



Date June 8, 2020

RESOLUTION SETTING HEARING ON THE CITY-INITIATED REQUEST FOR DESIGNATION OF THE DRAKE PARK PLAYGROUND SHELTER, 2300 DRAKE PARK AVENUE, DES MOINES, IOWA, AS A LOCAL LANDMARK

WHEREAS, the City of Des Moines has pending an application to designate the Drake Park Playground Shelter, located on property at 2300 Drake Park Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa, as a local landmark; and

WHEREAS, on May 5, 2020, the Landmark Review Board unanimously approved the recommendation that the “Drake Park Playground Shelter” be designated a local Landmark; and

WHEREAS, on May 21, 2020, the Plan and Zoning Commission, by a vote of 12-0, recommended to the Council **APPROVAL** of the application; and

WHEREAS, the Des Moines Municipal Code Section 58-60 requires a public hearing be held to consider the application.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of the City of Des Moines, Iowa, as follows:

1. That the attached communication from the Plan and Zoning Commission is hereby received and filed.
2. That the City Council consider approving the application for the designation of the Drake Park Playground Shelter as a local landmark at a hearing to be held at 5:00 p.m. on June 22, 2020, by electronic means in accordance with the Governor’s and Mayor’s Proclamations and to encourage and maintain social distancing to curb the spread of COVID19 in the community, with or without public access to the meeting location, at which time the City Council will hear both those who oppose and those who favor the proposal.
3. That the City Clerk is hereby authorized and directed to cause notice of said proposal in the accompanying form to be given by publication once, not less than seven (7) days and not more than twenty (20) days before the date of hearing, all as required in Iowa Codes Sections 362.3 and Section 386.3(4).
4. That notice referred to above shall be in the form attached hereto as Exhibit “A”, which contains information required by Iowa Code Section 386.4(5).

MOVED BY _____ TO ADOPT.



Roll Call Number

Agenda Item Number

27

Date June 8, 2020

FORM APPROVED: Judy K. Parks-Kruse
Judy K. Parks-Kruse, Asst City Attorney

(20-2020-4.02)

COUNCIL ACTION	YEAS	NAYS	PASS	ABSENT
COWNIE				
BOESEN				
GATTO				
GRAY				
MANDELBAUM				
VOSS				
WESTERGAARD				
TOTAL				
MOTION CARRIED		APPROVED		

CERTIFICATE

I, P. Kay Cmelik, City Clerk of said City hereby certify that at a meeting of the City Council of said City of Des Moines, held on the above date, among other proceedings the above was adopted.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal the day and year first above written.

Mayor

City Clerk



June 2, 2020

Date June 8, 2020
 Agenda Item 27
 Roll Call # _____

Honorable Mayor and City Council
 City of Des Moines, Iowa

Members:

Communication from the City Plan and Zoning Commission advising that at their May 21, 2020 meeting, the following action was taken regarding a City initiated request to designate the "Drake Park Playground Shelter" on property located at 2300 Drake Park Avenue as a Local Landmark.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

After public hearing, the members voted 12-0 as follows:

Commission Action:	Yes	Nays	Pass	Absent
Francis Boggus	X			
Dory Briles	X			
Abby Chungath	X			
Jacqueline Easley				X
Jann Freed	X			
John "Jack" Hilmes	X			
Lisa Howard	X			
Carolyn Jenison	X			
Greg Jones	X			
William Page	X			
Rocky Sposato				X
Steve Wallace	X			
Greg Wattier	X			
Emily Webb	X			

APPROVAL of the "Drake Park Playground Shelter" be designated as a local Landmark.

The Landmark Review Board and the Plan and Zoning Commission recommendations will be forwarded to the City Council for review in accordance with Chapter 58-60 and Chapter 82-40 of the City Code. (20-2020-4.02)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION TO THE P&Z COMMISSION

Staff recommends that the “Drake Park Playground Shelter” be designated as a local Landmark.

The Landmark Review Board and the Plan and Zoning Commission recommendations will be forwarded to the City Council for review in accordance with Chapter 58-60 and Chapter 82-40 of the City Code.

STAFF REPORT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

- 1. Case Overview:** Drake Park is in the southeast portion of the Drake Neighborhