become one of the most impressive urban parks in the country, but P Street Beach's popularity underscores the continued vitality of Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway as a broad-based urban amenity rather than simply an attractively landscaped transportation corridor."[167] By the 1980s, the P Street Beach had acquired iconic stature in the LGBTQ+ community of Washington, DC.[168]

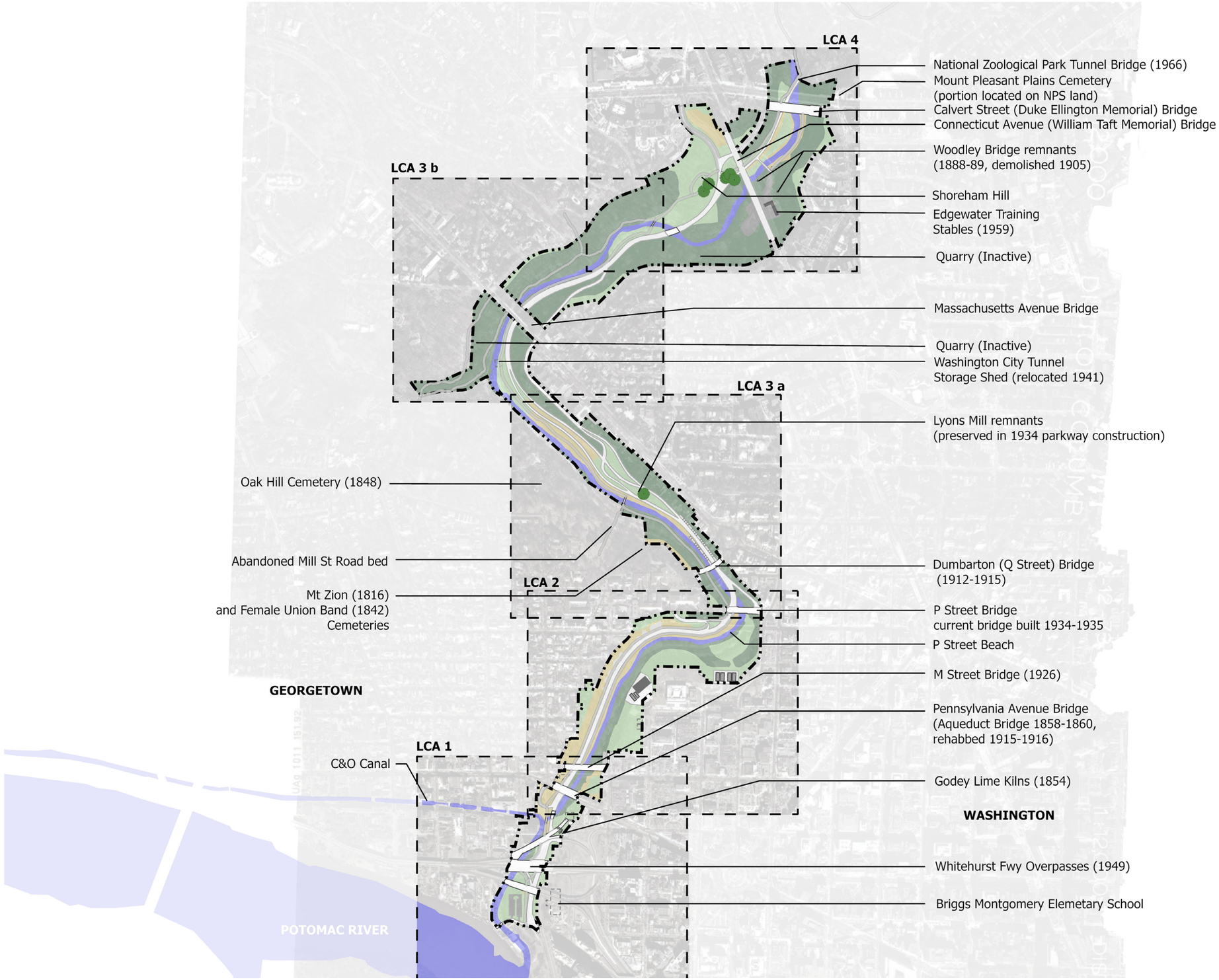
At the same time, however, the P Street Beach and Black Forest became increasingly policed due to their dual use for social gathering by a historically

165 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 217; "Cruising" was the coined term for consensual same-sex solicitation that included coded words, double entendres, gestures, and even dress to signal same-sex preference (Louis Berger, *Historic Context Statement for Washington's LGBTQ Resources* (Prepared for the District of Columbia Office of Planning and Historic Preservation Office, September 2019), 2-13).

166 Rainbow History Project, "Dupont Circle: LGBT Walking Tour," 2022, accessed September 26, 2023, available at http://rainbowhistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/rainbowhistory_dupont_03-1.pdf.

167 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 217.

168 Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," 217.



Cultural Landscape Report

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway
Washington, DC

Overall Study Area
Historic Period Plan, 1972

National Park Service
National Capital Region

Sources

1. Park boundaries from National Park Service, National Capital Region, Rock Creek Park, 2022.
2. 1973 Historic Aerial from National Archives
3. NPS Archives, Drawing numbers: 844_89074; 844_80619 and 844_89074.

Drawn By

Quinn Evans, ArcGIS Pro 3.1.3, 2024

- CLR Boundary
- LCA Sheet
- Trails
- Wall
- Maintained Landscape
- Mixed Forest
- Mown Turf
- Open Water
- Road
- Parking Area
- Rock Outcrop
- Bridge
- Buildings/ Structures
- Buildings Demolished Prior to 1972
- Recreational Feature
- Specimen Tree

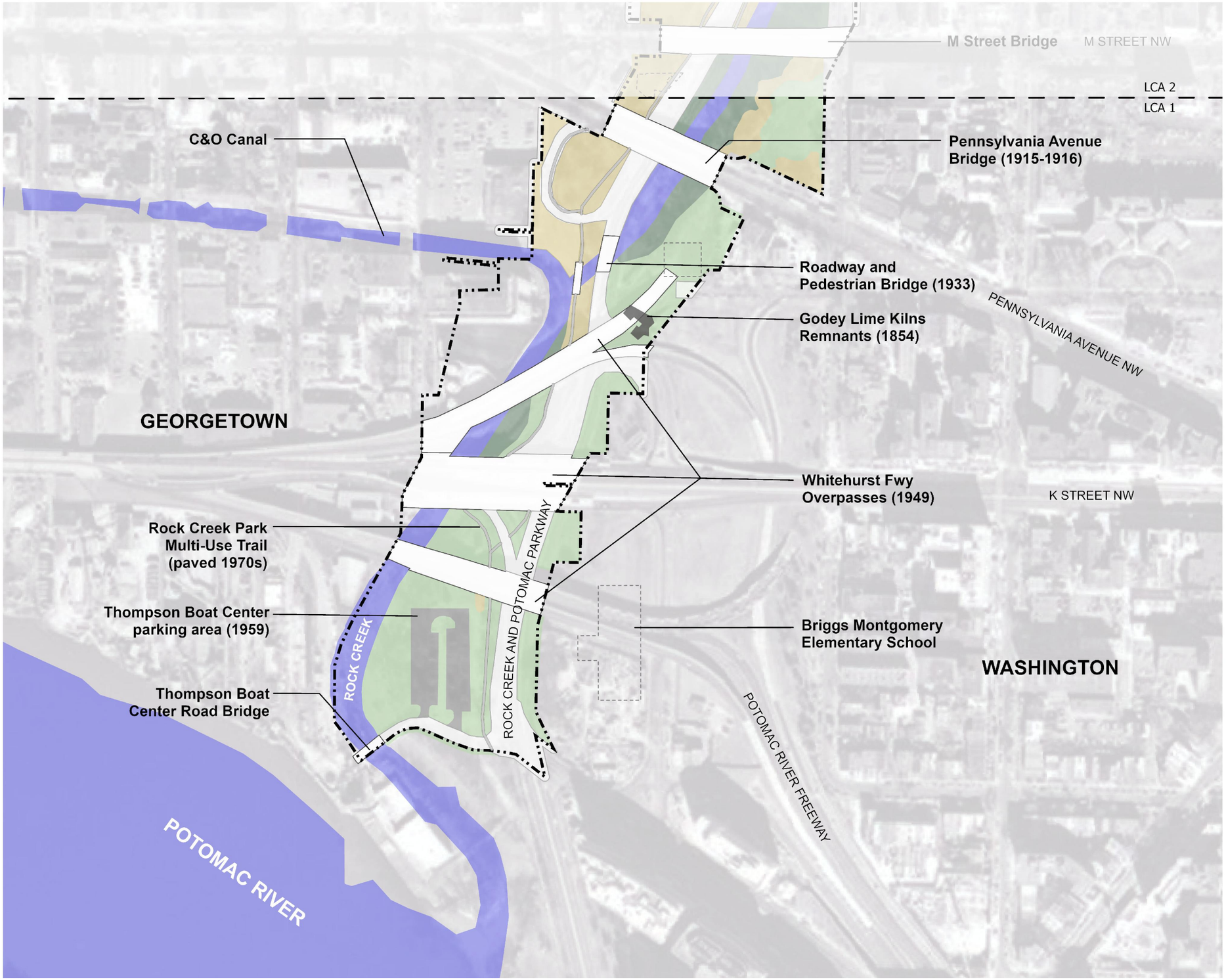
Notes

1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N.
2. 1973 Historic Aerial shown as background.

N 0 425 850 1,700 Feet

Drawing HPP-3 Overall

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Cultural Landscape Report

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway
Washington, DC

LCA 1
from Virginia Ave NW to Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Historic Period Plan, 1972

National Park Service
National Capital Region

Sources
1. Park boundaries from National Park Service, National Capital Region, Rock Creek Park, 2022.
2. 1973 Historic Aerial from National Archives.
3. NPS Archives, Drawing numbers: 844_80619.

Drawn By
Quinn Evans, ArcGIS Pro 3.1.3, 2024

Legend
- CLR Boundary
- LCA Match Line
- Trails
- Maintained Landscape
- Mixed Forest
- Mown Turf
- Open Water
- Road
- Parking Area
- Bridge
- Buildings/ Structures
- Buildings Demolished Prior to 1972

Notes
1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N.
2. 1973 Historic Aerial shown as background.

N 0 100 200 400 Feet

Drawing HPP3-1

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Cultural Landscape Report

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway
Washington, DC

LCA 2
from Pennsylvania Avenue NW to P Street NW
Historic Period Plan, 1972

National Park Service
National Capital Region

Sources
1. Park boundaries from National Park Service, National Capital Region, Rock Creek Park, 2022.
2. 1973 Historic Aerial from National Archives.

Drawn By
Quinn Evans, ArcGIS Pro 3.1.3, 2023

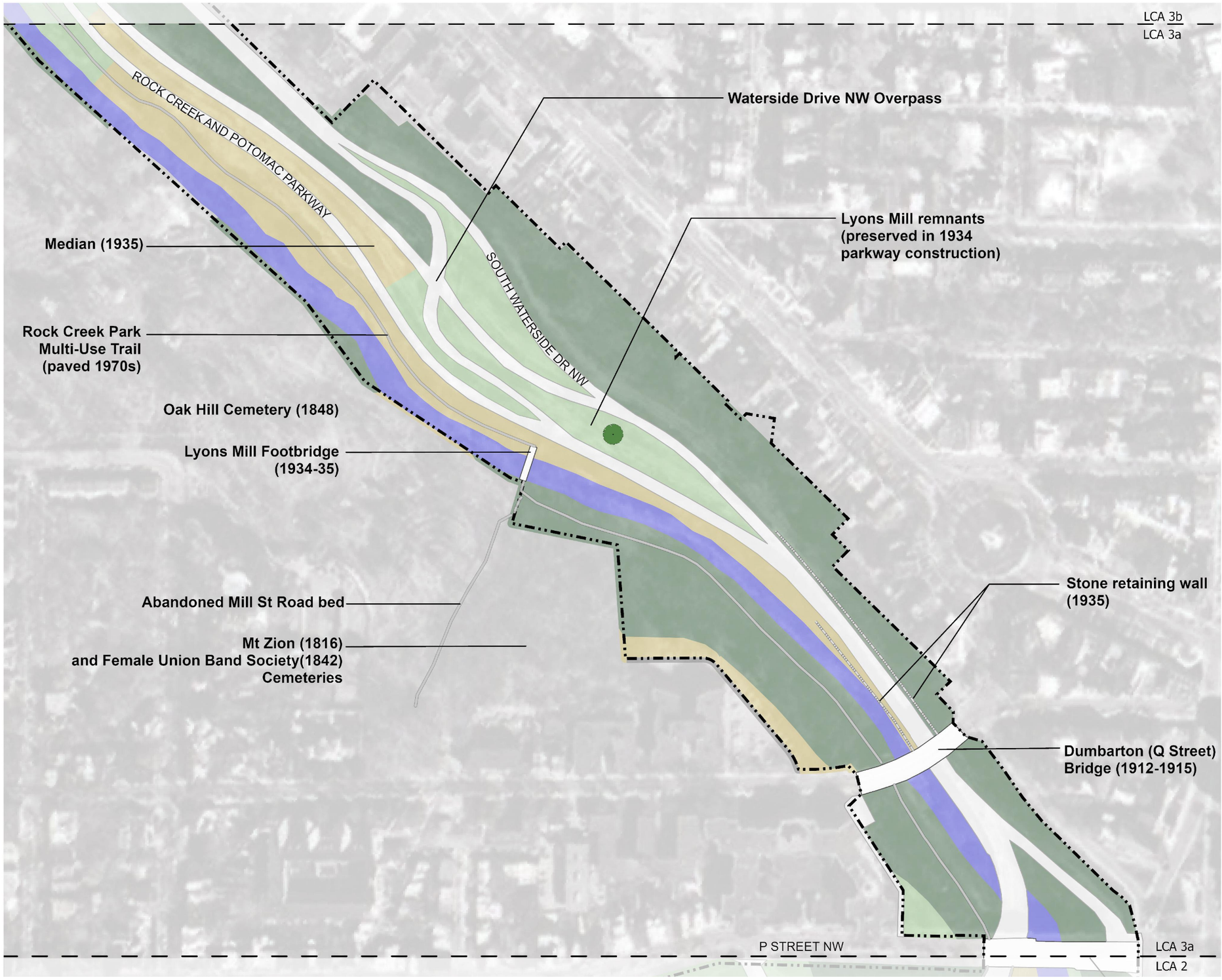
Legend
- CLR Boundary
- LCA Match Line
- Trails
- Maintained Landscape
- Mixed Forest
- Mown Turf
- Open Water
- Road
- Parking Area
- Rock Outcrop
- Bridge
- Buildings/ Structures
- Buildings Demolished Prior to 1972
- Recreational Feature

Notes
1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N.
2. 1973 Historic Aerial shown as background.

N 0 100 200 400 Feet

Drawing HPP3-2

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Cultural Landscape Report

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway
Washington, DC

LCA 3
from P Street NW to Saddle Club Footbridge
Historic Period Plan, 1972

National Park Service
National Capital Region

Sources

1. Park boundaries from National Park Service, National Capital Region, Rock Creek Park, 2022.
2. 1973 Historic Aerial from National Archives.

Drawn By

Quinn Evans, ArcGIS Pro 3.1.3, 2024

Legend

- CLR Boundary
- LCA Match Line
- Trails
- Wall
- Maintained Landscape
- Mixed Forest
- Mown Turf
- Open Water
- Road
- Parking Area
- Bridge
- Specimen Tree

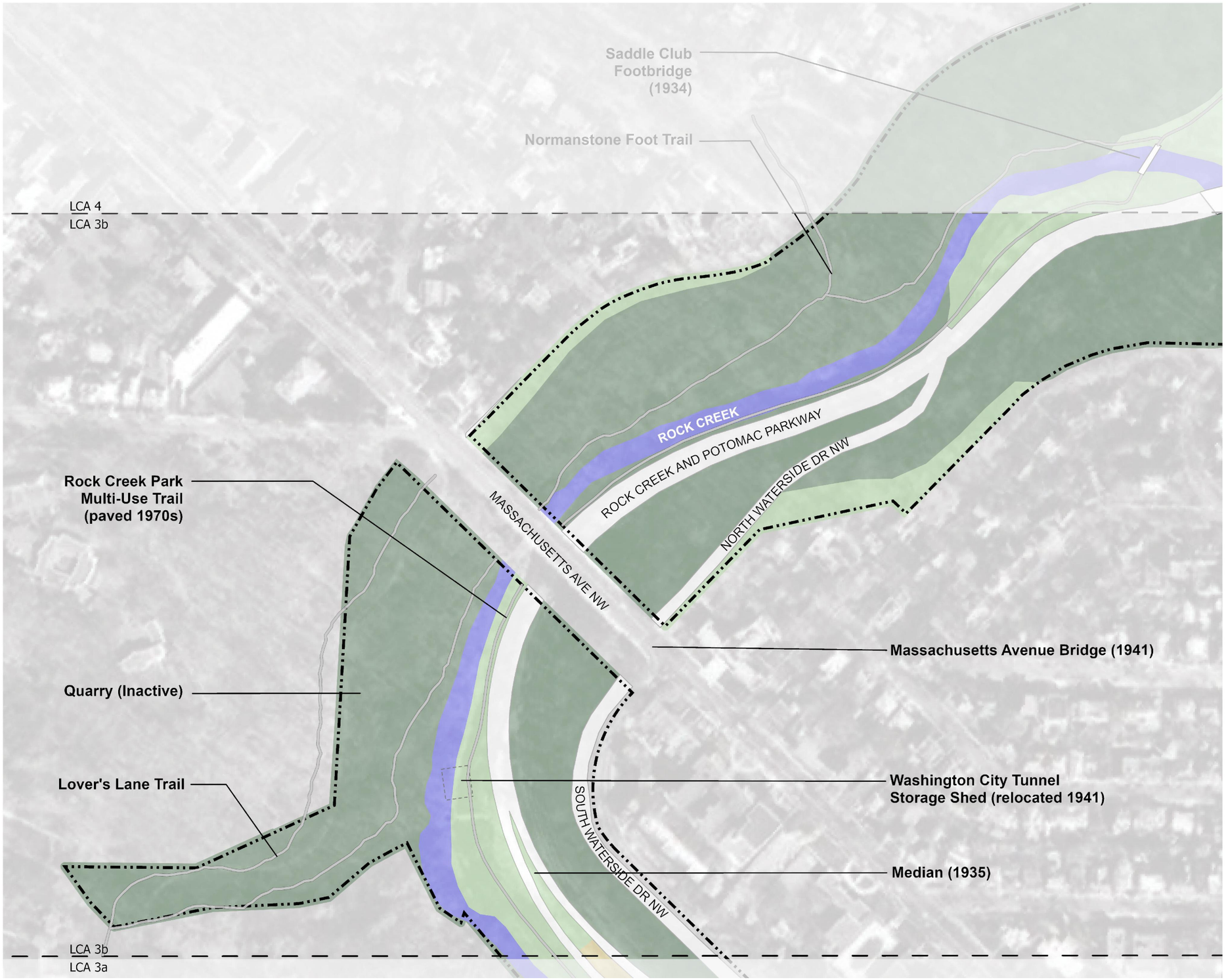
Notes

1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N.
2. 1973 Historic Aerial shown as background.

N 0 100 200 400 Feet

Drawing HPP3 - 3a

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Cultural Landscape Report

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway
Washington, DC

LCA 3
from P Street NW to Saddle Club Footbridge
Historic Period Plan, 1972

National Park Service
National Capital Region

Sources
1. Park boundaries from National Park Service, National Capital Region, Rock Creek Park, 2022.
2. 1973 Historic Aerial from National Archive.

Drawn By
Quinn Evans, ArcGIS Pro 3.1.3, 2023

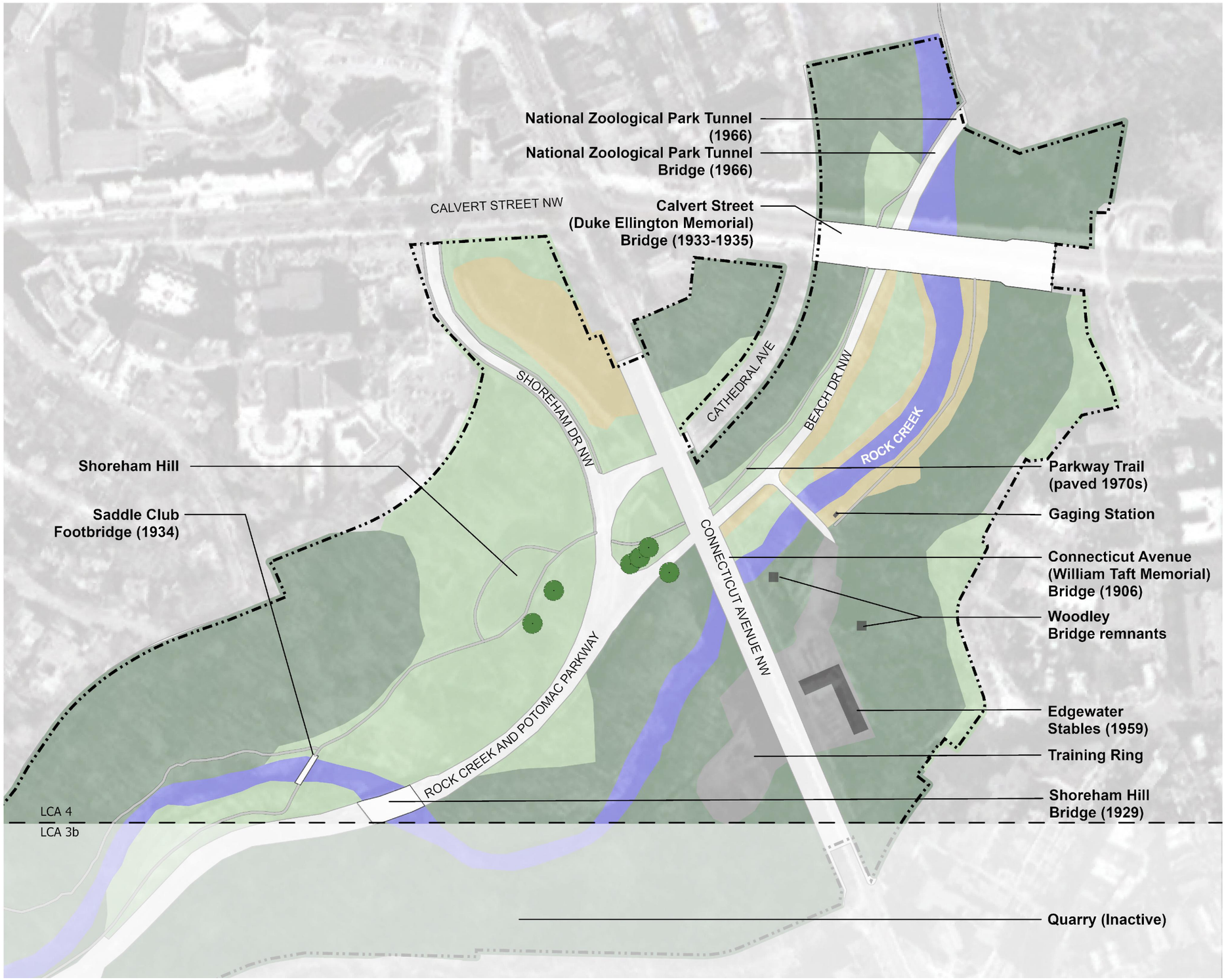
Legend
- CLR Boundary
- LCA Match Line
- Trails
- Maintained Landscape
- Mixed Forest
- Mown Turf
- Open Water
- Road
- Bridge
- Buildings Demolished Prior to 1972

Notes
1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N.
2. 1973 Historic Aerial shown as background.

N 0 100 200 400 Feet

Drawing HPP3 - 3b

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Cultural Landscape Report

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway
Washington, DC

LCA 4
from the Saddle Club Footbridge to National Zoological Park Tunnel
Historic Period Plan, 1972

National Park Service
National Capital Region

Sources

1. Park boundaries from National Park Service, National Capital Region, Rock Creek Park, 2022.
2. 1973 Historic Aerial from National Archive.
3. NPS Archives, Drawing numbers: 844_89074.

Drawn By

Quinn Evans, ArcGIS Pro 3.1.3, 2024

Legend

- CLR Boundary
- LCA Match Line
- Trails
- Maintained Landscape
- Mixed Forest
- Mown Turf
- Open Water
- Road
- Parking Area
- Bridge
- Buildings/ Structures
- Specimen Tree

Notes

1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N.
2. 1973 Historic Aerial shown as background.

N 0 100 200 400 Feet

Drawing HPP3 - 4

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marginalized group and for illicit sexual activity largely by gay men. Although LGBTQ+ persons used the P Street Beach and Black Forest for gathering and celebrations, some individuals also engaged in sexual activities in these spaces that were sometimes visible to parkgoers and to students at nearby Francis Junior High School.[169]

Police surveillance and harassment of homosexuality in the District dated to well before the 1970s. The eighteenth-century criminalization of sodomy in the American colonies survived into the twentieth century. DC and US Park Police regularly engaged in oppression and persecution of homosexual male activity. Lafayette Park, across Pennsylvania Avenue from the White House, emerged as an early cruising spot in the early twentieth century and was a frequent police target. This climate of hostility in the District increased in the mid-twentieth century. Under J. Edgar Hoover's tenure leading the FBI (1924–72), the director led a "War on the Sexual Criminal" that sought to expose both communists and homosexuals working in the federal government.[170] Indeed, Hoover's campaign against homosexuality reflected a post-World War II phenomenon known as the "Lavender Scare," a period of intense anxiety among elected officials and the public about homosexuals employed in the civil service, that was closely intertwined with the post-war Red Scare, a period of anxiety about suspected communists in government employment and US public life.[171]

Amid this climate in the 1940s and 1950s, police harassment of gay men in well-known cruising areas in the city continued. The US Park Police's "Pervert Elimination Campaign" in 1947 arrested hundreds of men for cruising in the District and held them "just long enough to fingerprint, photograph, and record [their] names and occupations" into a federally designated "pervert file," writes historian David K. Johnson.[172]

This surveillance included areas in Rock Creek Park other than the P Street Beach. The Waterside Drive Overpass comfort station, for instance, became a cruising spot. DC officials focused attention on this and other comfort stations in the early 1950s as part of a broader campaign. In April 1951, DC Commissioners shuttered two comfort stations operated by the District. The police superintendent stated that the comfort stations were gaining "international notoriety" as locations

169 *Gay Blade*, May 1974.
170 Louis Berger, *Historic Context Statement for Washington's LGBTQ Resources* (Prepared for the District of Columbia Office of Planning Historic Preservation Office, September 2019), 2-14.
171 David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 21.
172 Johnson, *The Lavender Scare*, 59.

where "young boys are initiated into careers of crime through contact with perverts and other criminal types."[173] One comfort station was located at Mount Vernon Square, 9th Street NW, and New York Avenue NW and the other at 13th Street NW and Pennsylvania Avenue NW. The superintendent recommended the Department of the Interior limit operating hours for the Waterside Drive Overpass comfort station as well as five others in Rock Creek Park.[174]

By the 1970s, the number of social spaces where LGBTQ persons could meet and socialize quadrupled from the previous decade to 130 places—mostly bars and restaurants, and stores.[175] A division of the Washington, DC, metropolitan police known as the Morals Division (or vice squad) often singled out the P Street Beach and Black Forest as part of a citywide assault on drag performances and places known for homosexual gathering. They arrested people for public sexual offenses, including sodomy and indecent acts but also harassed people simply gathering at these spaces.[176]

The longtime premiere newspaper of the gay community in Washington, DC, alternately named the *Gay Blade* or the *Blade* or the *Washington Blade*, regularly covered this issue in the 1970s and 1980s. In August 1970, the *Gay Blade* reported that police harassment had made the P Street Beach and Black Forest "highly dangerous."[177] In May 1972, the *Gay Blade* reported that police helicopters were seen repeatedly flying over the Black Forest and shining searchlights in the bushes.[178] It is not clear what prompted this police surveillance incident. Police harassment and arrests continued through the early 1980s.[179] By the mid-1980s, the park police established a liaison to the LGBTQ community in an attempt to build a working relationship and address their fears about a surge in crime in this area. The metropolitan and park police worked with the LGBTQ community to combat increasing incidents of assault and theft they believed were anti-gay attacks by individuals.[180]

173 "Two Comfort Stations To Be Closed; Four Others May Be Shut," *Evening Star*, April 10, 1951.
174 "District Balks Sex Deviates By Closing 2 Comfort Stations," *Washington Post*, April 11, 1951; "Two Comfort Stations To Be Closed; Four Others May Be Shut," *Evening Star*, April 10, 1951.
175 Megan E. Springate, ed., *LGBTQ America: A Theme Study of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer History* (Prepared for the National Park Service, 2016), 01-5.
176 *Gay Blade*, May 1974.
177 *Gay Blade*, August 1970.
178 *Gay Blade*, May 1972.
179 *Washington Blade*, October 26, 1984.
180 *Washington Blade*, July 11, 1986; James Rupert, "Attacks on Gays Prompt Curfew," *Washington Post*, November 24, 1988.

LGBTQ+ activities in the study area did not end in the 1980s; however, additional research on recent and continued use is needed. NPS and the District of Columbia Office of Planning and Historic Preservation have prepared theme studies that focus on documentation and contextualization of sites important to the LGBTQ+ community in Washington and beyond. Additional research and the theme studies will aid in evaluating the study area's importance in LGBTQ+ history.

RECREATION AND MAINTENANCE PROJECTS

Exercise stations were built along the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail in the late 1970s. Timber and steel guardrails were installed along portions of the parkway sometime after 1975.[181] In 1981, construction began on a new bridge to replace the L Street Bridge completed in 1933 (Figure 2-52). The L Street Bridge conveys the roadway across Rock Creek at the C&O Canal outlet. Finished in 1983, the new L Street bridge was built of steel girders spanning 88 feet supported by concrete piers (Figure 2-53).

In the early 1990s, NPS worked with multiple entities, including the Federal Highway Administration, on the removal of the defunct ramps constructed as a part of the Inner Loop project that was never realized. Planting plans from 1992, annotated by Darwina Neal, landscape architect and Chief of Cultural Resources in the NPS Office of Lands, Planning, and Design at the National Capital Region, indicate a commitment to the preservation of historic landscape character by way of specimen and massed tree plantings utilizing native species. In 1992–94, DC Department of Public Works planned for rehabilitation of the Dumbarton (Q Street) Bridge, M Street Bridge, and Massachusetts Avenue Bridge. Efforts involved repair of both the bridge structures as well as associated roadways and pedestrian routes. In 1997, a new asphalt path was added along Shoreham Hill Drive NW, connecting the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail to the intersection of Calvert Street and Connecticut Avenue.[182]

The Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail has been widened and repaved over time to accommodate the volume and variety of users. The trail surface was replaced south of P Street between 2009 and 2010. In 2017, the portion of the trail between Shoreham Hill and the National Zoological Park Tunnel was rebuilt. The remaining section of the multi-use trail in the study area, between P Street and Shoreham Hill, was completed in 2022.

181 Federal Highway Administration, "Federal Lands Innovation," accessed June 17, 2024, available at https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/clas/federal_lands_projects/timeline_text.aspx.
182 NCRO Drawing 844_85250.



Figure 2-52. Aerial view of the L Street Bridge completed in 1933, shown here in 1973 (NARA, Record Group 412).



Figure 2-53. A new L Street Bridge was completed in 1983 to replace the 1933 bridge. The new bridge is shown here in 2015, looking south (Available through Creative Commons at https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/3c/L_Street_Bridge_deck_2015.jpg).

Efforts to maintain the historic parkway landscape are ongoing and involve coordinated efforts from Rock Creek Park's facilities and maintenance staff, contractors, and volunteer groups such as the Rock Creek Conservancy. The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic corresponded with a rise in graffiti on historic parkway structures such as bridges, requiring coordination between NPS, the city of Washington, DC, and the DC State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Also during the pandemic, the DC city government stopped relocating unhoused people to shelters to minimize spreading the virus. A temporary city policy paid for some unhoused people to stay in hotels.[183] The policy, however, left out many people and was only temporary. These circumstances resulted in numerous encampments of unhoused people forming in public spaces such as the study area landscape. Citywide, the number of unhoused encampments rose more than forty percent from 2020 to 2021.[184] The growing number of encampments in Rock Creek Park again requires collaboration between state and federal entities to balance the preservation of historic resources and cultural landscapes with a growing humanitarian crisis. In 2022, a Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) was undertaken to identify safety risks associated with one-directional traffic patterns enforced during peak commuting hours.

In spite of an evolving list of challenges with maintaining the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, it remains a popular route for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists alike, providing a temporary departure from the urban character that surrounds the valley.

183 Julie Zauzmer, "D.C. hotel rooms may further limit virus's spread," *Washington Post,* August 9, 2020.

184 Peter Hermann and Emily Davies, "Man fatally shot at Thomas Circle homeless encampment," *Washington Post*, May 23, 2022.

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Existing Conditions

Chapter cover: Daffodils in bloom along Shoreham Drive NW with the Calvert Street (Duke Ellington Memorial) Bridge in the background (QE, 2023).

Existing Conditions

This chapter describes the existing conditions of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, beginning with a description of the regional context and park operations. The overall character of the cultural landscape is documented using landscape characteristics, the tangible and intangible aspects of a landscape that collectively create historic character and aid in understanding cultural importance. Characteristics used to describe the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway cultural landscape include spatial organization, circulation, natural systems and features, topography, land use, vegetation, views and vistas, buildings and structures, small-scale features, and archeological sites. Descriptions of the individual landscape character areas (LCAs) document instances where the condition of the landscape varies from the overall study area. Detailed descriptions of each landscape feature are presented in the following chapter, Analysis and Evaluation.

Drawings EC-0 through EC-4 illustrate existing conditions within the study area. Site surveys were conducted in January and March 2023 to record conditions within the 164-acre study area. Other data utilized in the drawings includes building and road data from the National Map, part of the United States Geological Survey's (USGS) National Geospatial Program, and elevation, circulation, vegetation, and culvert data provided by the National Park Service, National Capital Region Office.

REGIONAL CONTEXT

The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway project area is located in the city of Washington, DC. The project area includes federal land on both sides of the roadway in the Rock Creek Valley beginning in the south at Virginia Avenue NW and ending in the north at the National Zoological Park Tunnel. The project area falls under the management of Rock Creek Park and shares boundaries with the city of Washington, DC, the Georgetown area, and numerous public and private entities. The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway is heavily utilized by both vehicular and pedestrian traffic and visitor experience depends greatly on how users are moving through the parkway landscape.

PHYSIOGRAPHIC

The study area encompasses approximately the last three miles of Rock Creek before it enters the Potomac River, 31 miles from its origin in Montgomery County, Maryland. Situated in the Fall Zone, the geologic boundary between the Piedmont Plateau and Coastal Plain ecoregions, Rock Creek Valley is characterized by a mixture of rocky ravines and hilly woodlands with acidic, low-nutrient soils. Washington DC's climate consists of warm and humid summers with mild to cold winters. Average monthly temperatures are highest in July and lowest in January and August typically sees the greatest volume of precipitation.[1] Temperatures are generally increasing in the greater Washington area, with record high temperatures set in seven of twelve months in 2023.[2] Microclimates throughout the Rock Creek Valley differ slightly from these broad patterns.

CULTURAL

The study area landscape is flanked by the cities of Washington, DC, and the Georgetown area in the District of Columbia. These are both bounded by the Potomac River to the south, whose navigable waters were the impetus for human development in this area throughout history. Georgetown's value as a port city solidified with the construction of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal, which terminated at Rock Creek at the city's eastern boundary, and later the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, which ran parallel to the canal and the Potomac River from the 1830s through 1980s. Today, vehicular traffic is the dominant commercial transportation method in the Georgetown area.

The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, conceptualized as a scenic route for carriages and equestrians, quickly became a route for vehicles as well, its construction aligning with the widespread availability of cars in the 1930s. Designed in response to the site's natural beauty, the route is also preferred by commuters, connecting neighborhoods such as Woodley Park and Woodland Normanstone with the National Mall and the Potomac riverfront. The affluent neighborhoods to the west of the study area are constructed on some of the earliest land patents in the area, subdivided over time first for agricultural and then residential and commercial purposes.

1 Peggy Fleming and Raclare Kanal, "Annotated Checklist of Vascular Plants of Rock Creek Park, National Park Service, Washington, D.C.," *Castanea* 60, no. 4 (December 1995): 284.

2 Wayne Presnell, "Precipitation Summary and Temperature Observations (PRESTO) for the Washington, DC and Baltimore, MD Area," NWS Analyse Forecast and Support Office, 2023. https://www.weather.gov/media/publications/presto/2023dec.pdf.

In northeastern Georgetown, the Rose Park area was a historically Black neighborhood with a vibrant cultural history. The Mount Zion United Methodist Church and its associated cemetery, along with the Female Union Band Society cemetery, abut the study area. A third African American cemetery, the Mount Pleasant Plains cemetery, partially located within the study area near Walter Pierce Park. Due to its shared ownership, the cemetery is jointly maintained by the National Park Service, Smithsonian, and DC Parks.

The northern boundary of the study area occurs where the roadway enters the National Zoological Park Tunnel, constructed in 1966 to divert traffic from fords and the zoo property. The study area's eastern boundary is bordered by Adams Morgan, Kalorama, and the West End, areas of Washington, DC, laid out as a part of L'Enfant's urban plan for the federal city in 1783. Properties adjacent to the parkway have exceptional views of the valley and have housed some of the capital's most prominent figures including the Obama family and multiple embassies.

POLITICAL

The District of Columbia encompasses 68 square miles and is bounded by Maryland to the north and east and the Virginia shoreline of the Potomac River to the west and southwest. The Potomac River forms the southern boundary of the district. Census counts from 2020 record the Washington, DC, area population to be 689,545. The Census Bureau estimated a median household income of $93,547.00 and a median value of owner-occupied homes at $635,900.00.[3] Neighborhoods immediately surrounding the study area having notably high property values, including Georgetown, Woodley Park, Kalorama, and Mount Pleasant. Zoning around the study area is a mix of commercial and residential, with some light industrial areas remaining at the southern portion of the study area near the confluence of Rock Creek and the Potomac River. The study area landscape is owned by the Department of the Interior and managed as a part of the Rock Creek Park unit of the National Park Service.

3 US Census Bureau Quickfacts: District of Columbia, accessed May 11, 2023, https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/DC/INC110221.

PARK OPERATIONS

VISITOR SERVICES

The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway is managed by the National Park Service as a part of Rock Creek Park. It is open year-round and is a major commuter route connecting downtown Washington, DC, with the city's northwestern suburbs. While the roadway is open 24 hours to vehicular traffic, the parkway landscape is closed dawn to dusk. A multi-use trail provides a cyclist and pedestrian route parallel to the roadway and numerous informal trails connect the parkway to the surrounding neighborhoods. Primary attractions for visitors include trails, which offer views of the valley landscape, Shoreham Hill, par course fitness equipment, and Thompson Boat Center (located just south of the study area). In 2022, Rock Creek Park experienced over 2 million recreational visits and the study area landscape specifically experiences around 55,000 vehicles per day.[4]

ADMINISTRATION

The legislative boundary of Rock Creek Park encompasses more than 1,700 acres.[5] All told, the Rock Creek Park unit of the National Park Service oversees 99 separate park areas (including Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway) and nearly 3,000 acres of land.[6] The parkway, designed in the context of the City Beautiful and American parkway movements, connects Rock Creek Park with the National Mall and operates as a critical link in the capital's network of parks. Within a year of opening, the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway was managed for single-direction rush hour traffic patterns. At the time of this report, weekday traffic is directed southbound on all lanes toward Washington, DC, between 6:45 and 9:30 am and northbound on all lanes between 3:45 and 6:30 pm.[7]

Landscape maintenance is directed by Rock Creek Park's Facility Manager and work on the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway includes regular and seasonal mowing, vegetation management, and maintenance of trails and small-scale features as well as maintenance of the roadway and its associated infrastructure such as lights, stormwater systems, and guardrails.

4 National Park Service, "Chesapeake & Ohio Canal NHP," https://irma.nps.gov/Stats/SSRSReports/Park%20Specific%20Reports/Annual%20Park%20Recreation%20Visitation%20(1904%20-%20Last%20Calendar%20Year)?Park=CHOH; National Park Service, "Rock Creek Park General Management Plan," last modified July 21, 2021, https://www.nps.gov/rocr/learn/management/rock-creek-park-general-management-plan.htm.

5 ROCR Foundation Document, 2015, 8.

6 ROCR Foundation Document, 2015, 3.

7 National Park Service, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway," last modified March 21, 2021, https://www.nps.gov/places/rock-creek-and-potomac-parkway.htm.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISTICS

The following section documents the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway landscape by landscape characteristic. Detailed descriptions and photographs of individual landscape features are included as a part of the following chapter, Analysis and Evaluation. Landscape characteristics used to describe the study area include spatial organization, circulation, natural systems, topography, land use, vegetation, views and vistas, buildings and structures, small-scale features, and archeological sites.

SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

Spatial Organization is the arrangement of elements that define and create space through the ground, vertical, and overhead planes, including the arrangement of topography, buildings, and vegetation.

The study area is organized in a linear alignment along a roughly north–south axis. This organization responds to the topography of Rock Creek Valley and the path of Rock Creek at its base. The roadway and Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail follow the creek's alignment along this axis within the study area and are framed by the walls of the valley (Figure 3-1). Vertical space in the northern end of the study area is defined by the steep valley topography, the vegetation that covers its slopes, and the historic bridges that span the valley (Figure 3-2).

South of P Street, the study area's spatial organization shifts to a more open character with flatter topography and sparser vegetation, allowing views to the surrounding city.



Figure 3-1. The linear north–south alignment of Rock Creek, the roadway, and the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail, facing north from Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge (QE, 2023).



Figure 3-2. Vertical space in the study area is defined by topography, vegetation, and historic bridges, facing south (QE, 2023).

CIRCULATION

Circulation consists of the features and materials that allow for systems of movement throughout the study area. Within this CLR, circulation focuses on the vehicular and pedestrian circulation routes including the roadway, Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail, and other associated roads and trails.

Roadway

The primary vehicular route within the study area is the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway. Vehicular traffic is channeled through the roadway, consisting of two northbound and two southbound lanes and numerous entry and exit routes. The roadway is constructed of an asphalt wearing surface laid over a crushed-stone base course with mountable curbs in most sections and vertical granite curbs in others. It is typically 44' wide with some widening at curves. A vegetated median separates directional lanes just north of the Dumbarton (Q Street) Bridge to the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge, and includes ornamental tree plantings (Figure 3-3). The roadway was paved in 2005 and is in fair condition. Repaving will be required within 5 years.

Parking Areas

Two parking areas are present in the study area. One is associated with Thompson Boat Center and is composed of two asphalt-paved aisles with approximately 90, 90-degree parking spaces arranged around a central vegetated island. The parking area includes four accessible parking spaces and a striped pathway, shared with the roadway, that connects spaces to the sidewalk (Figure 3-4). The second parking area is associated with the Edgewater Stables and is composed of 90-degree parking spaces and trailer parking areas.

Trails

Pedestrian traffic is dispersed through the study area on a network of trails, with the majority of visitors utilizing the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail on the west side of the roadway (Figure 3-5). The Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail is asphalt-paved and 12' wide in most places, though it narrows to 4-5' wide in places between P Street and M Street. Other pedestrian trails vary in width and surface material. The trail is utilized by walkers, joggers, and cyclists. There are no speed limits or guidelines for motorized bicycles and scooters, and conflicts between user groups are common. The trail was resurfaced in 2017 and is in good condition. Other unpaved pedestrian trails vary in condition and steep slopes and heavy use have resulted in erosion and destabilization in many places.



Figure 3-3. Northbound (right) and southbound (left) lanes of the roadway are separated by a vegetated median, facing north from the Waterside Drive NW Overpass (QE, 2023).



Figure 3-4. The west aisle of the Thompson Boat Center parking area, facing north (QE, 2023).



Figure 3-5. The Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail crosses Rock Creek via the Lyon's Mill Footbridge (foreground), northbound and southbound lanes of the roadway split around the median (background) (QE, 2023).

NATURAL SYSTEMS

Natural Systems are those natural aspects that have influenced the development and physical form of the study area, including geology, hydrology, soils, water bodies, climate, and ecological communities.

Hydrology

The Rock Creek watershed covers 76.5 square miles within the larger Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay watersheds.[8] The study area includes approximately 2.25 miles of Rock Creek, where it has carved a valley before meeting the Potomac River to the south (Figure 3-6). Two perennial streams, Dumbarton Stream and Normanstone Stream, enter Rock Creek within the study area. Numerous culverts also daylight into Rock Creek. These inputs of water from the surrounding city often carry pollutants from stormwater runoff and some contain sewage effluent from an outdated combined sewer overflow system. Generally, the water quality of Rock Creek is poor. A Citizen Science project run by the Anacostia Riverkeeper between 2018 and 2021 reports that bacteria levels in the study area were consistently above the safety threshold, with Normanstone Creek exhibiting the highest tested levels across three years.[9]

Geology and Soils

Soils reflect the study area's position at the intersection of the Coastal Plain and Piedmont Plateau ecoregions. Soil profiles in the study area vary from exposed metamorphic and igneous bedrock of the Piedmont formation to unconsolidated sediments of the Coastal Plain and sandy or silty deposits made by the creek throughout the floodplain.

Bedrock in the study area falls into two major formations: Sykesville and Laurel. Soils from both formations tend to be acidic and nutrient poor with pockets of volcanic rock and ash that have higher nutrient content; they are differentiated by the types and frequency of embedded fragments. South of P Street, soils are composed mainly of floodplain sediments and fill material graded during the construction of the parkway. Erosion resulting from stormwater surges is evident in numerous locations, including along Normanstone Stream (Figure 3-7).

8 Explore Natural Communities, "The Rock Creek Watershed," https://www.explorenaturalcommunities.org/parks-places/rock-creek-park/natural-history/physical-setting/watersheds.

9 Rock Creek, "DC Citizen Science Water Quality Monitoring Report: 2018-2021," Anacostia Riverkeeper, Department of Energy and Environment, 12. https://www.anacostiariverkeeper.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/2021VWQM_report_Final.pdf.



Figure 3-6. Rock Creek follows a roughly north to south route through the study area. In general, the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail and roadway follow the path of the creek, shown here just north of the Dumbarton (Q Street) Bridge, facing south (QE, 2023).



Figure 3-7. Soils in the study area are susceptible to erosion, especially where stormwater volumes rapidly raise stream and creek levels, shown here along Normanstone Stream, facing south (QE, 2023).

TOPOGRAPHY

Topography is the three-dimensional configuration of the landscape surface. Study area topography is a result of both natural and human processes.

The topography of the valley is a result of fluvial geomorphology as well as human processes. Existing topographic conditions reflect a combination of slopes constructed to accommodate parkway features and steeper, natural slopes that have remained largely undisturbed. Slope and bank erosion threaten the condition of topography adjacent to streams and creeks in the study area. Valley topography begins north of K Street, quickly reaching a depth of approximately 50' from the creek to the upper ridgeline. North of P Street, the valley deepens to 80' by the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge and then to 120' around the Connecticut Avenue (William Taft Memorial) Bridge (Figure 3-8).[10]



Figure 3-8. The topography of the valley slopes steeply up from Rock Creek and the roadway between the Calvert Street and Connecticut Avenue (William Taft Memorial) Bridge (pictured), facing south (QE, 2023).

10 HABS, 6.

LAND USE

Land Use is tied to the ways that people use the landscape and is often related to patterns of spatial organization.

The study area landscape is primarily used for transportation and recreational purposes. Residential and commercial uses surround the study area and so have a visual presence in some areas, but are largely screened by the valley's steep slopes and mature vegetation.

Transportation

The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway is a heavily utilized commuter route and experiences high volumes of vehicular traffic during commuting hours. Commuters on bicycles and scooters also utilize the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail during these times.

Recreation

Recreational visitors utilize the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail, earthen, and social trails throughout the study area for walking and jogging. The par course elements along the trail and at Shoreham Hill are also used by recreational visitors. The Francis Dog Park and Pool and N Street Tennis Courts are recreational amenities on the east side of the valley. The National Park Service owns and manages the tennis courts, while the DC government owns the dog park and the DC Department of Parks and Recreation maintains it. The south boundary of the study area follows the access road for Thompson Boat Center and the associated parking area is located within the study area.

Institutional/Maintenance

Institutional use is associated with Edgewater Training Stables, a US Park Police equestrian facility, and the Washington City Tunnel Storage Shed, which is used as a storage facility.

VEGETATION

Vegetation is indigenous or introduced trees, shrubs, vines, ground covers, herbaceous plants, and lawns within the study area.

Vegetation in the study area can be divided into five categories: mixed forest, revegetation, woody wetland, mown turf, and maintained landscape.

Mixed Forest

Forest areas within the study area can be categorized as successional mixed deciduous forest and basic mesic hardwood forest, which are classified by their preferred soils, dominant species, and species diversity.

Successional Mixed Deciduous Forest

Tuliptree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) and white and northern red oaks (*Quercus alba* and *Quercus rubra*) are dominant canopy trees, with American beech (*Fagus grandifolia*) establishing in the understory (Figure 3-9). Some areas exhibit a healthy understory of eastern redbud (*Cercis canadensis*) and northern spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*), but the majority of the forested areas have low understory diversity and invasive species are present, including: Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*), Japanese honeysuckle (*Lonicera japonica*), multiflora rose (*Rosa multiflora*), English ivy (*Hedera helix*), and non-native cherry species.[11]

Basic Mesic Hardwood Forest

This category describes a natural forest category that has experienced a low degree of disturbance and so retains high species diversity. The vegetation community thrives on shaded, moist slopes with deeper and less-acidic soils. Common canopy trees include: tuliptree, northern red oak, bitternut hickory (*Carya cordiformis*), and American beech. Beech trees are also a dominant presence in the understory, along with American hornbeam (*Carpinus carolinana*), flowering dogwood, and red maple. The natural community is distinct from the successional community in its broad diversity of shrubs and low plants, which include northern spicebush, pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*), bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*), Christmas fern (*Polystichum acrostichoides*), mayapple (*Podophyllum pentatum*), Jack-in-the-pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*), white wood-aster (*Aster divaricatus*), and numerous others. Some mature pine trees are present in the study area but are not common.

11 Explore Natural Communities, "Semi-Natural Communities," https://www.exploreNaturalcommunities.org/parks-places/rock-creek-park/natural-communities-and-more/semi-natural-communities.



Figure 3-9. Mixed forest with beech understory on the west side of Rock Creek Valley. Invasive English ivy covers portions of the ground (QE, 2023).



Figure 3-10. Shrubs and trees planted as a part of a restoration planting site north of the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge on the west bank of Rock Creek (QE, 2023).

Revegetation

Restoration planting sites are located at the southern end of Shoreham Hill and around the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge on the west side of the valley. They include shrubs and small trees planted as a part of a collaboration between the NPS and the Rock Creek Conservancy (Figure 3-10). Species observed include: witch hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*), holly (*Ilex opaca*), eastern redbud, and pawpaw. Some tree plantings at Shoreham Hill are associated with the DC Front Runners, Washington DC's LGBTQ+ walking and running club, in memoriam of deceased members.[12]

12 DC Frontrunners, "Memorial Grove," 2021, https://dcfrontrunners.org/memorial-grove/.

Woody Wetland

Woody wetland areas contain a mix of indigenous and introduced species that thrive in the moist soils and shady conditions surrounding Rock Creek and its tributary streams. Important species include: tuliptree, American sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*), box-elder (*Acer negundo*), river birch (*Betula nigra*), green ash, sweetgum, red maple, white oak, and a variety of native and non-native shrubs and herbaceous perennials including horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*). This plant community exists near Oak Hill Cemetery, just north of the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge, south of the Connecticut Avenue (William Taft Memorial) Bridge on the east side of the roadway, and north of the Calvert Street (Duke Ellington Memorial) Bridge along both sides of Rock Creek (Figure 3-11).

Maintained Landscape

The parkway landscape contains three categories of maintained landscapes including: ornamental plantings, daffodil plantings mown annually, and areas mown irregularly or infrequently. Ornamental plantings laid out during parkway construction and subsequent planning and construction efforts include: canopy trees such as beech, oak, and maple; groupings of ornamental shrubs and trees such as eastern redbud, dogwood, and crepe myrtle (Figure 3-12). Plantings associated with the planters at the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge are also included in this category. The second level of maintained landscape includes areas where mass plantings of daffodils were laid out as a part of Beautification Era plantings. The landscape is mown in the late winter in preparation from spring blooms (Figure 3-13). A prominent example is on the west bank of the valley between Pennsylvania Avenue NW and P Street NW where daffodils cover the hillside in early spring. The third category of maintained landscapes are those where mowing is irregular or infrequent, allowing grasses, vines, and herbaceous and woody plants to establish. This type of vegetation occupies strips of land between the roadway, the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail, and Rock Creek. Invasive species including Japanese honeysuckle, Amur peppervine (*Ampelopsis brevipedunculata*), Oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*), tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), and Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) commonly colonize these areas and reduce views between circulation routes and Rock Creek.



Figure 3-11. Woody wetland vegetation character along the banks of Rock Creek under the Connecticut Avenue (William Taft Memorial) Bridge, facing south (QE, 2023).



Figure 3-12. A clump of crepe myrtles is planted at the top of the slope and daffodils are interspersed through the mown turf at the Pennsylvania Avenue entrance/exit ramp, facing northwest (QE, 2023).



Figure 3-13. The west side of Rock Creek Valley south of P Street is characterized by open maintained landscape with sparse canopy trees. English ivy has colonized the groundplane and daffodils are prolific in spring (QE, 2023).



Figure 3-14. A mown turf condition is maintained along the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail, allowing for easy use of par course equipment at Shoreham Hill, facing south (QE, 2023).

Mown Turf

Mown turf areas are maintained through regular mowing and consist of a mixture of turfgrass species including: perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), Kentucky bluegrass (*Poa pratensis*), and tall fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*).[13] Mown turf areas often include specimen trees that provide shade for recreational users and support the picturesque park character (Figure 3-14).

VIEWS AND VISTAS

Views and vistas are groupings of features that create or allow a range of vision. Views can be natural or designed and controlled.

Prominent visual connections within the study area include views to and from the bridges that span the valley, views along the parkway from the roadway and Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail, views to Rock Creek, and views to the surrounding city fabric.

Views from the valley to the bridges spanning it create a sense of place and rhythm as visitors navigate the roadway or pedestrian trails. The bridges' distinct designs and their soaring vertical presence key visitors to their location relative to the surrounding city. Views from the bridges down into and across the parkway are also an important piece of visitor experience. The Calvert Street (Duke Ellington Memorial) Bridge incorporates viewing areas into the bridge design (Figure 3-15). Rock Creek Park maintains views by managing vegetation and circulation routes, but in some locations weedy vegetation has obscured views from the roadway to Rock Creek (Figure 3-16).

13 Fleming and Kanal, "Annotated Checklist of Vascular Plants of Rock Creek Park, National Park Service, Washington, D.C."Castanea, Southern Appalachian Botanical Society (Vol. 60, No. 4) December, 1995. 294.



Figure 3-15. View from the pedestrian bridge at the north study area boundary facing south under the Calvert Street (Duke Ellington Memorial) Bridge to the Connecticut Avenue (William Taft Memorial) Bridge. Triangular prisms on top of the bridge provide viewing areas for pedestrians crossing the bridge (QE, 2023).



Figure 3-16. Dense vegetation between the roadway and Rock Creek between Pennsylvania and M Streets visually disconnects the roadway and Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail from the creek, facing north (QE, 2023).



Figure 3-17. Views to the surrounding city buildings are more prevalent near the southern boundary of the study area, facing east toward the Godey Lime Kilns. Some of these views are screened by leaves in warmer months (QE, 2023).

Views to the city beyond the study area boundary depend on location, season, and vegetation. South of P Street, the valley is shallower and vegetation character is more open, so views to the urban surroundings are clearer there than north of P Street, where the valley deepens and views are more constrained and obscured by slopes and trees, particularly during leaf-on (Figure 3-17). Finally, invasive vegetation such as bamboo, which proliferates from private properties surrounding the park boundary, periodically screens views of the city from within the study area.

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

Buildings and Structures are three-dimensional built features, including bridges, walls, and any buildings located within the study area. These features are critical infrastructure throughout Rock Creek Valley, create a sense of mass and scale, and contribute to character through style and appearance.

Built features in the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway study area consist of buildings, historic structures, roadway and pedestrian bridges, retaining walls, and culverts. Buildings and structures are related to historic and ongoing parkway functions and represent a variety of architectural styles. Retaining walls are mostly associated with the roadway or the banks of Rock Creek and are typically of stone construction. Buildings and structures are described individually as a part of the Evaluated Inventory of Landscape Features Table in Chapter 4.

Historic Structures

Extant historic structures in the parkway cultural landscape include remnants from the area's industrial past as well as those used as a part of initial parkway operations (Figure 3-18). Remaining structures were intentionally incorporated into the parkway design while the majority of the buildings within the study area were removed before its initial construction. Historic structures are characterized by stone and brick construction representative of their period of construction and align with the parkway's design aesthetic (Figure 3-19).

Bridges

The parkway's 2005 National Register nomination identifies 19 bridges that span the roadway and pedestrian trails within the study area, representing a variety of ages, sizes, styles, and materials. Eleven of the bridges are documented by the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER). In general, roadway bridges are in good condition. Historic pedestrian bridges show signs of limited deterioration such as cracking and spalling in concrete features.



Figure 3-18. The Godey Lime Kilns (HABS No. DC-441), located north of the Whitehurst Freeway on ramp on the east side of Rock Creek, facing northeast (QE, 2023).



Figure 3-19. The confluence of the C&O Canal with Rock Creek downstream of Lock 1, facing west (QE, 2023).



Figure 3-20. A stone retaining wall provides a flat space for a former bridle trail along the east side of Rock Creek north of Edgewater Stables (QE, 2023).

Retaining Walls

Retaining walls are characterized by stone construction or facing and both dry-laid and mortared walls are present in the study area landscape. Generally, retaining walls are located adjacent to Rock Creek, where they serve as armoring for the creek banks or roadways and paths, where they retain steep valley slopes to provide a flat walking or driving surface. While retaining walls adjacent to the roadway are in good condition, those adjacent to Rock Creek and trails (Figure 3-20) exhibit signs of deterioration including cracking, missing mortar, and vegetation encroachment.

Culverts

Culverts are features related to the conveyance of water consisting of a barrel with an inlet and outlet, often framed by headwalls of varying construction styles and materials. Culverts channeling stormwater runoff and overflows from the combined sewer and stormwater system are located throughout the study area with signage warning visitors of potential contamination around outlets. Culverts also vary in design and materials. Two culvert inlet types and seven culvert outlet types have been identified within the study area. Features vary in condition from poor to good, with common impacts including vegetation encroachment, debris, spalling, cracking, and erosion. Culverts located north of P Street are documented in detail in the 2005 Culvert Feature Assessment.[14]

Inlets:

- Metal grated road inlets
- Metal slotted curb inlets

Outlets:

- Concrete box with mortared stone facing (Figure 3-21)
- Brick headwall with corbelled architrave
- Stone faced with circular opening (Figure 3-22)
- Rectilinear in dry-laid retaining wall (Figure 3-23)
- Concrete box (no headwall)
- Terra cotta, concrete, PVC, or metal pipe (no headwall)
- Concrete end section

14 The Louis Berger Group, "Culvert Architectural Feature Assessment: Reconstruction and Rehabilitation of Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway from P Street through Beach Drive," National Park Service, Rock Creek Park (2004).



Figure 3-21. Concrete box culvert with stone faced headwall, typical of combined sewer/stormwater outlet (QE, 2023).



Figure 3-22. Stone faced culvert headwall with circular opening (NPS, 2023).



Figure 3-23. Rectilinear culvert embedded within retaining wall (NPS, 2023).

SMALL-SCALE FEATURES

Small-Scale Features are human-scaled landscape elements that provide specific functions within the study area, such as fences, signs, and furnishings.

The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway has a broad range of small-scale features that support wayfinding and visitor experience including signage, lighting, fitness equipment, benches, trash receptacles, fences and railings, and bollards. Features are documented by type in the Evaluated Inventory of Landscape Features Table located in Chapter 4.

Signage

Park Service signage along the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway is generally consistent with NPS Signage Guidelines.[15] The majority of signs within the study area are located along the roadway and are sited to inform drivers and Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail users about the parkway and related sites (Figure 3-24).

Lighting

Painted metal standards incorporate metal bases with small scroll details at the corners, fluted shafts, and slightly curved necks. Standards are mounted to concrete bases adjacent to the roadway and bulbs are graded for high-traffic roadways (Figure 3-25).

Fences

Timber fences are located between the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail and Rock Creek in multiple locations throughout the study area. Fences are approximately 48" tall and are constructed of vertical timber posts with two cross beams (Figure 3-26). The fences were installed in 2022.

15 Hunt Design, "Rock Creek Park Signage Guidelines," Rock Creek Conservancy, National Park Service. September 18, 2020.



Figure 3-24. Signage at the south end of the study area indicating Thompson Boat Center. NPS logo is faded and unclear (QE, 2023).



Figure 3-25. Streetlights are located on both sides of the roadway south of P Street, facing south (QE, 2023).



Figure 3-26. Wooden fences installed between the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail and Rock Creek, facing south (QE, 2023).

Guardrails

Guardrails are approximately 36" high and are located adjacent to the roadway. At termination points, the horizontal rail angles gradually taper down until they meet the groundplane. Guardrails are constructed of horizontal beams mounted to steel plates on 9" square vertical posts spaced every 10' (Figure 3-27).

Fitness and Recreation Equipment

Par course fitness equipment is located at intervals along the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail between Massachusetts Avenue NW and Shoreham Hill (Figure 3-28). The features consist of simple timber, metal, and concrete elements and are occasionally accompanied by instructional signage. They are in fair to poor condition. A timber-clad structure is located between the Thompson Boat Center parking area and Rock Creek that encloses rowing shells and other fitness equipment associated with boathouse operations.

Site Furnishings

A stone picnic grill is located on the west bank of Rock Creek north of the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge in the remnants of a picnic grove, which is being revegetated (Figure 3-29). Multiple styles of timber and metal benches are present throughout the study area, mainly located in areas of primary recreation such as Shoreham Hill.



Figure 3-27. Timber guardrail detail showing steel mounting hardware (QE, 2023).



Figure 3-28. A timber and metal par course feature with instructional signage. A timber bench is set off of the multi-use path at Shoreham Hill, facing north (QE, 2023).



Figure 3-29. Stone picnic grill (QE, 2023).

ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES

Archeological Sites are locations containing surface and subsurface remnants related to previous land use.

"Bold, Rocky, and Picturesque," the 2008 Archeological Identification and Evaluation Study of Rock Creek Park, details the archeological record within the park boundary. The study area landscape includes several archeological sites associated with Indigenous use, likely preserved by the vast amounts of fill added to the area for development and by tidal and fluvial action over time. Archeological sites related to later periods include homestead remnants and ruins from milling and other small-scale industrial activities in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Archeologists have conducted non-invasive surveys of the Mount Zion and Female Union Band Society Cemeteries just north of P Street on the west side of the valley as well as the Mount Pleasant Plains Cemetery at the northeast boundary of the study area.[16] These studies indicate the extents of burials and help to guide ongoing preservation activities.

16 Mark Mack and Mary Belcher, "The Archaeological Investigation of Walter C. Pierce Community Park and Vicinity, 2005-2012: Report to the Public, May 2013," Howard University, https://walterpierceparkcemeteries.files.wordpress.com/2013/05/public_report2.pdf.



Cultural Landscape Report

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway
Washington, DC

Overall Study Area
Existing Conditions Key Plan

National Park Service
National Capital Region

Sources

1. Park data including boundaries, hillshade, and vegetation from National Park Service, National Capital Region, Rock Creek Park, 2022.
2. Multi-use trail data from AECOM, 2017.
3. World imagery from ESRI, 2023.
4. Specimen and ornamental vegetation, small-scale features, and culvert data collected by Quinn Evans, 2023.

Drawn By

Quinn Evans, ArcGIS Pro 3.1.3, 2024

Legend

- CLR Boundary
- LCA Sheet
- Asphalt Trail
- Earthen Trail
- Social Trail
- Brick Paved Trail
- Ephemeral Stream
- Wall
- Maintained Landscape
- Mixed Forest
- Mown Turf
- Woody Wetlands
- Revegetation
- Open Water
- Road
- Parking Area
- Bridge
- Buildings/ Structures
- Recreational Feature
- Historic Specimen Tree

Notes

1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N.

N 0 425 850 1,700 Feet

Drawing EC-0

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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 1

LCA 1 encompasses the lowest point of elevation in the study area between Pennsylvania Avenue to the north and terminating just before Rock Creek enters the Potomac River south of Thompson Boat Center.

SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

Unlike the rest of the study area, vertical space is defined not by steep valley walls but rather by views of surrounding urban buildings and small-scale features such as light posts, signage, and utilities.

TOPOGRAPHY

At the confluence of Rock Creek and the Potomac River, the landscape has a flat, open character (Figure 3-30). Topography has been altered by the construction of transportation routes in this area.

VEGETATION

Vegetation unique to LCA 1 includes the large hollies and an osmanthus hedge on the east side of the Thompson Boat Center parking area and a large blue Atlas cedar (*Cedrus atlantica sp.*) on the south side of the Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge. Clusters of crepe myrtles and redbuds are located along the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail and vehicular connections from Pennsylvania Avenue NW and the Whitehurst Freeway (Figure 3-31). Mown turf areas with specimen maples are on the east side of the roadway between the study area boundary and L Street NW.

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

Buildings and structures in LCA 1 include:

- Whitehurst Freeway/K Street NW Bridge
- Pennsylvania Avenue NW Bridge
- L Street roadway bridge (Figure 3-32)
- L Street pedestrian bridge (Figure 3-32)
- Godey Lime Kilns
- Thompson Boat Center access road bridge
- Thompson Boat Center storage shed



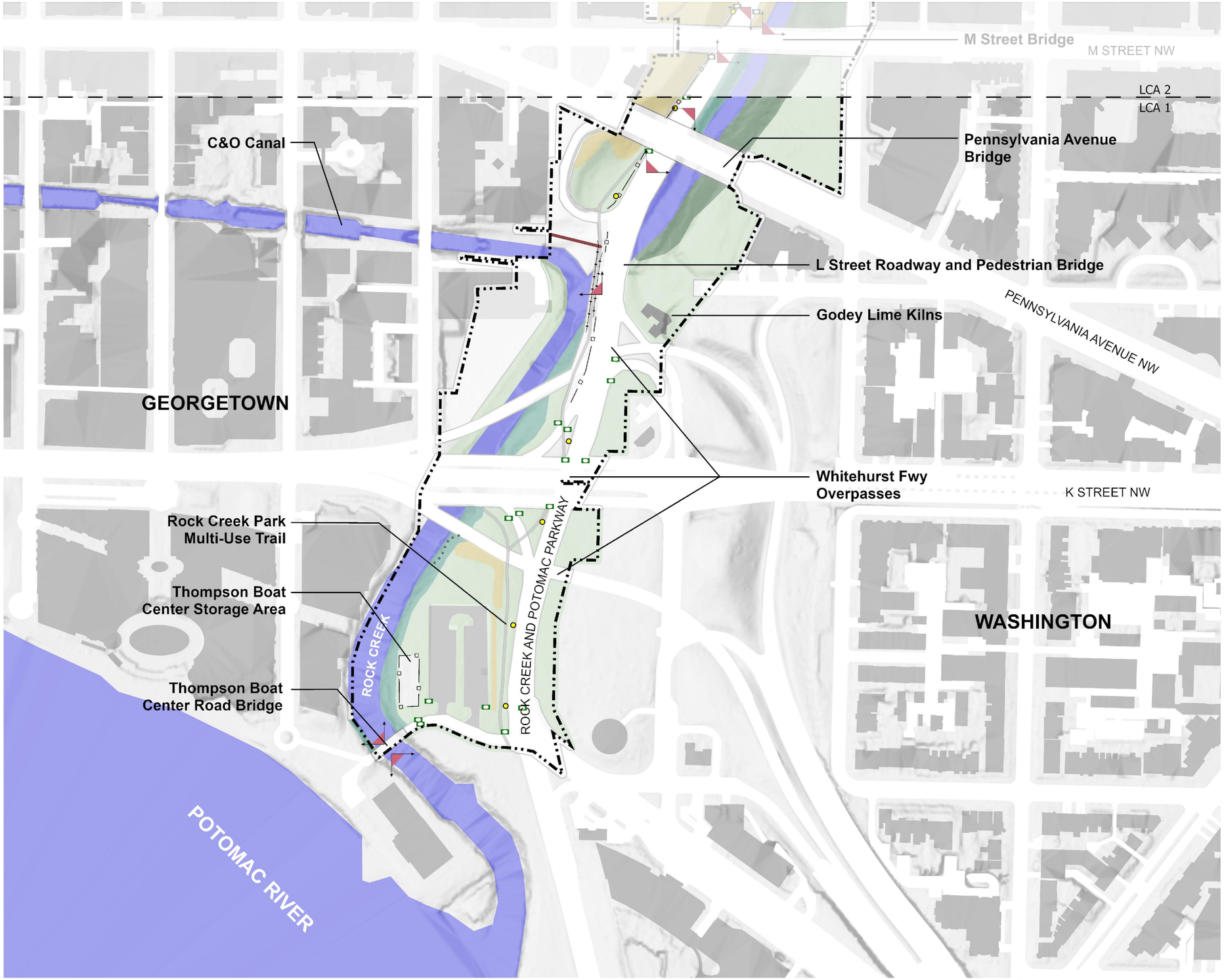
Figure 3-30. The broad, gentle slopes of LCA 1 are distinct to the Rock Creek and Potomac River floodplain. A runner passes the Atlas cedar in the foreground with K Street Bridge and urban context visible in the background (QE, 2023).



Figure 3-31. A cluster of multistem redbuds planted along the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail near the Whitehurst Freeway Overpass, facing west (QE, 2023).



Figure 3-32. The L Street roadway bridge (right) and pedestrian bridge (left) cross Rock Creek where the C&O Canal enters from the west, facing north (QE, 2023).



Cultural Landscape Report

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway
Washington, DC

LCA 1
From Virginia Ave NW to Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Existing Conditions

National Park Service
National Capital Region

Sources

1. Park data including boundaries, contours, and vegetation from National Park Service, National Capital Region, Rock Creek Park, 2022.
2. Multi-use trail data from AECOM, 2017.
3. World imagery from ESRI, 2023.
4. Specimen and ornamental vegetation, small-scale features, and culvert data collected by Quinn Evans, 2023.

Drawn By

Quinn Evans, ArcGIS Pro 3.1.3, 2024

Legend

- CLR Boundary
- LCA Match Line
- Asphalt Trail
- Social Trail
- Brick Paved Trail
- Metal Fence or Railing
- Wood Railing or Fence
- Lightpost
- View
- Maintained Landscape
- Mixed Forest
- Mown Turf
- Woody Wetlands
- Open Water
- Road
- Parking Area
- Bridge
- Buildings/Structures
- Culvert (Inlet)

Notes

1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N.

N 0 100 200 400 Feet

Drawing EC-1

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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 2

LCA 2 encompasses the stretch of Rock Creek Valley between Pennsylvania Avenue NW and P Street NW where the valley walls steepen and create a sense of partial enclosure.

SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

Vertical space is defined by the valley topography, light fixtures, and the Pennsylvania Avenue NW and P Street NW bridges at the southern and northern boundaries of the LCA.

TOPOGRAPHY

The topography in LCA 2 transitions from the broad, open floodplain of LCA 1 to steeper valley walls, which are open on the west side of the creek and enclosed by vegetation on the east side (Figure 3-33).

VEGETATION

Distinct vegetation in LCA 2 includes the maintained plantings and specimen trees occupying the open hillside west of the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail. In the spring, this area is blanketed in daffodils, with some varieties retained from the 1965–67 plantings (Figure 3-34). The strip of landscape between the roadway and the creek is also maintained by irregular mowing. The east bank of the creek is mixed deciduous forest. Two dedicated volunteers manage understory vegetation, and therefore invasives such as English ivy are minimal in this area.

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

Buildings and structures in LCA 2 include:

- M Street Bridge
- Frances Pool and Bathhouse
- Tennis courts
- Basketball courts



Figure 3-33. The west bank of Rock Creek Valley is characterized by rock outcroppings, sparse canopy trees, daffodils, and English ivy. The Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail narrows to 4-5' wide in this area (QE, 2023).



Figure 3-34. Daffodils blanket the west slope of the valley in spring, facing north (QE, 2023).



Cultural Landscape Report

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway
Washington, DC

LCA 2
from Pennsylvania Avenue NW to P Street NW
Existing Conditions

National Park Service
National Capital Region

Sources

1. Park data including boundaries, hillshade, and vegetation from National Park Service, National Capital Region, Rock Creek Park, 2022.
2. Multi-use trail data from AECOM, 2017.
3. World imagery from ESRI, 2023.
4. Specimen and ornamental vegetation, small-scale features, and culvert data collected by Quinn Evans, 2023.

Drawn By

Quinn Evans, ArcGIS Pro 3.1.3, 2024

Legend

- CLR Boundary
- LCA Match Line
- Asphalt Trail
- Earthen Trail
- Social Trail
- Chain Link Fence
- Metal Bollards
- Metal Fence or Railing
- Wall
- Wood Railing or Fence
- Rock Outcropping
- Lightpost
- View
- Maintained Landscape
- Mixed Forest
- Mown Turf
- Woody Wetlands
- Open Water
- Road
- Bridge
- Buildings/Structures
- Recreational Feature
- Culvert (Inlet)

Notes

1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N.

N 0 100 200 400 Feet

Drawing EC-2

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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 3

The landscape in LCA 3 is illustrated on sheets EC-3a and EC-3b. This portion of the study area is characterized by a sense of immersion in Rock Creek Valley and strong connections between circulation routes and the creek.

SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

Spatial organization in LCA 3 is defined by a sense of enclosure by valley walls. The roadway and Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail spread out across a broad valley floor, which widens north of the Dumbarton (Q Street) Bridge.

TOPOGRAPHY

North of P Street, the study area topography becomes much steeper and curves following the path of Rock Creek. Steep slopes are anchored by an undulating valley floor, which provides a sense of place within the valley.

CIRCULATION

In LCA 3, the roadway splits around a vegetated median (Figure 3-35). The Waterside Drive NW Overpass connects southbound traffic entering from the east, and a single lane exits from the northbound roadway at this point. North of Massachusetts Avenue, Waterside Drive NW provides access to the northbound roadway. At the southern end of the roadway median, the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail crosses from the west side of Rock Creek to the east at the Lyons Mill Bridge, where it remains until it crosses from east to west at the Saddle Club Footbridge (Figure 3-37).

VEGETATION

The plantings within the roadway median north of the Waterside Drive NW Overpass include numerous mature eastern redbuds, a few large specimen tulip trees, and a Carolina hemlock (Figure 3-36). South of the overpass, three historic sycamores and two white ashes are documented in HALS DC-40.[17] Two revegetation projects are located within LCA 3 where volunteers planted a variety of native trees, shrubs, and herbaceous species between 2017 and 2023.

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

Buildings and structures included in LCA 3 include:

- Dumbarton (Q Street) Bridge
- Lyons Mill Footbridge
- Waterside Drive NW Overpass
- Potential Lyons Mill remnants
- Stone tree wells
- Washington City Tunnel Storage Shed
- Normanstone Stream Footbridge

17 Patti Kuhn and David Plakorus, *Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway/Waterside Drive Sycamore and White Ash Trees*, HALS DC-40 (Washington, DC: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 2012).



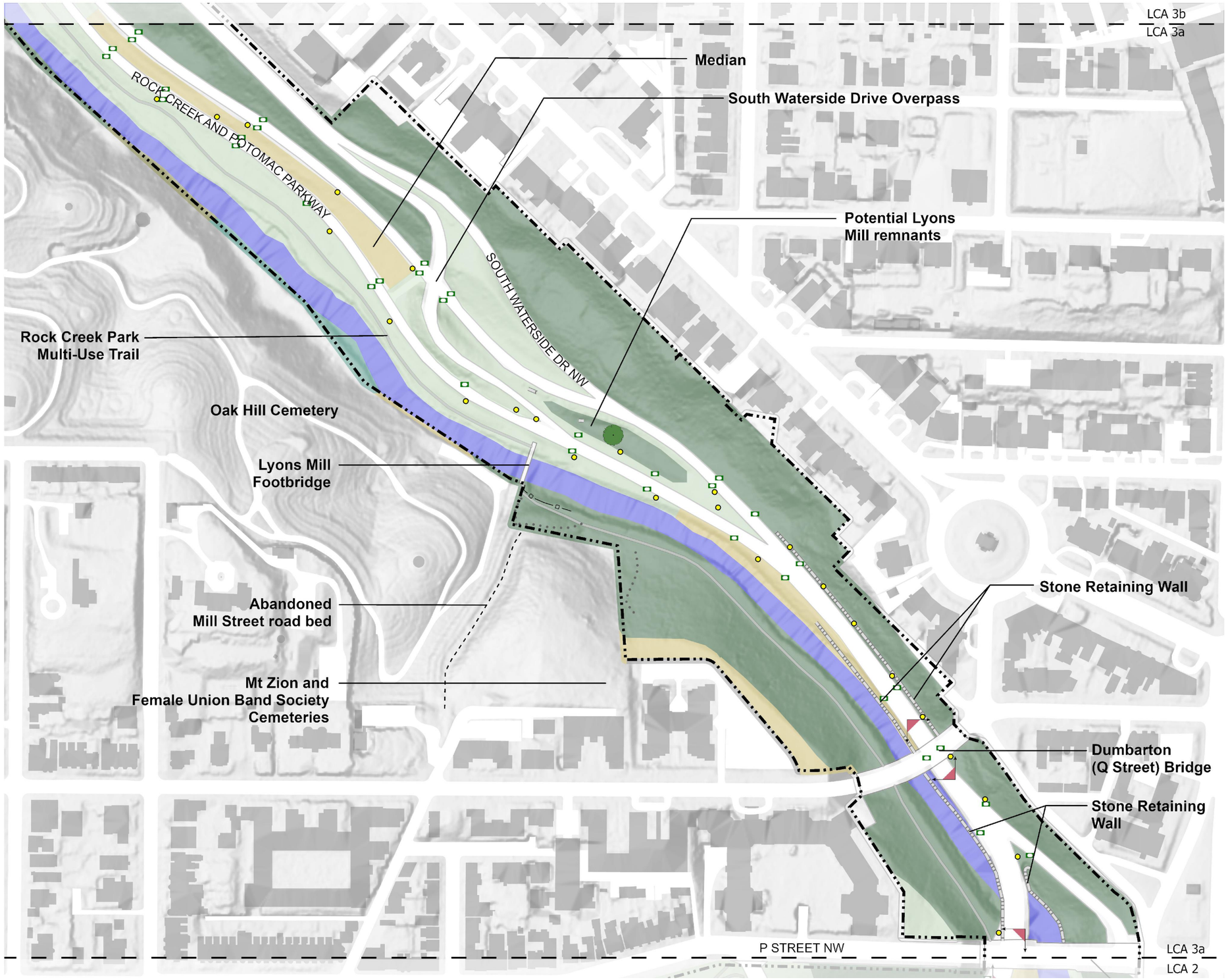
Figure 3-35. The Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail (left), southbound lanes (middle), and northbound lanes (right) of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, facing north. Planted medians separate the roadway and the Waterside Drive NW exit and overpass are visible (QE, 2023).



Figure 3-36. A grove of redbuds is located in the median north of the Waterside Drive NW Overpass, facing north (QE, 2023).



Figure 3-37. View from the Saddle Club Footbridge, facing south into LCA 3 (QE, 2023).



Cultural Landscape Report

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway
Washington, DC

LCA 3
from P Street NW to Saddle Club Footbridge
Existing Conditions

National Park Service
National Capital Region

Sources

1. Park data including boundaries, hillshade, and vegetation from National Park Service, National Capital Region, Rock Creek Park, 2022.
2. Multi-use trail data from AECOM, 2017.
3. World imagery from ESRI, 2023.
4. Specimen and ornamental vegetation, small-scale features, and culvert data collected by Quinn Evans, 2023.

Drawn By

Quinn Evans, ArcGIS Pro 3.1.3, 2024

Legend

- CLR Boundary
- LCA Match Line
- Asphalt Trail
- Earthen Trail
- Social Trail
- Wall
- Wood Railing or Fence
- Lightpost
- View
- Maintained Landscape
- Mixed Forest
- Mown Turf
- Woody Wetlands
- Revegetation
- Open Water
- Road
- Bridge
- Historic Specimen Tree
- Culverts (Inlet)

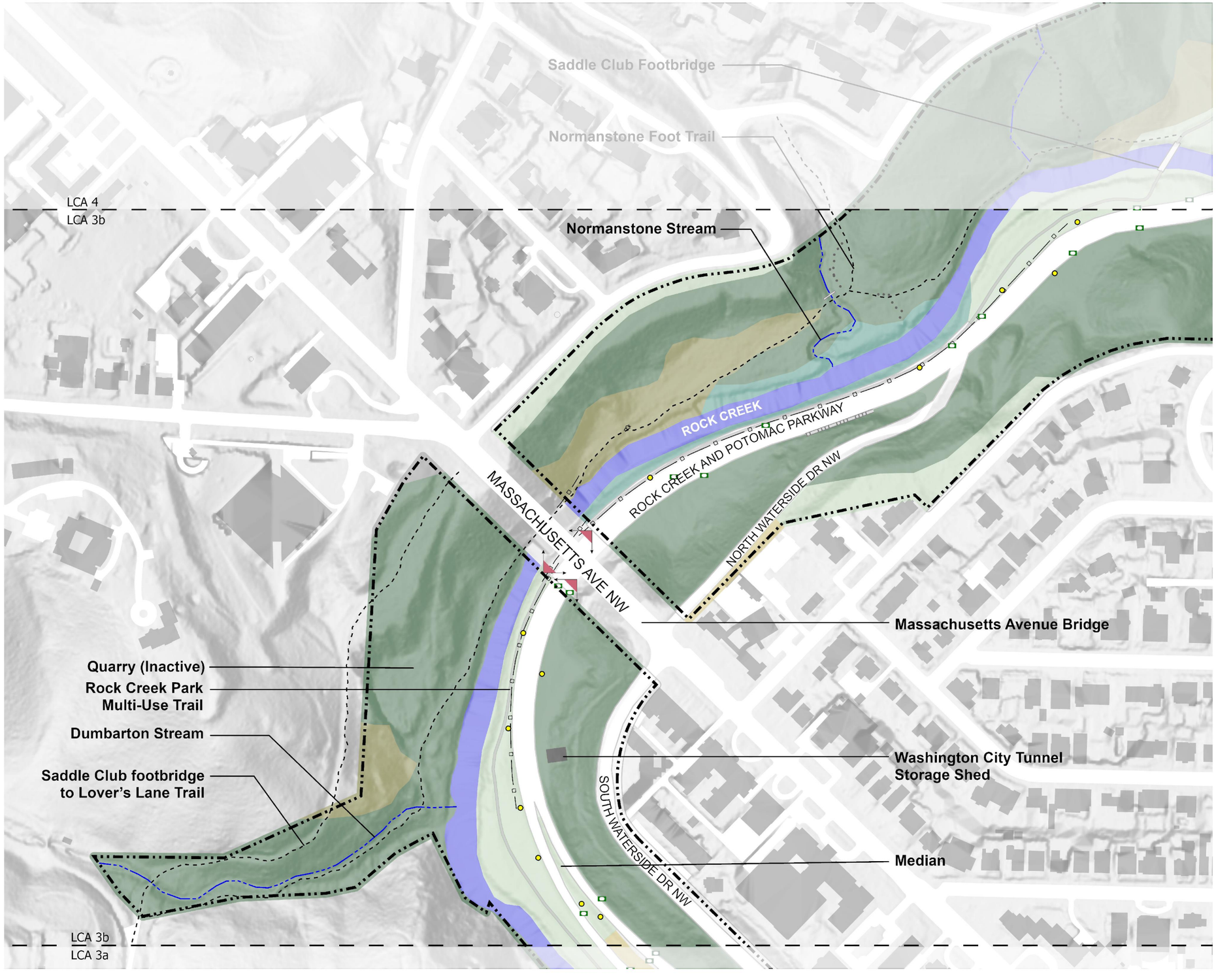
Notes

1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N.

N 0 100 200 400 Feet

Drawing EC-3a

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Cultural Landscape Report

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway
Washington, DC

LCA 3
from P Street NW to Saddle Club Footbridge
Existing Conditions

National Park Service
National Capital Region

Sources

1. Park data including boundaries, hillshade, and vegetation from National Park Service, National Capital Region, Rock Creek Park, 2022.
2. Multi-use trail data from AECOM, 2017.
3. World imagery from ESRI, 2023.
4. Specimen and ornamental vegetation, small-scale features, and culvert data collected by Quinn Evans, 2023.

Drawn By

Quinn Evans, ArcGIS Pro 3.1.3, 2024

Legend

- CLR Boundary
- LCA Match Line
- Asphalt Trail
- Earthen Trail
- Social Trail
- Ephemeral Stream
- Wall
- Wood Railing or Fence
- Lightpost
- View
- Maintained Landscape
- Mixed Forest
- Mown Turf
- Woody Wetlands
- Revegetation
- Open Water
- Road
- Bridge
- Buildings/Structures
- Culvert (Inlet)

.Notes

1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N.

N 0 100 200 400 Feet

Drawing EC-3b

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LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREA 4

The northernmost part of the study area encompasses the landscape north of the Saddle Club Footbridge, including Shoreham Hill, Edgewater Stables, and the roadway and trails before they enter the National Zoological Park Tunnel.

TOPOGRAPHY

LCA 4 includes steep and rocky slopes that drop to an undulating valley floor. With the exception of Shoreham Hill, slopes rise precipitously from the creek and in some areas stone retaining walls are employed to hold them away from the roadway and trails (Figure 3-38).

CIRCULATION

The parkway ends where the roadway changes at Shoreham Hill from two lanes in either direction to Beach Drive NW, formed by a single northbound and southbound lane north of Shoreham Drive NW (Figure 3-39). Southbound vehicles enter the parkway from the National Zoological Park Tunnel and Beach Drive NW, Shoreham Drive NW, or Cathedral Avenue NW. Northbound vehicles may exit onto Shoreham Drive NW or continue on Beach Drive NW through the tunnel. Rush hour one-way traffic patterns affect use of roadway infrastructure. A pedestrian bridge was recently reconstructed along the Normanstone Trail where it crosses Normanstone Stream. The Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail crosses Shoreham Hill north of the Saddle Club Footbridge and an asphalt sidewalk connects it to the city sidewalk grid at the intersection of Calvert Street and Connecticut Avenue. A new pedestrian footbridge crosses Rock Creek at the northern edge of the study area, separating vehicular and pedestrian routes.

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

Buildings and structures located in LCA 4 include:

- Saddle Club Footbridge
- Connecticut Avenue (William Taft Memorial) Bridge
- Calvert Street (Duke Ellington Memorial) Bridge
- Vehicular bridge to Edgewater Stables
- Edgewater Stables
- Woodley Lane Bridge Remnants
- Gaging Station
- National Zoological Park Tunnel Pedestrian Bridge
- National Zoological Park Tunnel Vehicular Bridge
- Stone retaining wall south of the Calvert Street (Duke Ellington Memorial) Bridge



Figure 3-38. A large stone retaining wall spans the steep valley slopes on the east side of Rock Creek south of the Calvert Street (Duke Ellington Memorial) Bridge, facing north (QE, 2023).



Figure 3-39. The parkway ends at Shoreham Hill. Vehicles can exit to and enter from Calvert Street NW to the west or continue north on Beach Drive NW. Cathedral Avenue NW meets Shoreham Drive NW at this point, facing southeast (QE, 2023).



Figure 3-40. A timber bench and fitness equipment located east of the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail at the south end of Shoreham Hill, facing north (QE, 2023).

Cultural Landscape Report

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway
Washington, DC

LCA 4
from the Saddle Club Footbridge to National Zoological Park Tunnel
Existing Conditions

National Park Service
National Capital Region

National Zoological Park
National Zoological Park Tunnel
National Zoological Park Tunnel Pedestrian Bridge
Calvert Street (Duke Ellington Memorial) Bridge
National Zoological Park Vehicular Bridge
Parkway Road Trace
Edgewater Stables to National Zoological Park Tunnel trail connection
Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail
Shoreham Hill
Saddle Club Footbridge
Gaging Station
Connecticut Avenue (William Taft Memorial) Bridge
Woodley Bridge remnants
Edgewater Training Stables
Training Ring
Shoreham Hill Bridge
Quarry (Inactive)
LCA 4
LCA 3b
CALVERT STREET NW
SHOREHAM DR NW
CATHEDRAL AVE
BEACH DR NW
ROCK CREEK
CONNECTICUT AVENUE NW
ROCK CREEK AND POTOMAC PARKWAY

CLR Boundary
LCA Match Line
Asphalt Trail
Farthen Trail
Social Trail
Ephemeral Stream
Wall
Wood Railing or Fence
Lightpost
View
Maintained Landscape
Mixed Forest
Mown Turf
Woody Wetlands
Revegetation
Open Water
Road
Bridge
Buildings/Structures
Historic Specimen Tree
Culvert (Inlet)

Sources

1. Park data including boundaries, hillshade, and vegetation from National Park Service, National Capital Region, Rock Creek Park, 2022.
2. Multi-use trail data from AECOM, 2017.
3. World imagery from ESRI, 2023.
4. Specimen and ornamental vegetation, small-scale features, and culvert data collected by Quinn Evans, 2023.

Drawn By

Quinn Evans, ArcGIS Pro 3.1.3, 2024

Notes

1. Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 18N.

N 0 100 200 400 Feet

Drawing EC-4

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Analysis and Evaluation

Chapter cover: View of the Q Street (Dumbarton) Bridge from the P Street roadway bridge, facing north (QE, 2023).

Analysis and Evaluation

This chapter presents an evaluation of the historical significance of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, an assessment of integrity, and a comparative analysis of historic and existing landscape conditions. The analysis and evaluation have been developed according to the NPS *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques*.[1]

NATIONAL REGISTER EVALUATION

The National Register of Historic Places program was established in 1966 to identify and evaluate historically and architecturally significant US properties. National Register listing eligibility applies to districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. A property can be found to have significance on a national, state, or local level and must meet one or more of the following criteria to be considered eligible for the National Register: (A) association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of US history; (B) association with the lives of persons significant in the past; (C) embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction that represents the work of a master, or possess high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or (D) has yielded, or may yield, information important in pre-contact history or history.

NATIONAL REGISTER DOCUMENTATION

The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway study area is contained within the 173-acre Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District (NRIS 05000367). The study area encompasses a 164-acre area, following Beach Drive NW as it exits the National Zoological Park Tunnel, through the northern terminus of the parkway at the Beach Drive NW/Shoreham Drive NW intersection, and following the parkway south to Virginia Avenue NW. The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on May 4, 2005, under the 1991 Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Parkways of the National Capital Region, 1913–1965." The nomination included the entire length of the parkway, hence the discrepancy between the study area acreage and that of the Historic

1 Robert R. Page, Cathy Gilbert, and Susan Dolan, A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1998.)

District. Three resources in the project area were previously listed—the C&O Canal, Godey Lime Kilns, and Dumbarton (Q Street) Bridge. The C&O Canal was administratively listed on October 15, 1966. Since administrative listings did not originally include documentation, a National Register nomination was not prepared for the C&O Canal until 1979. In 2015, an updated nomination for the canal was prepared with a boundary increase and additional documentation. The remains of the Godey Lime Kilns were listed in the National Register on May 22, 1973, and the Dumbarton (Q Street) Bridge was listed on July 16, 1973.

Below are summaries of criteria, areas of significance, the period of significance for the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, and recommended modifications based on research and analysis in this report.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Existing Nomination

The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway was listed in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A with state significance in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Recreation and under Criterion C in the areas of Engineering and Landscape Architecture. The current period of significance for the entire Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway district is 1828 to 1951, corresponding with the beginning of construction of the C&O Canal and concluding with the installation of *The Arts of Peace* sculpture groups at Lincoln Circle.

Recommendations

New research conducted for the production of this CLR suggests that the study area cultural landscape's period of significance could potentially be expanded to 1967 to include Beautification-Era plantings executed under Lady Bird Johnson's program from 1965 to 1967 or perhaps later to incorporate the P Street Beach's significance to the Washington, DC, LGBTQ community in the 1970s. This determination will not be made in this CLR. Rather, this CLR recommends that further study be undertaken to assess whether the Beautification-era plantings were significant or demonstrative examples in the program's history and the importance of the P Street Beach in Washington's LGBTQ history. This further study would determine whether the period of significance for the study area cultural landscape should be extended.

Likewise, this CLR recommends that further study be undertaken to determine whether the study area cultural landscape is significant at the national level. The 2005 nomination determined state significance most appropriate. However, the parkway's association with the Parkway Movement, the Senate Park (McMillan)

Commission plan for Washington, and the City Beautiful Movement suggests the potential for national significance. To justify national significance, this additional study will need to evaluate the parkway's impact nationwide (i.e., whether the parkway was influential nationally in parkway design). This study might explore Community Planning and Development under Criterion A or Landscape Architecture under Criterion C as potential areas of significance.

Cemeteries both inside and outside the study area provide important context for the parkway cultural landscape. A portion of the Mount Pleasant Plains Cemetery is located within the study area boundaries, while the Mount Zion and Female Union Band Society Cemeteries (NRIS 75002050) and Oak Hill Cemetery are located adjacent to the study area.

The CLR also recommends evaluating the study area for significance under Criterion D. In 1949, important Native American archeological sites including a burial were found during the construction of the Whitehurst Freeway. A midden dating to the Middle Archaic and Middle and Late Woodland periods was discovered on Rock Creek's east side containing artifacts that include ceramic potsherds, points, stone cobbles, and stored foraged foods. Research to date has not indicated that any historic burials were present at the site and disturbed during the construction.

Criterion A—Community Planning and Development

The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway project area is significant at the state level under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development as an ambitious planning project that dramatically reshaped the Rock Creek Valley, created a vital route for park users and commuters, and embodied some of the most acclaimed and criticized aspects of City Beautiful planning. The Senate Park (McMillan) Commission of 1901–02 envisioned a parkway connecting Rock Creek and East and West Potomac parks as part of its City Beautiful movement-inspired vision to remake Washington, DC, into a capital city that aspired to planner Pierre Charles L'Enfant's vision and rivaled the capitals of Europe. To fulfill this vision, the commission proposed Beaux Arts-style public architecture, grand boulevards, and city parks that offered city dwellers picturesque escapes in natural settings. Congress established the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission in 1913 to oversee the planning, design, and construction of the parkway. Since its completion in 1936, the parkway increasingly became an important roadway that connected neighborhoods of Northwest DC and suburban Maryland to downtown Washington. The construction of the parkway required the demolition of residences and industrial buildings along the Georgetown area's eastern edge. Planners argued that the houses targeted

for demolition were "sordid," but historians have challenged this assessment of the demolished housing stock's condition and the motives for targeting a neighborhood with a large African American population. Today, the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway remains a picturesque path that reflects the ambitious civic goals of the Senate Park Commission and the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission. Yet it is also a reminder of past planning philosophies that provided public benefit to some at the detriment of others.

Criterion A—Recreation

The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway project area is significant at the state level under Criterion A in the area of Recreation. In the early nineteenth century, the lower Rock Creek Valley served as an area of recreation for residents of the city of Washington, Georgetown area, and Montgomery County. The establishment of Rock Creek Park in 1890 was part of a larger national and local movement to establish parks as places of recreation, particularly for those not able to venture outside the city. Recreation remained at the forefront for planners and landscape architects designing the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, and parkways like the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway provided an escape from urban life. Although the parkway's function gradually shifted by the mid-twentieth century from a recreational drive to a fast-paced commuter route to and from downtown Washington, recreation remained an important use of the project area.

Criterion C—Engineering

The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway project area is significant at the state level under Criterion A in the area of Engineering as a site of engineering milestones in the construction of bridges across the valley. The Connecticut Avenue (William Taft Memorial) Bridge was the largest concrete bridge in the world at the time of its completion in 1907. The Dumbarton (Q Street) Bridge, individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places, is a Romanesque-style bridge that was also completed before the parkway opened but set a high design standard for future bridges erected in the project area. The project area features other significant bridges, including the M Street Bridge, P Street Bridge, Massachusetts Avenue Bridge, and the Calvert Street (Duke Ellington Memorial) Bridge.

Criterion C—Landscape Architecture

The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway project area is significant at the state level under Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture as a designed landscape that expresses the principles of the American parkway movement. Landscape architects and boosters of the early twentieth-century parkway movement aimed for parkways to serve a role similar to the urban park by offering a space for recreation and respite for pedestrians and carriages that briefly removed

users from urban life. Although parkway planning soon shifted to accommodate automobiles, many of the broader goals remained. The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway was principally the vision of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., but was designed by a combination of various landscape architects.

EVALUATION OF LANDSCAPE INTEGRITY

Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance, or how well the physical features of the landscape relate to its historic significance. In order to be listed in the National Register of Historic Places, a property must be shown to have significance under at least one of the four criteria (as identified in the previous section of this chapter) and also must retain a degree of its historic integrity. The National Register of Historic Places defines seven aspects or qualities that make up integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.[2]

The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway study area landscape retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials and workmanship, feeling, and association. The existing parkway landscape represents the full implementation of the original vision and design for the parkway and overall, its extant resources continue to convey its historic significance. Limited instances occur where modern features have been added, such as fitness equipment and new timber guardrails, or plantings in designed areas have been lost, such as shrubs along the P Street on-ramp, but these do not substantially detract from the character of the historic landscape.

LOCATION

Location is the place where the cultural landscape was constructed or the landscape where the historic event occurred. The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway retains integrity of location. The primary elements of the historic landscape, including the roadway, pedestrian trails, Rock Creek, bridges, forested areas, and topography, continue to occupy their historic locations.

DESIGN

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. The existing condition of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway within the study area reflects the original parkway design generated between 1916–1936 with the guidance of the Commission of Fine Arts, Rock

2 National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington, DC: US Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1995), 44.

Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission, the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, and the US Army Corps of Engineers, among other contributors. The parkway expresses the signature design elements of the American parkway movement including a winding path screened from views of the nearby city for a feeling of seclusion except at intersections; separate northbound and southbound drives that blend the roadway into the scenery; wooded areas, glens, and pedestrian paths; varied views; and structures and bridges embellished with architectural ornament that frequently include local stone. Although changes have been made in subsequent years to landscape elements such as the roadway, trails, and plantings, the designed relationships between those elements and the landscape of Rock Creek Valley retains integrity of design related to initial planning and compatible changes made during the period of significance.

SETTING

Setting is the physical environment of the landscape. Overall, integrity of setting is retained throughout the study area landscape. The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway was constructed in the Rock Creek Valley, which separates Washington, DC, and the Georgetown area, to take advantage of the natural character of this area in the rapidly developing District of Columbia. North of P Street, the parkway retains much of its natural character, including mature forests, steep hillsides, and a close relationship with Rock Creek. The parkway continues to provide a respite from the urban character of the surrounding city. Cemeteries that border the study area are important features that contribute to the setting of the parkway cultural landscape and their future protection is integral to preserving the parkway setting. The section of the parkway south of P Street has incorporated industrial uses since early European settlement and the urban context is partially visible from the parkway in this area. As this is consistent with the historic setting of the designed landscape, it does not detract from integrity.

MATERIALS AND WORKMANSHIP

Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a distinct period of time in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. Within the project area, materials are closely related to the aspect of workmanship, which is the physical evidence of the craft of a particular culture or people during any given period in history. Designed and constructed to accommodate automobiles, equestrians, and pedestrians, the historic parkway landscape incorporated an asphalt-paved roadway, curbing, gutters, and footpath, a gravel bridle path, a network of earthen trails, and numerous structures, bridges, walls, and culverts of masonry construction. The roadway and trails, bridges and structures, walls, and many historic culverts are retained. The gravel path for equestrian use is missing as the bridle path was paved for use by pedestrians and cyclists. Vegetation preserved or added as a part of parkway construction formed a critical element of the design and feeling of the landscape. Vegetation types that represent these initial preserved or planted areas continue to convey the historic character of the parkway landscape, though some areas of designed plantings are missing. While activities such as paving, resurfacing, and the addition of noncontributing structures have changed some aspects of the landscape, overall, the original surfaces and structures are extant and retain integrity for the cultural landscape.

FEELING

Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. Feeling results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the property's historic character. The feeling of being in an early twentieth-century American parkway is apparent throughout the study area. Drivers on the roadway and pedestrians on the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail experience a gently winding route that follows the course of Rock Creek through the valley. While the landscape is broader and more open south of P Street, the original grading and forested areas limit views to the city. North of P Street, the forested valley encloses the roadway and the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail and the median integrates ornamental and canopy trees into the driving experience. Historic bridges are distinct markers relating to the surrounding city and frame views of the valley at intervals throughout the study area. The feeling of being in a forested valley, separated from the dense urban context surrounding it but connected to a system of urban parks, is extant and conveys the significance of the landscape as a part of the early twentieth-century parkway movement in the District of Columbia.

ASSOCIATION

Association is the direct link between the important historic event or person and a cultural landscape. The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway study area retains a strong association with the contexts of community planning and development and recreational use in the District of Columbia. Providing a picturesque and efficient connection between downtown Washington, DC, and Rock Creek Park, the parkway is still highly utilized as a recreational and commuter route. The design of the parkway landscape retains integrity to the field of landscape architecture and the design and construction of historic bridges retain integrity to the field of engineering. The design and construction of the parkway landscape is consistent with the American parkway movement, combining vehicular, equestrian, and pedestrian traffic with picturesque design principles such as emphasizing the landscape's natural qualities, utilizing curvilinear circulation routes, and framed views. While the parkway has historically been and continues to be challenged by high volumes of commuter traffic, the parkway landscape represents its association with American parkway design and provides visitors a both beautiful and efficient path between Rock Creek Park, the northwest suburbs, and downtown Washington, DC.

OVERALL CULTURAL LANDSCAPE EVALUATION

This section evaluates the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway cultural landscape to assess changes in historic landscape character. The evaluation is organized by landscape characteristic per *The Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*. Integrity of the cultural landscape is evaluated based on the ability of the landscape to convey significance related to two National Register criteria identified by the 2005 Nomination for the parkway: Criterion A—Events under the themes of Community Planning and Development and Recreation; and Criterion C—Design/Construction under the themes of Engineering and Landscape Architecture. The analysis assesses changes based on the character and condition of the landscape during the period of significance (1828–1951).

An evaluated inventory of landscape features within the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway study area is provided in Table 4-1. Features are evaluated as contributing or non-contributing to the historic character of the landscape, non-contributing compatible if the feature does not detract from or relates to the historic character, non-contributing incompatible if the feature is visually incongruent with the historic character of the landscape, or undetermined if insufficient information exists to complete the assessment. Missing features are not evaluated.

SPATIAL ORGANIZATION

Historic Condition (1828–1951)

During the period of significance, the spatial character of the Rock Creek Valley was defined by the valley's steep topographic condition. The steep slopes provided a natural barrier between the expanding suburbs of Georgetown and those of neighboring Washington, DC, laid out along a roughly north–south axis following the course of Rock Creek to its confluence with the Potomac River. Development of the parkway capitalized on this dramatic natural condition, beautified parts of the valley degraded by industry, and provided a link from Washington's core to its designated parklands, specifically Rock Creek Park to the north. The roadway and bridle path followed the course of Rock Creek and a network of trails made use of the scenic, wooded slopes. As the need for transportation between the east and west sides of the valley increased, a series of bridges was constructed to span the valley, defining the vertical plane of the study area and shaping visitor experience of the valley floor. The relationship between low or sparse vegetation and dense and mature forest communities also created a sense of connection to or enclosure from the surrounding city.

Post-Historic Condition (1952–Present)

Changes associated with the spatial organization of the study area after 1951 are minimal. Changes in vegetation are associated with fluctuations in open versus enclosed experiences along the parkway.

Evaluation

The existing spatial organization of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway retains the historic character of the valley and parkway experience. The condition of vegetation should be monitored and managed to maintain the historic character of enclosure or openness.

CIRCULATION

Historic Condition (1828–1951)

Prior to the construction of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, major circulation features followed roughly north–south routes along the upper rim of the valley or crossed east–west where the topography flattened out south of P Street. Informal footpaths crisscrossed the valley in the growing urban areas of Washington, DC, and Georgetown, and Mill Street extended to the Lyons Mill on the valley floor. The creek could be forded by horses, carriages, and pedestrians at numerous points. The Chesapeake and Ohio (C&O) Canal met Rock Creek between Pennsylvania Avenue and K (Water) Street beginning in 1828 and introduced large volumes of barge traffic along the creek's southern section.

The construction of the parkway coincided with the increasing popularity of the personal automobile, and the parkway facilitated both a beautiful recreational driving experience as well as an expeditious route between northwestern suburbs and downtown Washington. Commuter traffic was so voluminous that the parkway's one-directional traffic patterns during commuting hours began just a year after its completion. Vehicular traffic connected to Rock Creek Park via the National Zoological Park and two fords across Rock Creek.

Post-Historic Condition (1952–Present)

Changes to the circulation system following the historic period include widening and resurfacing of the roadway, the paving of the multi-use (Parkway) trail (former bridle path) to better serve pedestrians and cyclists, and a temporary experiment with a bike lane in the roadway during commuting hours in 1971. Unofficial or social trails have shifted and changed based on use and enforcement by park management. In 1966, the National Zoological Park Tunnel opened and the vehicular fords in the National Zoological Park closed. Recreational equestrian use of the valley was preserved in the construction of the bridle path (utilized until the 1950s) and pedestrians were welcomed on sidewalks and earthen paths that followed historic alignments.

Evaluation

Overall, circulation patterns are retained from the period of significance and represent the landscape's historic character for the contexts of community planning and development, recreation, and landscape architecture. Motorists and pedestrians continue to experience the parkway along sinuous routes that respond to the natural topography. Circulation within the study area retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials and workmanship, feeling, and association, and contributing circulation routes include the roadway, Rock Creek

Park Multi-Use Trail, Normanstone Trail, and Lover's Lane Trail. Features such as the National Zoological Park Tunnel, which stylistically evokes the Mission 66 movement rather than the American parkway movement, facilitate the connection of circulation through the valley and do not detract from historic landscape character.

NATURAL SYSTEMS AND FEATURES

Historic Condition (1828–1951)

During the period of significance, the defining natural systems and features of the Rock Creek Valley were Rock Creek and its hydrologic patterns and the nutrient-poor soil and shallow bedrock of the valley walls. Tidal action influenced Rock Creek up to modern day P Street until the mid-nineteenth century and this area was used as a temporary camp for Indigenous groups who came to fish the waters of the Potomac. As Georgetown and Washington, DC, developed, the study area's steep slopes and poor soils protected the valley from logging and development. The flow of clean water through the valley provided opportunities for early industry, such as milling, and a diverse array of cultural and recreational activities centered around Rock Creek as the cities grew. As the region developed, dumping became a significant problem in the southern portion of the study area. Removal of waste and the addition of fill material to construct the parkway layered new material onto the sedimentary deposits near the creek's confluence with the Potomac River. Rock Creek was rechanneled and straightened in 1940, creating the area known as P Street Beach. Quarrying of bedrock in two locations in the study area generated stone used in multiple bridges and other structures.

Post-Historic Condition (1952–Present)

Changes associated with Rock Creek and its valley since 1952 include increasingly poor water quality in Rock Creek due to combined sewer outflows (CSOs) and high bacteria and contaminant levels in urban stormwater. Soils in the study area are consistent with the historic condition and continue to support native and successional vegetation communities. Erosion of native and fill soils has become a concern throughout the study area due to increased stormwater volumes, changes in vegetation, and use of social trails.

Evaluation

Natural systems and features retain the historic character of the parkway landscape related to the contexts of community planning and development, recreation, and landscape architecture. While high levels of use and increased urbanization threaten the preservation of hydrology and soils in the study area, overall natural systems and features convey the historic character of the cultural landscape. Water quality is being monitored and remediation efforts are recommended to improve the quality of this contributing resource. Soil stabilization efforts are underway in numerous locations and closure of social trails will continue to preserve soils.

TOPOGRAPHY

Historic Condition (1828–1951)

Steep slopes define the northern part of the valley, which flatten and broaden as Rock Creek approaches the Potomac River at the south end of the study area. Topography played a significant role in the development of the surrounding urban areas and effectively preserved swaths of steep hillsides for recreational use. Parkway designers used the undulating valley floor to craft a driving experience through the dramatic valley topography from its lowest point.

Quarrying activities in two locations within the study area created isolated but significant topographic changes. Dumping of waste material including ash into the valley occurred primarily south of P Street and construction of the parkway necessitated the removal of many tons of refuse before filling and regrading activities could begin. Large volumes of clean fill were employed to craft the parkway landscape south of P Street. Significant grading activities also accompanied the rechanneling of Rock Creek and the creation of P Street Beach in 1940.

Post-Historic Condition (1952–Present)

Topographic changes after 1951 were minimal. Minor regrading efforts have been involved with roadway resurfacing, Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail resurfacing, revegetation efforts, and erosion mitigation along pedestrian trails.

Evaluation

Topography is retained from the period of significance for the contexts of community planning and development, recreation, and landscape architecture. The designed topography built as a part of initial parkway construction is extant south of P Street. North of P Street, the steep natural topography of the Rock Creek Valley as well as the undulating valley floor, occupied by the roadway and the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail, continue to convey the historic character of the landscape.

LAND USE

Historic Condition (1828–1951)

Historic land uses in the Rock Creek Valley include industry, recreation, transportation, and institutional. Agricultural use occurred prior to parkway construction but was minimal because of the valley's steep slopes and poor soils. Due to its natural beauty, portions of the study area landscape were sought as places of recreation and respite from the urban surroundings. By the nineteenth century, industries capitalized on the flow and volume of water in the creek and its proximity to the C&O Canal and other markets present in the growing cities. With the construction of the parkway and subsequent management by the National Park Service, industrial uses ceased within the study area, though industrial use persisted along the Potomac waterfront into the twentieth century. Institutional use in the parkway consisted of US Park Police, who utilized the tower at the South Waterside Drive NW Overpass.

Post-Historic Condition (1952–Present)

Changes to land use following 1952 were minimal. The study area landscape no longer contained industrial uses, though recreation, transportation, and institutional use persisted. The South Waterside Drive NW Overpass building remained extant but was closed to use in the 1970s. The Park opened the Edgewater Training Stables in 1959, and the stables have solely served the US Park Police since public riding was disallowed in the parkway.

Evaluation

Land use is consistent with that of the period of significance and retains integrity related to the historic contexts of community planning and development, recreation, and landscape architecture.

VEGETATION

Historic Condition (1828–1951)

Prior to the construction of the parkway, vegetation communities present in the study area included mixed hardwood forest, woody wetland, open meadows, and orchards/agriculture. Parkway design and construction coincided with the American parkway movement and an appreciation for picturesque landscapes with curated natural features and the addition of ornamental vegetation. Planners used vegetation to frame or screen views and add distinct moments along the parkway. Specifically, views to Rock Creek were framed with trees and plantings, and areas disturbed by the construction of the roadway, including the median and slopes between P Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, were planted with a variety of ornamental trees, shrubs, and ground covers. Mown turf areas facilitated a breadth of recreational uses from picnicking to fitness activities.

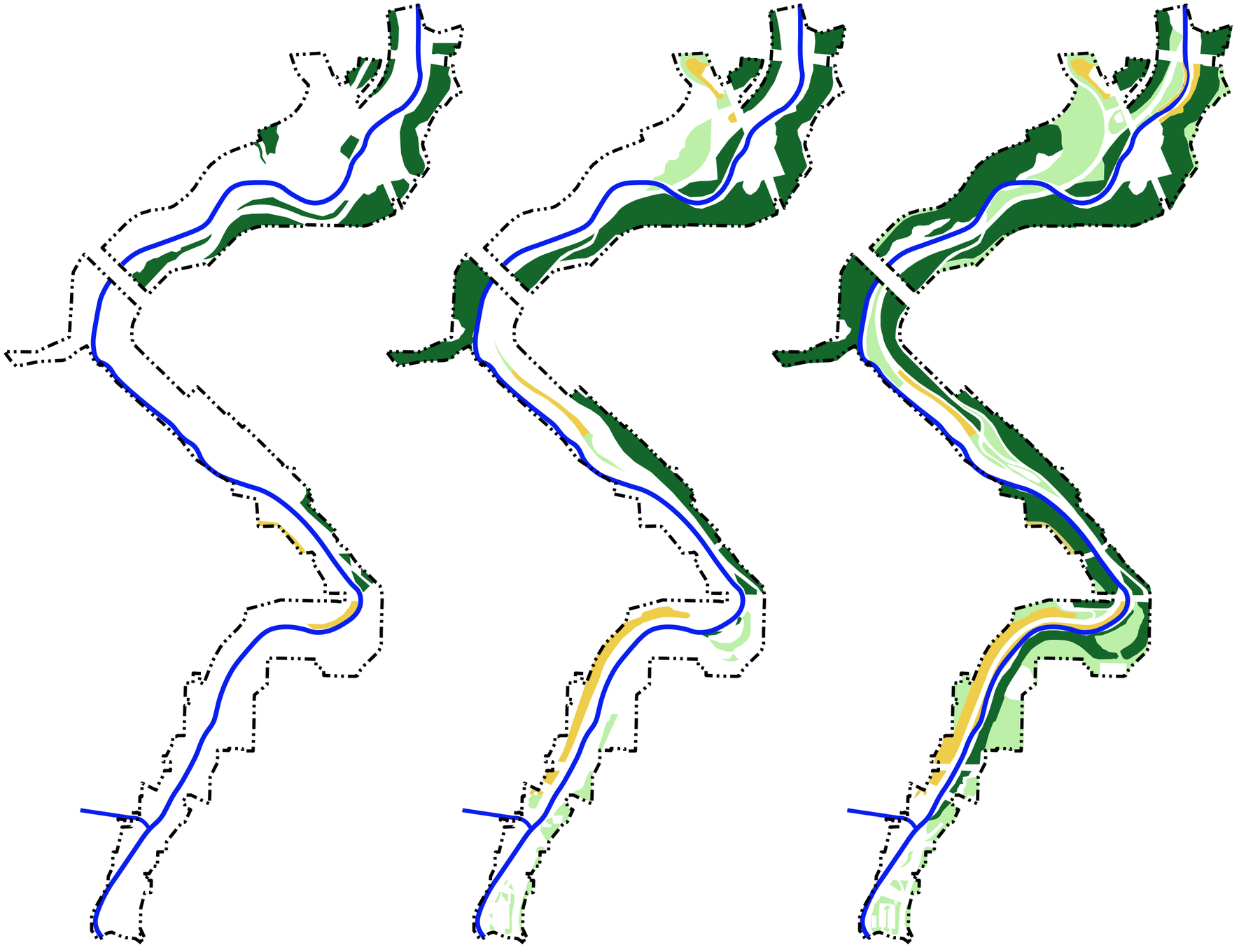
Post-Historic Condition (1952–Present)

While historic structures are intact, many maintained landscape areas, designed as a part of initial parkway construction, have been converted to mown turf or been colonized by woody and invasive vegetation over time. In the 1960s, Lady Bird Johnson led an effort to plant tens of thousands of daffodils in the study area. Ornamental vegetation is now mostly conveyed through massed plantings of trees and Beautification-era daffodil plantings in springtime. Invasive vegetation has been introduced by intentional plantings, natural processes, visitors, and properties neighboring the study area. NPS natural resource managers and community volunteers have devoted time and resources to invasive vegetation removal.

Evaluation

Vegetation retains historic character for the contexts of community development and planning, recreation, and landscape architecture. Contributing vegetation types such as forest and mown turf are extant, often in their historic locations. Many designed plantings are missing and they have been replaced with another form of maintained landscape such as mown turf, mixed forest, or a mix of vegetation that is mown annually. Current plantings reflect the park's maintenance regimes; replacing missing designed landscape elements such as shrubs and ground covers would require significant maintenance inputs that would not be feasible for the park. Daffodil plantings are located in many of the areas where they were planted during the Beautification Era with exact species and locations potentially shifting over time. These plantings, completed after the end of the period of significance, should be reevaluated if the study area's period of significance is extended to include the Beautification Era.

The vegetation analysis diagram illustrates vegetation cover types that are extant from historic periods. The leftmost diagram shows vegetation cover types from 1889 that are extant in 2023. The central diagram shows vegetation cover types present in 1936 that remain in 2023. Finally, the diagram to the right illustrates vegetation cover types existing in 2023 that reflect the 1972 condition. Overall, forested areas in the northern part of the study area have largely remained forested since 1890. Mown turf was introduced as a part of parkway design and has expanded as a vegetation cover type in the study area. While species composition has shifted in most cases, some areas of designed and maintained landscape from the 1930s to the early 1950s are extant.



1889 cover types present in 2023

1936 cover types present in 2023

1972 cover types present in 2023

Legend

- Forest area extant in 2023
- Mown turf area extant in 2023
- Maintained landscape area extant in 2023
- Rock Creek (2023)

References:

Vegetation analysis was completed utilizing sources referenced for Historic Period Plans. These include: 1861 Boschke Topographical Map of DC; 1898 Rand McNally Map of DC; Drawings from the NPS archives including numbers 844_80773, 844_80538, 844_80141, 844_80709, 844_80551, 844_80170A, 844_80170, 844_80569, 844_89074, 844_80169; Aerial imagery from 1922, 1942, 1951, and 1972 from the National Archives.

Drawing 4-1. Vegetation Analysis (QE, 2023).

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VIEWS AND VISTAS

Historic Condition (1828–1951)

Views within Rock Creek Valley before the construction of the parkway were strongly affected by vegetation and land use. Where land was cleared for industry or development, views were open to the surrounding landscape and cities. In undeveloped areas, or where vegetation volunteered following disturbance, views were mostly obscured. With the construction of the parkway, planners identified desirable views and designed the roadway or trails to respond to them. Primary views established during the period of significance include the strong visual connection between the roadway and trails with Rock Creek; views to historic bridges; and general qualities of visual enclosure (experienced north of P Street) and openness (experienced south of P Street).

Post-Historic Condition (1952–Present)

Views changed after 1952 primarily in response to shifts in vegetation communities. Where vegetation was historically smaller and framed views, mature specimen trees and new vegetation have grown in to block or screen elements of historic views. Particularly between the roadway and Rock Creek, woody vegetation obscures the visual connection in many places. The same is true along portions of the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail. Combined with poor water quality, the lack of visual connection between the creek and circulation routes disconnects visitors from this critical feature of the parkway cultural landscape.

Evaluation

Overall, views and vistas retain historic character for the historic context themes of community planning and development, recreation, and landscape architecture. Overall, views are intact and continue to convey the design intent of the parkway. Minor changes include partial obstruction of views due to vegetative growth and modification of small-scale features such as lighting and guardrails.

Comparative historic and contemporary photographs illustrate: the view of the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge from the roadway (Figure 4-1 and Figure 4-2); the view from the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge to the roadway, trail, and creek below (Figure 4-3 and Figure 4-4); the view from the P Street access ramp south along the parkway (Figure 4-5 and Figure 4-6); and the view from the northeast rim of the valley near Kalorama toward the Connecticut Avenue (William Taft Memorial) Bridge (Figure 4-7 and Figure 4-8).



Figure 4-1. View from the roadway to the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge, facing north, ca. 1945 (NARA).



Figure 4-2. Similar view from the roadway to the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge depicting the compatible timber guardrail and fencing; non-contributing paved median and light fixtures; and roadway, bridge, and vegetation communities that contribute to the historic character of the parkway, including historic sycamores (QE, 2023).



Figure 4-3. View from the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge roadbed to the roadway, parkway trail, and creek below, facing south, 1951 (DC History Center).



Figure 4-4. Similar view from the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge sidewalk depicting layout of the roadway, Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail, and creek in the foreground and views to Oak Hill Cemetery in the background, all of which contribute to the integrity of the landscape (QE, 2023).



Figure 4-5. View from the location of the P Street access ramp during grading and construction, facing south, ca. 1930s (NARA).



Figure 4-6. Similar view from the P Street access ramp facing south along the parkway depicting compatible timber guardrails, non-contributing light fixtures, and the topography, rock outcroppings, and vegetation types that convey historic character (QE, 2023).

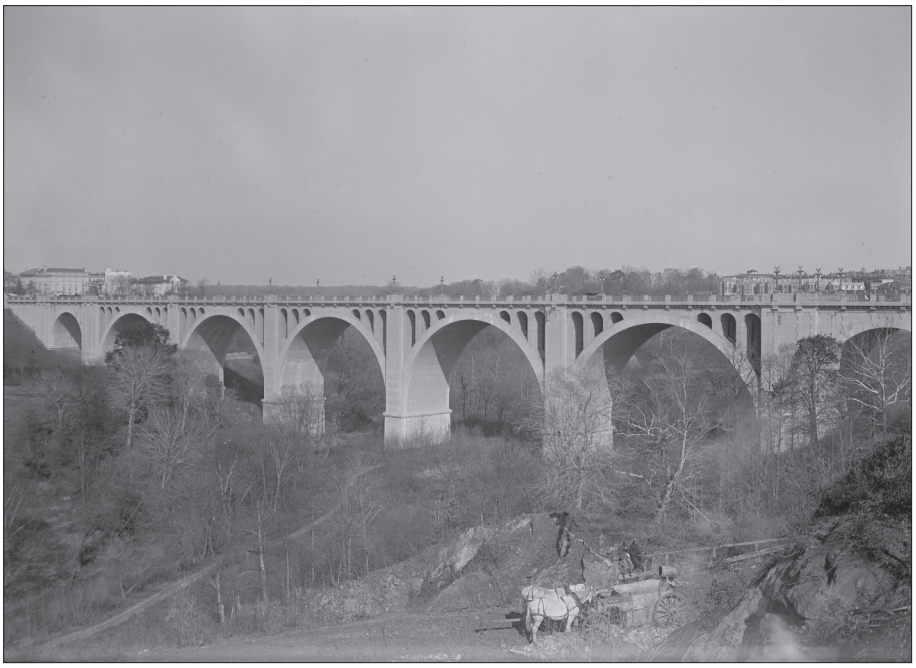


Figure 4-7. View from Kalorama facing north across a quarry to the Connecticut Avenue (William Taft Memorial) Bridge, ca. 1910 (Library of Congress).



Figure 4-8. Similar view from Kalorama depicting the contributing topography and structures heavily screened by mature vegetation (QE, 2023).

BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

Historic Condition (1828–1951)

Prior to the construction of the parkway, numerous industrial buildings and residences were located in the study area. Early structures also included bridges. In an effort to counteract dumping and industrial waste in the Rock Creek Valley, proponents of the parkway, including the Washington Board of Trade, promoted the idea of removing what they considered unsightly structures and dwellings. From a contemporary perspective, many of these dwellings were well-maintained and their erasure was likely discriminatory based on the neighborhood's demographics.

The Godey Lime Kilns and remnants of the Lyons Mill were preserved as historic structures during parkway construction. The construction of the Whitehurst Freeway overpasses in 1949 resulted in the removal of two of the four original kiln structures.

All extant historic bridges spanning Rock Creek Valley were constructed during the period of significance. The Shoreham Hill road bridge was updated in 1938.

Post-Historic Condition (1952–Present)

While the majority of buildings and structures were constructed before or during the period of significance, maintenance and rehabilitation efforts have occurred since 1952, including the construction of the National Zoological Park Tunnel and road bridge in 1966, the rehabilitation of the L Street road and pedestrian bridges in 1983, and the rehabilitation of the Shoreham Hill road bridge in 1987. The new National Zoological Park Tunnel pedestrian bridge was completed in 2022.

Evaluation

Buildings and structures retain historic character in the contexts of community planning and development, landscape architecture, and engineering. Historic built features convey the character and design intent of the original parkway and form a critical element of visitor experience of the cultural landscape.

SMALL-SCALE FEATURES

Historic Condition (1828–1951)

Small-scale features associated with the original parkway construction include guardrails, lightposts, and fences. In the original parkway design, guardrails were a rustic timber design and lightposts were a combination of a Millet lamppost (south of Pennsylvania Avenue), a bishop's crook pole with an acorn luminaire (see Figure 4-3 for reference), and a fluted post with a mast arm extension and rounded luminaire (see Figure 4-1). Wood fences were utilized at specific locations along the Parkway Trail where steep slopes led down to Rock Creek. Many of these features were present until at least the 1950s, evidenced by 1951 photographs taken by John P. Wymer. Bishop's crook lighting fixtures were replaced by the 1940s (see Figure 2-38) and all other fixtures from the period of significance were absent from photographs taken in the 1970s.

Post-Historic Condition (1952–Present)

Since 1952, almost all small-scale features have changed. Stone picnic grills were added in the 1960s. Rustic timber guardrails were replaced with angular timber and steel-backed guardrails. New wooden fences were installed with the rehabilitation of the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail. One stone picnic grill is extant. These features utilize similar materiality and are compatible with historic design intent. Light fixtures are the most significant change to small-scale features in the study area. High-wattage painted metal standards with mast arm extensions and flat LED luminaires illuminate the roadway. They are not in keeping with the design intent of the parkway.

Evaluation

Although no small-scale features remain from the original parkway construction, the scale and materiality of existing small-scale features are compatible with the historic character of the landscape, with the exception of the contemporary light fixtures, which detract from the historic character of the parkway landscape due to their modern design, height, and brightness.

ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES

Historic Condition (1828–1951)

Archeological sites present in the study area include sites utilized by Native American inhabitants of Rock Creek Valley, followed by sites related to early industrial use, and finally three cemetery sites, Mt. Zion, Female Union Band Society, and Mt. Pleasant Plains, which were historically managed by African American churches and societies. The Mt. Zion and Female Union Band Society cemeteries were negatively affected by parkway construction at their eastern boundaries, which border the parkway landscape. It is likely that fill used to construct the parkway south of P Street preserved archeological sites related to Native American habitation, which were found in 1949 during construction of the Whitehurst Freeway overpasses.

Post-Historic Condition (1952–Present)

Archeological investigations have occurred in the study area after 1952. The Louis Berger Group completed the Archeological Identification and Evaluation Study of Rock Creek Park, titled "Bold, Rocky, and Picturesque," in 2008, summarizing archeological sites throughout the parkway. From 2005 to 2012, archeological investigations were performed utilizing non-invasive ground-penetrating radar techniques at the Mount Pleasant Plains Cemetery in Walter Pierce Park, led by Howard University. Descendant and ally events occur at the park honoring those buried there and preservation efforts are ongoing. Descendants associated with the Mt. Zion and Female Union Band cemeteries established the Mt. Zion / Female Union Band Historic Memorial Park, Inc. (Black Georgetown Foundation) in 2005 as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization to jointly manage the preservation and commemoration of the two cemeteries.

Evaluation

Archeological sites for the three cemeteries retain historic character of the community planning and development context of the cultural landscape. It is recommended that archeological contexts be developed in updated National Register documentation for Native American occupation and use.

LANDSCAPE CHARACTER AREAS

LCA 1

Changes to the historic landscape in LCA 1 since the end of the period of significance include the formalization of the Thompson Boat Center parking area, planting of Beautification Era daffodils, and the rehabilitation of the L Street road and pedestrian bridges in 1983. Daffodils remain in some locations from the Beautification Era, including the exit ramp to Pennsylvania Avenue NW. Woody vegetation between the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail and Rock Creek has eliminated visual connections to the creek from the trail and roadway. Clusters of ornamental trees and shrubs, while not extant from initial construction, reflect the design intent of the original parkway. The broad floodplain topography and open character result in a strong visual connection between the parkway and the surrounding city. While non-contributing features such as the Whitehurst Freeway overpasses detract from the historic character, historic bridges are extant. Overall, the cultural landscape in LCA 1 conveys the historic character associated with community planning and development, recreation, landscape architecture, and engineering.

LCA 2

Since the historic period, the removal of canopy trees between M and P Streets along the valley's west slope has increased the sense of openness and connection to the surrounding city and daffodil plantings initiated by Lady Bird Johnson between 1965 and 1967 have greatly enhanced the landscape in LCA 2. The daffodils have expanded since 1967, and the spring display in LCA 2 is spectacular. Growth of woody vegetation between the roadway and creek has obscured views to the creek. Much of the original designed landscape on both sides of the valley is missing, but volunteer efforts to reduce invasive vegetation on the east bank have succeeded and a profusion of daffodils provides interest along the west bank in early spring. Reconstruction of the P Street access ramp in the 2020s incorporates a wood fence, oak tree plantings, and improved safety for pedestrians. Light fixtures along the Rose Park path at the top of the valley are compatible with historic lighting in this part of the parkway. Overall, the LCA 2 cultural landscape retains historic character associated with community planning and development, recreation, and landscape architecture.

LCA 3

Changes to the historic landscape in LCA 3 include widening of the roadway associated with the construction of the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge in 1941 and closure of the Waterside Drive NW Overpass tower. Numerous historic buildings and structures are extant in the cultural landscape and contribute to the historic character. Ornamental vegetation planted in the vegetated median

and Massachusetts Avenue Bridge planters convey design intent. Daffodils planted during the Beautification Era are mostly missing and mown turf occupies areas where they were formerly planted. Overall, the LCA 3 cultural landscape retains historic character associated with community planning and development, recreation, landscape architecture, and engineering.

LCA 4

Changes associated with the LCA 4 cultural landscape include the addition of the National Zoological Park Tunnel and road bridge, which fundamentally altered the parkway route in this area. This design change, which greatly improved parkway usability and visitor safety, is compatible with the original design intent to connect the parkway and Rock Creek Park north of the National Zoological Park. Fitness equipment was added to the parkway project area around Shoreham Hill in the 1970s. When equestrian use was disallowed in the parkway, Edgewater Training Stables became a full-time facility for the US Park Police. Vegetation in LCA 4 generally supports the historic character of the landscape, though some daffodil plantings from the Beautification era are missing and others have been added. Historic bridges are extant and support historic views and vistas. Overall, the LCA 4 cultural landscape retains historic integrity associated with the contexts of community planning and development, recreation, landscape architecture, and engineering.

TABLE 4.1: EVALUATED INVENTORY OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES: ROCK CREEK AND POTOMAC PARKWAY

Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location / Asset records)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period:1828–1951)	Existing Condition Graphic Reference
Natural Systems and Features					
Rock Creek		N/A	Contributing	**Context:** Community Planning and Development, Recreation, Landscape Architecture Rock Creek shaped the valley surrounding it over thousands of years, carving away steep slopes to the north and depositing silts around a broad floodplain near its confluence with the Potomac River. Throughout its history, the creek has been a destination for anglers, millers, merchants, recreational visitors, and commuters. Although diminished by erosion and poor water quality, Rock Creek is extant and contributes to the character of the parkway landscape.	
Dumbarton Stream		N/A	Contributing	**Context:** Community Planning and Development, Recreation A stream was surveyed in the location of Dumbarton Stream as a part of Boshke's 1861 topographic map of Washington. The stream and the steep, wooded valley it has carved over time operate as a natural boundary between parkway land, Dumbarton Oaks Park, Montrose Park, and the Oak Hill Cemetery. Part of the Lover's Lane trail follows the stream to its confluence with Rock Creek. The stream is extant and contributes to the historic character of the parkway landscape.	
Normanstone Stream		N/A	Contributing	**Context:** Community Planning and Development, Recreation The Normanstone Stream was historically in this location and is one of just a few streams that were not buried underground as a part of urban and parkway development. While erosion and its subsequent mitigation have altered the appearance of the stream bed in some places and water quality is poor, it contributes to the sylvan character of the parkway landscape.	
Geology and soils		N/A	Contributing	**Context:** Community Planning and Development Development and agriculture were limited in the Rock Creek Valley due to its steep slopes, exposed bedrock, and thin soils, preserving it (above P Street) in the sylvan state admired by parkway enthusiasts. Below P street was mostly fill/dump material, which was removed or regraded to create the parkway. Existing conditions reflect the historic period and contribute to the character of the landscape.	
Spatial Organization					
Linear alignment of Rock Creek, roadway, and Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail within Rock Creek Valley			Contributing	**Context:** Community Planning and Development, Landscape Architecture Circulation patterns within the Rock Creek Valley followed the north–south linear alignment of Rock Creek and the valley topography long before the construction of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway. Development of the roadway and trails as a part of parkway design and construction adhered to this spatial pattern of use. This organization of the study area landscape is extant and contributes to historic character.	

TABLE 4.1: EVALUATED INVENTORY OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES: ROCK CREEK AND POTOMAC PARKWAY

Feature Name	**Other Resource Inventory**	**FMSS Data** (Location / Asset records)	**Evaluation Status**	**Evaluation Narrative** (Historic Period:1828–1951)	**Existing Condition Graphic Reference**
Vertical definition of space by bridges, topography, and vegetation			Contributing	**Context:** Community Planning and Development, Landscape Architecture, Engineering The organization of vertical space within Rock Creek Valley is dominated by the topography of the valley walls and the vegetation that covers them. Bridges provide a visual reminder of the depth of the valley below the streets of the adjacent cities. These vertical elements contribute to the historic character of the landscape.	
Open and enclosed character			Contributing	**Context:** Community Planning and Development, Landscape Architecture Spatial organization in the study area strongly relates to a sense of openness or enclosure based on the topography and vegetation. Where slopes are flat and vegetation is sparse, visitors experience a sense of connectedness to the surrounding city. Where slopes are steeper and more densely vegetated, visitors have a sense of being disconnected from the urban surroundings, a strong design component of the original parkway. The open or enclosed character of spaces along the parkway contributes to the historic landscape.	
Land Use					
Transportation		N/A	Contributing	**Context:** Community Planning and Development The Rock Creek Valley has played a role in the movement of goods and people throughout history. Through the mid-nineteenth century, large boats could navigate Rock Creek as far north as P Street. Prior to parkway construction, numerous bridges and footpaths transected the valley and recreational paths followed the course of the creek. Since the opening of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway in 1936, the valley has been a major conduit for recreational and commuter traffic. Transportation use contributes to the character of the historic landscape.	
Recreation		N/A	Contributing	**Context:** Recreation The Rock Creek Valley was documented as a place of recreation since the development of Georgetown and Washington, DC. With steep slopes that prevented agricultural use in many areas, the sylvan scenery drew hikers, swimmers, and equestrians as a respite from the surrounding urban context. During the development of the parkway, recreational use (for drivers, equestrians, and pedestrians) was a primary design consideration. Contemporary recreational use includes cycling, walking, and jogging. Equestrian use is no longer extant outside of park police and swimming is prohibited due to poor water quality. Vehicular use does not reflect a recreational character. Overall, while the types of recreation have shifted, recreational use contributes to the historic character of the landscape.	
Institutional/maintenance		N/A	Non-Contributing, Compatible	Maintenance activities have been a part of the parkway since construction, but machinery and equipment are not stored within the study area.	

TABLE 4.1: EVALUATED INVENTORY OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES: ROCK CREEK AND POTOMAC PARKWAY

Feature Name	**Other Resource Inventory**	**FMSS Data** (Location / Asset records)	**Evaluation Status**	**Evaluation Narrative** (Historic Period: 1828–1951)	**Existing Condition Graphic Reference**
Circulation					
Roadway		26130 (northbound) 51639 (southbound)	Contributing	**Context:** Community Planning and Development, Recreation, Landscape Architecture The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway roadway was constructed between 1929 and 1936 and is composed of four asphalt-paved lanes designed to carry two northbound and two southbound lanes. At the base of Shoreham Hill, the parkway ends and Beach Drive NW continues north to pass through the National Zoological Park Tunnel, Cathedral Avenue extends through a Calvert Street (Duke Ellington Memorial) Bridge arch to join Shoreham Hill Drive, which runs up the hill to meet Calvert Street. The roadway was widened under the new Massachusetts Avenue Bridge in 1940–1941, straightened between P and K Streets, and the original terminus of the roadway at the zoo ford was abandoned in 1966 with the completion of the National Zoological Park Tunnel. The roadway retains its historic character and contributes to the cultural landscape of the parkway.	
Median			Contributing	**Context:** Landscape Architecture The median that separates north- and southbound lanes between the Dumbarton Bridge and the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge allows the roadway to take a more curvilinear form and respond to the natural topography of the site. This extant feature of the roadway design contributes to the pastoral driving experience and the historic character of the parkway.	
Trails					
Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail		45467 (Parkway Foot Trail)	Contributing	**Context:** Recreation The Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail follows the route of the historic bridle path designed on the west side of the roadway in the original parkway plan. Equestrians utilized this path through the 1950s. The bridle path was paved in the 1970s to accommodate a growing number of recreational cyclists. The extant Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail was expanded to a 12' width in most places and repaved and striped between 2009 and 2022. While the trail's width and surfacing are contemporary additions, the trail alignment is historic and contributes to the character of the parkway cultural landscape.	
Normanstone Trail		45465	Contributing	**Context:** Recreation The Normanstone Trail connects Normanstone Parkway to the Parkway Foot Trail, which runs along the west bank of Rock Creek between the Saddle Club footbridge and Lover's Lane. The trail has been formalized to mitigate erosion along Normanstone Stream and includes noncontributing elements such as PVC/HDPE culverts and modern signage. The route and earthen character of the trail contribute to the historic parkway landscape.	

TABLE 4.1: EVALUATED INVENTORY OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES: ROCK CREEK AND POTOMAC PARKWAY

Feature Name	**Other Resource Inventory**	**FMSS Data** (Location / Asset records)	**Evaluation Status**	**Evaluation Narrative** (Historic Period:1828–1951)	**Existing Condition Graphic Reference**
Lover's Lane Trail		51647/	Contributing	**Context:** Recreation Lover's Lane trail has been used by recreational visitors to Rock Creek Valley since the nineteenth century. Beginning at R Street adjacent to Montrose Park (established in 1911), Lover's Lane originally wound along the edge of Rock Creek Valley to a cottage known as Normanstone and to the creek beyond. The Lover's Lane trail is extant and portions are included in the study area. The trail represents centuries of recreational use in the valley and contributes to the historic character of the parkway landscape.	
NPS Trail Connections			Non-Contributing, Compatible	**Context:** Recreation A network of walking trails existed in the Rock Creek Valley prior to parkway construction. During construction, some of these routes were formalized or connected and are maintained by the National Park Service as a part of the parkway landscape. Extant trail sections that contribute to the character of the historic landscape include: Rose Park Trail, Francis Junior High playing fields to P Street Beach, and Saddle Club footbridge to Lover's Lane.	
Social trails			Non-Contributing, Incompatible	Numerous informal social trails traverse the valley and are not maintained or encouraged by NPS. These trails do not follow historic alignments and add to the erosion of the valley's steep slopes.	
Parking areas					
Thompson Boat Center parking area		51807	Non-Contributing, Incompatible	The Thompson Boat Center parking area was constructed in the 1970s to serve the boat center and has since been formalized. It was constructed after the period of significance and does not contribute to the historic character of the landscape.	
Edgewater Stables parking area		51734	Non-Contributing, Compatible	**Context:** Recreation The Edgewater Stables parking area was constructed in 1959 as a part of the Edgewater Stables development. Initially constructed as a public riding facility, the stables have served the US Park Police since riding was disallowed in the parkway. Recommend contributing based on updated period of significance ending in 1967.	
Topography					

TABLE 4.1: EVALUATED INVENTORY OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES: ROCK CREEK AND POTOMAC PARKWAY

Feature Name	**Other Resource Inventory**	**FMSS Data** (Location / Asset records)	**Evaluation Status**	**Evaluation Narrative** (Historic Period: 1828–1951)	**Existing Condition Graphic Reference**
Floodplain			Contributing	**Context:** Community Planning and Development The broad, relatively flat topography of the floodplain where Rock Creek meets the Potomac River reflects hydrologic patterns and was an area for industrial development and waste disposal prior to the parkway's construction. During parkway construction, this area was redesigned from primarily industrial use to reflect a more natural condition. The flat topographic character is extant and the parkway character is strongly influenced by views to the surrounding city.	
Steep valley			Contributing	**Context:** Community Planning and Development The steep topography of the Rock Creek Valley intensifies from south to north in the study area. Historically, much of the landscape was seen as too steep for agriculture or development and so retained its natural character. Some areas were quarried for bedrock, but otherwise the valley slopes were untouched. During parkway construction, retaining walls were employed to retain slopes as needed for the roadway and trails. Designers mimicked the steep character with designed slopes south of P Street. The steep valley topography is extant and is a fundamental part of the character of the historic landscape.	
Vegetation					
Mixed forest			Contributing	**Context:** Landscape Architecture When the parkway was constructed, mixed forest was present mostly north of P Street. South of that point, waste removal and regrading necessitated the addition of new, designed plantings, many of which involved a mixture of canopy and understory trees, shrubs, and ground covers as indicated on the 1935 planting plans. As of 2023, most of the wooded areas north of P Street convey the character of a mixed forest. While invasive vegetation such as bamboo and English ivy have threatened some native understory communities, the effect of a mature mixed forest is extant and contributes to the character of the historic landscape. South of P Street, mixed forest is intact on the east side of Rock Creek and invasive vegetation is managed.	
Revegetation plantings		TBD Consider adding record if park actively maintains	Non-Contributing, Compatible	In 2017, the Rock Creek Conservancy, in partnership with the National Park Service, began a series of revegetation efforts where a breadth of native shrubs and small trees were planted and protected from wildlife. While these plantings occurred outside the period of significance, the species added are compatible with those indicated on the parkway's original planting plans.	

TABLE 4.1: EVALUATED INVENTORY OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES: ROCK CREEK AND POTOMAC PARKWAY

Feature Name	**Other Resource Inventory**	**FMSS Data** (Location / Asset records)	**Evaluation Status**	**Evaluation Narrative** (Historic Period:1828–1951)	**Existing Condition Graphic Reference**
Mown turf		31179 (Rose Park) 31181 (P St. Beach) 27926 (Shoreham Hill) Consider adding records to capture parkway turf areas	Contributing	**Context:** Landscape Architecture, Recreation Mown turf areas were an important component of the designed, recreational landscape of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway. While the initial seed mix used to establish the turf areas is not documented, extant turf areas convey the historic character of the vegetation type.	
Woody wetland			Contributing	**Context**: Landscape Architecture Woody wetland vegetation communities occur where the creek provides a high water table and occasional flooding to support wetland species. Prior to the parkway's construction, a larger percentage of the valley floor was likely affected by the creek's hydrologic patterns. Remnants of this community are extant and contribute to the character of the historic landscape.	
Maintained landscape			Contributing	**Context**: Landscape Architecture Maintained landscape was designed as part of the parkway design and construction beginning in 1935 and the creation of P Street Beach in 1940. While many intentionally planted areas have changed in terms of species present, other qualities of designed planting areas from initial construction such as massed planting of ornamental trees or mown turf areas with specimen canopy trees are extant. Features added after the period of significance include daffodils planted during the Beautification Era in 1965–67. Some of these daffodils are extant. Beautification-Era elements are recommended to be evaluated as contributing based on an updated period of significance ending in 1967.	
Maintained landscape			Non-Contributing, Compatible	Maintained landscape associated with design and construction projects following the period of significance includes massings of small, ornamental trees (for example, around the Whitehurst Freeway overpasses, shown right) and canopy trees in mown turf areas (for example, along the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail by Rock Creek). These types of vegetation are compatible with initial parkway planting design. Supplemental daffodil plantings are compatible with initial plantings from the Beautification Era (for example, on the west bank of the valley south of P Street).	

TABLE 4.1: EVALUATED INVENTORY OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES: ROCK CREEK AND POTOMAC PARKWAY

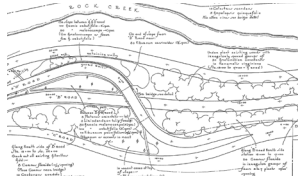
Feature Name	**Other Resource Inventory**	**FMSS Data** (Location / Asset records)	**Evaluation Status**	**Evaluation Narrative** (Historic Period: 1828–1951)	**Existing Condition Graphic Reference**
Maintained landscape			Non-Contributing, Incompatible	Planting plans from 1935 for the parkway landscape suggest that many open areas were planned to incorporate multiple layers of ground covers and shrubs. Over time, many of these plantings died and were not replaced in kind. Today, open areas that are not maintained as mown turf are maintained with annual or irregular mowing of annual and perennial vegetation. Most areas include invasive vegetation. The composition of these areas does not contribute to the historic character as they do not reflect the historic design intent and often obstruct views between parkway features such as the roadway and Rock Creek.	
Maintained landscape			Missing	Shrubs and ground covers included in the initial design and planting of the parkway are no longer extant. Invasive vines that were proposed as a part of initial parkway planting have out-competed shrubs and ground covers and are now maintained with annual mowing.	
Buildings and Structures					
Godey Lime Kilns	NRIS ID: 73000221 HABS No. DC-441 CRIS-HS #011928	27113	Contributing	**Context:** Community Planning and Development Five kilns were erected in 1854 and were operational until 1908, utilizing limestone delivered via the C&O Canal. Two kilns were demolished for the Whitehurst Freeway overpass construction in 1949. The remaining kilns were listed on the National Register of Historic Places on November 2, 1973, and contribute to the character of the historic landscape.	
Thompson Boat Center storage area fence		TBD Consider adding record if park actively maintains	Non-Contributing, Incompatible	The storage area associated with the Thompson Boat Center is enclosed by an approximately 10' tall timber clad fence and houses racks of rowing shells and other equipment. It is not a historic structure and is not compatible with the historic character of the parkway landscape.	
Lyons Mill remnants (potential)			Undetermined	The Lyons Mill, constructed in 1780, was an important piece of industrial history in Rock Creek Valley. Operational until 1875, the mill building was repurposed as a dance hall until 1913. A linear section of stone wall was surveyed as a part of field documentation and corresponds to the approximate Lyons Mill location identified in historic maps. Further archeological research is required to determine the origins of the wall remnant.	

TABLE 4.1: EVALUATED INVENTORY OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES: ROCK CREEK AND POTOMAC PARKWAY

Feature Name	**Other Resource Inventory**	**FMSS Data** (Location / Asset records)	**Evaluation Status**	**Evaluation Narrative** (Historic Period:1828–1951)	**Existing Condition Graphic Reference**
Rock Creek armoring (stone)			Contributing	**Context:** Community Planning and Development Stone armoring exists along Rock Creek in numerous locations. Some of this bank stabilization predates parkway construction and is visible in historic photos from as early as 1915. Additional mortared stone and rip rap armoring along Rock Creek was added as a part of parkway construction (NCRO Drawing No. 844_80525, 844_80543) and reflects the character of the preexisting stacked stone walls. These contribute to the character of the parkway landscape. Portions of the creek banks reinforced with wooden piers and metal retaining require further study to determine date of construction and potential significance. Modern rip-rap armoring does not contribute to, but is compatible with, the historic character of the landscape.	
National Zoological Park Tunnel		44017	Non-Contributing, Compatible	**Context:** Community Planning and Development, Engineering Constructed in 1966, the National Zoological Park Tunnel addressed a decades-long issue of parkway traffic connecting to Rock Creek Park through the National Zoological Park and fords across Rock Creek. Two concrete fords were removed following tunnel construction to improve fish migration in Rock Creek. Recommend Contributing based on updated period of significance ending in 1967.	
Washington City Tunnel Storage Shed	CRIS-HS #545766		Contributing	**Context:** Community Planning and Development The Tunnel Storage Shed was constructed between 1882 and 1901 to house a steam pump and shaft as a part of the Washington City Tunnel connecting the Georgetown and MacMillan reservoirs. The shed was moved in 1941 to accommodate the construction of the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge and the widening of the roadway at this point. It is a flat-roofed structure with stone veneer and a metal door. The extant building is used for storage and contributes to the historic character; however, graffiti and vegetation detract from its integrity.	
Edgewater Training Stables		26132	Non-Contributing, Compatible	**Context:** Recreation The stables and paddock were constructed in 1959 by the National Park Service to replace a similar structure demolished for the construction of the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bridge. Historically, the stables were open to the public, but they are now solely utilized by US Park Police. The building is wood and concrete construction and contributes to the parkway's historic character. Recommend Contributing based on updated period of significance ending in 1967.	

TABLE 4.1: EVALUATED INVENTORY OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES: ROCK CREEK AND POTOMAC PARKWAY

Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location / Asset records)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1828–1951)	Existing Condition Graphic Reference
Edgewater Training Stables Gaging Station		TBD Consider adding record if park actively maintains	Non-Contributing, Compatible	The Gaging Station structure is located north of the Edgewater Training Stables road bridge on the east side of Rock Creek. It was constructed around 1967 and is faced with stone, has a flat roof, one door, and one window. The materiality of the structure is compatible with historic structures in the parkway landscape. Reevaluate based on updated period of significance ending in 1967 and updated historic context	
Woodley Lane Bridge abutments	HAER No. DC-24 CRIS-HS #100427		Contributing	**Context:** Community Planning and Development, Engineering The Woodley Lane Bridge was constructed in 1888–1889 to connect Belmont Road on the east side of the valley with Woodley Lane and Woodley, Grover Cleveland's summer estate. The bridge spanned 450' at an elevation of 54' above the valley floor and was mostly deconstructed in 1905 to enable completion of the Taft Bridge. Two ruins are extant, and in spite of overgrown vegetation, they convey the character of the historic landscape.	
Bridges					
Whitehurst Freeway overpasses		N/A	Non-Contributing, Incompatible	The Whitehurst Freeway overpasses were constructed in 1949 and rehabilitated in the 1990s. Though constructed within the period of significance, the unadorned concrete structures lack the form, natural stone aesthetic, and architectural details of contributing bridges. The overpasses are not aligned with the design intent of the parkway and they detract from the historic character of the landscape.	
K Street Bridge [District of Columbia property]	HAER No. DC-20 NRIS #05000367, Structure	N/A	Contributes to the 2005 RCPP HD – Located outside of CLR study area	**Context:** Community Planning and Development The K Street Bridge is not owned or maintained by the NPS; however, it is listed as a contributing structure in the 2005 Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District National Register nomination. Bridges were located in this location starting in 1792. The current structure was completed in 1941 and altered in 1949 to accommodate the Whitehurst Freeway. The bridge contributes to the overall historic character of the parkway landscape.	
Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge [District of Columbia property]	HAER No. DC-37 NRIS #05000367, Structure	N/A	Contributes to the 2005 RCPP HD – Located outside of CLR study area	**Context:** Engineering The Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge is not owned or maintained by the NPS; however, it is listed as a contributing structure in the 2005 Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District National Register nomination. The Aqueduct (Pennsylvania Avenue) Bridge was constructed from 1858 to 1860 and conveyed water from the Washington Aqueduct through iron pipes and the Pennsylvania Avenue roadbed across Rock Creek Valley. At the time, it was one of the largest single-span, iron pipe, arched structures in the world. The bridge was rehabilitated in 1915–1916 by encompassing the original structure in stone-faced reinforced concrete. The bridge is extant and contributes to the character of the historic landscape.	

TABLE 4.1: EVALUATED INVENTORY OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES: ROCK CREEK AND POTOMAC PARKWAY

Feature Name	**Other Resource Inventory**	**FMSS Data** (Location / Asset records)	**Evaluation Status**	**Evaluation Narrative** (Historic Period:1828–1951)	**Existing Condition Graphic Reference**
M Street Bridge [District of Columbia property]	HAER No. DC-37 NRIS #05000367, Structure	N/A	Contributes to the 2005 RCPP HD – Located outside of CLR study area	**Context:** Community Planning and Development The M Street Bridge is not owned or maintained by the NPS; however, it is listed as a contributing structure in the 2005 Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District National Register nomination. The first bridge in this location was erected in 1788 by the city of Georgetown. The current M Street Bridge is the fifth bridge in this location and was constructed in 1926, utilizing steel girders with decorative concrete detailing. While it remains the only non-arctuated bridge in the parkway, the M Street Bridge contributes to the historic character of the parkway landscape.	
P Street Bridge [District of Columbia property]	HAER No. DC-48 NRIS #05000367, Structure	N/A	Contributes to the 2005 RCPP HD – Located outside of CLR study area	**Context:** Community Planning and Development The P Street Bridge is not owned or maintained by the NPS; however, it is listed as a contributing structure in the 2005 Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District National Register nomination. A bridge has existed at this location since 1855, marking the boundary of tidal action influencing creek flows. The extant P Street Bridge was constructed in 1934–1935 with concrete and granite ashlar facing. The bridge is mostly in good condition and contributes to the historic character of the parkway. Graffiti and its subsequent removal have lessened the integrity of granite facing on the parapets.	
Dumbarton (Q Street) Bridge [District of Columbia property]	NRIS-ID #73002080 HAER No. DC-38 NRIS #05000367, Structure	N/A	Contributes to the 2005 RCPP HD – Located outside of CLR study area	**Context**: Community Planning and Development The Dumbarton (Q Street) Bridge is not owned or maintained by the NPS; however, it is listed as a contributing structure in the 2005 Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District National Register nomination. The Dumbarton Bridge was constructed in 1912–1915 in the style of Roman aqueducts. The bridge incorporates five reinforced concrete arches faced in stone and tinted, sculpted concrete. Sculptural elements include 28 reproductions of a Native American head carved from sandstone on each side and four buffalo sculptures. The bridge was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on July 16, 1973 and contributes to the historic character of the parkway cultural landscape.	
Massachusetts Avenue Bridge [District of Columbia property]	HAER No. DC-22 NRIS #05000367, Structure	N/A	Contributes to the 2005 RCPP HD – Located outside of CLR study area	**Context:** Community Planning and Development, Engineering The Massachusetts Avenue Bridge is not owned or maintained by the NPS; however, it is listed as a contributing structure in the 2005 Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District National Register nomination. Constructed in 1940–1941 to replace the earthen berm that had carried Massachusetts Avenue across the valley since 1901, the bridge is concrete-faced with gneiss and granite detailing. Four large planters are integrated into the bridge structure at the base of the arch, which spans 150′ of the 420′ bridge. The bridge is extant and contributes to the historic character of the parkway landscape.	

TABLE 4.1: EVALUATED INVENTORY OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES: ROCK CREEK AND POTOMAC PARKWAY

Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location / Asset records)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1828–1951)	Existing Condition Graphic Reference
Connecticut Avenue (William H. Taft Memorial) Bridge [District of Columbia property]	HAER No. DC-6 NRIS #05000367, Structure	N/A	Contributes to the 2005 RCPP HD – Located outside of CLR study area	**Context:** Engineering The Connecticut Avenue Bridge is not owned or maintained by the NPS; however, it is listed as a contributing structure in the 2005 Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District National Register nomination. Constructed between 1897 and 1906, the Connecticut Avenue Bridge was at the time the largest concrete bridge in the world and is one of the earliest examples of a pre-cast concrete bridge in the country. The bridge spans 1068', incorporating seven arches and cast stone details that utilize a gray aggregate extracted from the quarry on site. The roadbed was widened in 1995 to include cantilevered sidewalks. Iron lampposts were designed in 1906 and lion sculptures adorn the ends of the bridge. These were recast in 1999 due to extreme weathering of the originals. The bridge is extant and contributes to the historic character of the parkway.	
Calvert Street (Duke Ellington Memorial) Bridge [District of Columbia property]	HAER No. DC-23 NRIS #05000367, Structure	N/A	Contributes to the 2005 RCPP HD – Located outside of CLR study area	**Context:** Community Planning and Development The Calvert Street Bridge is not owned or maintained by the NPS; however, it is listed as a contributing structure in the 2005 Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District National Register nomination. Constructed between 1933 and 1935, the Calvert Street (Duke Ellington Memorial) Bridge (renamed in honor of Washington, DC, composer and musician Duke Ellington in 1974) is a concrete structure with limestone facing that spans 825' across the valley. In the late 1980s, high metal railings were installed along the sidewalks, which impact views to the valley below. Though the metal railings detract from the character of the bridge, the overall structure contributes to the historic character of the parkway landscape.	
Roadway bridges					
Thompson Boat Center access road bridge		44012	Non-Contributing, compatible	This bridge was built to provide access to the Thompson Boat Center and consists of a reinforced concrete structure with an asphalt road bed, concrete sidewalks, and metal and cable hand railings. It crosses Rock Creek to provide a connection between the parking area and the boat center on an isthmus facing the Potomac River. The road bridge design relates to the Mission 66 movement rather than that of the parkway and it does not contribute to the character of the landscape. Reevaluate based on updated period of significance ending in 1967 and updated historic context.	
L Street road bridge		43998	Non-Contributing, Incompatible	Constructed in 1983 with steel girders supported by concrete piers, this 88' long road bridge does not reflect the design style of the parkway and does not contribute to the historic character of the landscape.	

TABLE 4.1: EVALUATED INVENTORY OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES: ROCK CREEK AND POTOMAC PARKWAY

Feature Name	**Other Resource Inventory**	**FMSS Data** (Location / Asset records)	**Evaluation Status**	**Evaluation Narrative** (Historic Period:1828–1951)	**Existing Condition Graphic Reference**
P Street road bridge	CRIS-HS #545768	44002	Contributing	**Context:** Landscape Architecture, Recreation Built in 1936 as a part of Section 2 parkway construction, the completion of the P Street road bridge enabled vehicles to drive the entire length of the valley floor. The bridge is faced in stone and spans 122', incorporating two shallow arches joined at a central pier. The bridge is extant and contributes to the character of the parkway.	
Waterside Drive NW Overpass	HAER No. DC-16 CRIS-HS #545765	44011	Contributing	**Context:** Landscape Architecture, Recreation The Waterside Drive NW Overpass consists of a roadway bridge that incorporates a small building with a tower for police observation, storage, and public restrooms at the southern end. It was constructed in 1932–1933 utilizing locally quarried gneiss facing on concrete. The public restrooms were closed in the 1970s. The structure contributes to the historic parkway landscape, but disuse and lack of maintenance threaten the integrity of the tower structure.	
Shoreham Hill road bridge	HAER No. DC-10 CRIS-HS #545769	44001	Contributing	**Context:** Community Planning and Development, Landscape Architecture The road bridge, constructed in 1938 to replace a temporary steel structure from 1929, conveys the roadway from the east to the west side of Rock Creek via a 78' double-arched, reinforced concrete structure with granite facing. The bridge was rehabilitated in 1987 and is in good condition. The bridge reflects the design style of historic park elements and contributes to the character of the landscape.	
Edgewater Stables access road bridge		253908	Non-Contributing, Compatible	**Context:** Recreation The concrete road bridge was constructed in 1959 to provide access to the Edgewater Training Stables. The structure was built within the period of significance, but is in fair to poor condition and is slated for replacement. Recommend Contributing based on updated period of significance ending in 1967.	
National Zoological Park Tunnel road bridge		44007	Non-Contributing, Compatible	**Context:** Landscape Architecture Constructed in 1966, the National Zoological Park Tunnel and corresponding road bridge formalized the link between the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway and Beach Drive in Rock Creek Park. Replacing two fords across Rock Creek, the road bridge and tunnel allowed for seamless passage between the two, no longer requiring travel through the National Zoological Park. The bridge structure and use contribute to the historic character of parkway landscape, though the tunnel itself is not located within the study area. Recommend Contributing based on updated period of significance ending in 1967.	

TABLE 4.1: EVALUATED INVENTORY OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES: ROCK CREEK AND POTOMAC PARKWAY

Feature Name	**Other Resource Inventory**	**FMSS Data** (Location / Asset records)	**Evaluation Status**	**Evaluation Narrative** (Historic Period: 1828–1951)	**Existing Condition Graphic Reference**
Pedestrian bridges					
L Street pedestrian bridge		27707	Non-Contributing, Incompatible	Constructed in 1983 with steel girders and aligned parallel to the L Street road bridge, the L Street pedestrian bridge does not contribute to the character of the historic landscape.	
Lyons Mill Footbridge	HAER No. DC-35 CRIS-HS #545771	27705	Contributing	**Context**: Recreation, Landscape Architecture The Lyons Mill footbridge was constructed in 1934 as one of eight built by the Public Works Administration. It is a concrete structure that consists of a single shallow arch measuring 88' long and 10' wide. The footbridge is extant and contributes to the historic landscape. However, degradation of surface material impacts the integrity of the structure.	
Saddle Club (Shoreham Hill) Footbridge	HAER No. DC-36 CRIS-HS #545772	27706	Contributing	**Context**: Recreation, Landscape Architecture The Saddle Club footbridge, constructed in 1934, is one of eight built by the Public Works Administration during the Depression. The bridge is 110' long and 10' wide and incorporates three arches on rubblework piers and wooden railings. The bridge is extant and contributes to the character of the historic landscape. However, damage to the wooden railings detracts from the integrity of the structure.	
Normanstone Stream Footbridge		45465/TBD Consider adding asset record to the Normanstone Trail location	Undetermined	The Normanstone Stream footbridge is a simple wood structure that was likely constructed outside the period of significance; however, stone embankments on either side of the bridge are likely remaining from an older structure and may contribute to historic character.	
National Zoological Park Tunnel pedestrian bridge		45467	Non-Contributing, Incompatible	Constructed in 2022, the National Zoological Park Tunnel pedestrian bridge conveys the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail across Rock Creek. The bridge was constructed outside the period of significance and does not contribute to the character of the historic landscape.	
Culverts (grouped by type)				**Current analysis based on field investigations performed by NPS and the 2005 National Register nomination.**	
Metal grated road inlet		26130 and 51639	Non-Contributing. Compatible	Road inlets incorporate a metal grate with a running bond pattern set flush with the asphalt surface at the roadway edge, located at intervals along the roadway. Their exact relationship to culvert outlets is unknown. The inlets are often partially blocked by sediment, vegetation, and debris. The inlets may occupy locations designed in the parkway's construction with the metal grates a contemporary addition.	

TABLE 4.1: EVALUATED INVENTORY OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES: ROCK CREEK AND POTOMAC PARKWAY

Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location / Asset records)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period:1828–1951)	Existing Condition Graphic Reference
Metal slotted curb inlet		26130 and 51639	Non-Contributing, Compatible	Metal slotted curb inlets incorporate a metal curb section with an opening along the vertical face of the curb, which leads to a masonry or concrete chamber below. The inlets are often partially blocked by sediment and debris. The inlets may occupy locations designed in the parkway's construction with the metal slot a contemporary addition.	
Concrete box with stone facing	CRIS-HS # TBD	TBD Consider adding record if park actively maintains	Contributing	**Context:** Community Planning and Development, Landscape Architecture This type of culvert outlet is composed of a concrete box housing faced with stone veneer. Gently arched outlet openings are typically utilized (shown right). This outlet style is commonly associated with CSOs that overflow into Rock Creek, a direct result of the rapid urbanization of Georgetown and Washington, DC. Based on the 2005 Culvert Assessment, culvert outlets that incorporate stone masonry contribute to the design aesthetic of the parkway.	
Brick headwall with corbelled architrave	CRIS-HS # TBD	TBD Consider adding record if park actively maintains	Contributing	**Context:** Community Planning and Development, Landscape Architecture This design of a brick headwall enclosing a concrete barrel occurs once in the study area. While not consistent with the stone and stone veneer styles of other contributing culvert structures, this culvert was evaluated as contributing in the 2005 assessment. The culvert headwall is deteriorated.	
Stone headwall with circular opening	CRIS-HS # TBD	TBD Consider adding record if park actively maintains	Contributing and Non-Contributing, Compatible	**Context:** Community Planning and Development, Landscape Architecture Stone headwalls support culvert outlets in many locations within the study area. The barrel or pipe material vary, as do the shape, height, and style of the headwall. Some headwalls are curved (shown right), while others are straight. Pipe materials used include concrete, metal, and terra cotta. Culverts of this type constructed during the period of significance contribute to the historic character of the landscape. Culverts constructed outside the period of significance are compatible with the historic character based on their design.	
Rectilinear opening in retaining wall	CRIS-HS # TBD	TBD Consider adding record if park actively maintains	Contributing	**Context:** Community Planning and Development, Landscape Architecture Rectilinear openings through stone retaining walls vary in size, elevation, and condition. Some outlets incorporate a concrete culvert barrel (shown right) and others utilize a single flat stone as a header supporting the opening in the wall. The integration of these culverts into other parkway historic designed features contributes to the historic landscape.	
Concrete box, no headwall		TBD Consider adding record if park actively maintains	Non-Contributing, Incompatible	Concrete box culverts are contemporary additions to the landscape and do not reflect the character of historic landscape features.	
Concrete, metal, PVC, or terracotta pipe, no headwall		TBD Consider adding record if park actively maintains	Non-Contributing, Incompatible	While some pipes that daylight into Rock Creek within the study area may date to the period of significance, the feature lacks integrity with the headwall missing and the feature does not contribute to the parkway's historic character.	

TABLE 4.1: EVALUATED INVENTORY OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES: ROCK CREEK AND POTOMAC PARKWAY

Feature Name	**Other Resource Inventory**	**FMSS Data** (Location / Asset records)	**Evaluation Status**	**Evaluation Narrative** (Historic Period: 1828–1951)	**Existing Condition Graphic Reference**
Concrete end section			Non-Contributing. Incompatible	Concrete end section outlets are modern additions to the landscape and do not reflect the character of historic landscape features.	
Views and Vistas					
Historic Matching Views					
From Parkway to Massachusetts Avenue Bridge, facing north			Contributing	**Context:** Landscape Architecture The view from the roadway to the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge depicts an important development in the history of the parkway. When the bridge replaced the former embankment, the single arch of the structure framed views of the valley as visitors approached from the north and south (see Figure 4.1, 1945). The view to and through the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge from the south contributes to the historic character of the parkway landscape.	
From Massachusetts Avenue Bridge to roadway and valley below, facing south			Contributing	**Context:** Landscape Architecture The view from the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge facing south across the parkway and valley landscape depicts the linear alignment of the creek, roadway, and trails (see Figure 4.3, 1951). The relationship of these features to each other and the valley topography is apparent and contributes to the historic character of the landscape.	
From the P Street access ramp, facing south			Contributing	**Context:** Landscape Architecture The view from the P Street access ramp depicts the constructed topography of the parkway landscape around existing bedrock outcroppings, the bridle trail (now the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail), and the relationship between the surrounding city, roadway, and Rock Creek (see Figure 4.5, ca. 1930s). The view conveys the historic character of the parkway landscape.	
From Kalorama toward the Connecticut Avenue (Taft) Bridge, facing north			Contributing	**Context:** Landscape Architecture The view from Kalorama toward the Connecticut Avenue Bridge depicts the steep valley topography falling away from one of Washington DC's oldest neighborhoods, across remnant quarry topography to the bridge structure (see Figure 4.7, ca. 1910). The view conveys the historic character of the parkway landscape and is partially obscured by woody vegetation in and around the former quarry.	
Enclosed views (general condition)			Contributing	**Context:** Landscape Architecture The sense of enclosure and separation from the surrounding city is an important visual feature of the parkway.	

TABLE 4.1: EVALUATED INVENTORY OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES: ROCK CREEK AND POTOMAC PARKWAY

Feature Name	**Other Resource Inventory**	**FMSS Data** (Location / Asset records)	**Evaluation Status**	**Evaluation Narrative** (Historic Period:1828–1951)	**Existing Condition Graphic Reference**
Open views to surrounding city (general condition)			Contributing	**Context:** Landscape Architecture Views to the surrounding city are mostly screened by mature vegetation, with the exception of the area south of Pennsylvania Avenue, which has maintained an open character throughout the parkway's history.	
Views to Rock Creek (general condition)			Contributing	**Context:** Landscape Architecture Views to Rock Creek from the roadway and the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail were important to the original design intent. Views are clear in some locations and obscured by vegetation in others.	
Views to historic bridges (general condition)			Contributing	**Context:** Landscape Architecture Views to the historic bridges that span Rock Creek Valley are an important feature of the parkway. Views are mostly extant but vines and woody vegetation threaten their integrity by attaching to bridge structures or with overgrowth at their bases and along the roadway.	
Small-Scale Features					
NPS signage (typical)			Non-Contributing, Compatible	The National Park Service has formally managed the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway since 1934. While signage during the period of significance is not well documented, NPS signage was likely a part of the landscape from this time. Current signage was introduced to the parkway outside the period of significance but does not detract from the historic landscape.	
Traffic signage (typical)			Non-Contributing, Compatible	Traffic signage is a critical piece of safety and wayfinding for drivers on the parkway. Current signage was added outside the period of significance and does not contribute to the character of the historic landscape.	
Trail signage (typical)			Non-Contributing, Compatible	Trail signage is located throughout the study area for trail users' safety and wayfinding. Current signage was introduced outside the period of significance and does not contribute to the character of the historic landscape.	

TABLE 4.1: EVALUATED INVENTORY OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES: ROCK CREEK AND POTOMAC PARKWAY

Feature Name	Other Resource Inventory	FMSS Data (Location / Asset records)	Evaluation Status	Evaluation Narrative (Historic Period: 1828–1951)	Existing Condition Graphic Reference
Fitness and recreation equipment			Non-Contributing, Compatible	Fitness and recreation equipment was installed within the project area as a part of the par course along the Rock Creek Multi-Use Trail in the 1970s. Equipment was introduced outside the period of significance and does not contribute to the historic landscape.	
Lighting		51639 and 26130/	Non-Contributing, Incompatible	Lighting was incorporated as a part of initial parkway construction in 1929–1936. Original light fixtures were a mix of the Millet lampposts between the south study area boundary and Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge and a 1904 design cast iron bishop's crook lamppost with curvilinear ornament installed north of M Street. None of the bishop's crook fixtures are extant and the parkway through the study area is lit by painted metal streetlights that incorporate a small base with scroll details, a fluted shaft, and a slightly curved neck. Current fixtures were installed outside the period of significance and are not in keeping with the historic design. The height, brightness, and fixture design of the features detract from the historic character of the parkway.	
Fences		45467/ 1029037	Non-Contributing, Compatible	Wooden fences were constructed as part of the Rock Creek Park Multi-Use Trail rehabilitation between 2021–22. They incorporate vertical wooden posts with an angled top and horizontal cross beams. They do not contribute to the character of the historic landscape but are consistent with timber fencing visible in similar areas (e.g., under the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge) present in the 1940s.	
Guardrails		51639 and 26130/ multiple asset numbers	Non-Contributing, Compatible	Following the completion of the parkway in the 1930s, workers installed rustic timber guardrails along portions of the roadway. While the existing timber and steel guardrails were installed after 1975, they are compatible with the materiality of the timber guardrails included in the original parkway construction.	
Picnic grills		TBD Consider adding record if park actively maintains	Non-Contributing, Compatible	There are three extant stone picnic grills, built around 1960. Two are located north of the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge and one is near the Edgewater Stables. Their design is in keeping with the rustic stone features from parkway construction and they are compatible with the design of historic features. However, without the context of the designed space, the grills lack integrity and do not contribute to the historic character.	
Archeological Sites					
Whitehurst freeway sites	CRIS-AR #: ROCR00022.000	N/A	Undetermined	**Context:** Archeology (not part of NR listing) Important Native American archeological sites, including one known as Feature 283, were found during the construction of the Whitehurst Freeway in 1949. Recommend Contributing based on NR update to include archeological sites.	Graphic omitted for resource protection

TABLE 4.1: EVALUATED INVENTORY OF LANDSCAPE FEATURES: ROCK CREEK AND POTOMAC PARKWAY

Feature Name	**Other Resource Inventory**	**FMSS Data** (Location / Asset records)	**Evaluation Status**	**Evaluation Narrative** (Historic Period:1828–1951)	**Existing Condition Graphic Reference**
Peter House site	CRIS-AR #: TBD	N/A	Undetermined	**Context:** Archeology (not part of NR listing) A midden found on the east side of Rock Creek contained artifacts from time periods archeologists refer to as the Middle Archaic and Middle and Late Woodland and include ceramic potsherds, points, stone cobbles, and stored foraged foods. Recommend Contributing based on NR update to include archeological sites.	Graphic omitted for resource protection
Mount Pleasant Plains Cemetery Burials		N/A	Contributing	**Context:** Community Planning and Development and Archeology The Mount Pleasant Plains Cemetery was operated by the Colored Union Benevolent Association between 1870 and 1890. In the 1950s, part of the cemetery landscape was slated for residential development, which was never realized. The land was converted to a park in the 1980s and GPR investigations led by Howard University in 2005 revealed extant burials.	Graphic omitted for resource protection
Mt. Zion and Female Union Band Society cemeteries burials [private property]		N/A	Contributing	**Context:** Community Planning and Development and Archeology The Mt. Zion Cemetery (created in 1808) and Female Union Band Society Cemetery (1842) were impacted by the construction of the parkway between 1929 and 1936. Archeological investigations utilized non-invasive technologies to determine the extents of burials in these parcels. S.3667 — 117th Congress (2021–2022) African-American Burial Grounds Preservation Act provides funding to interpret/acquire grants for cemetery preservation and restoration. Government funding could be sought to pursue additional preservation efforts at Mount Zion and Female Union Band Society cemeteries.	Graphic omitted for resource protection



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Chapter cover: Bridge over Rock Creek at M Street, 1927 (People's Archive, DCPL).

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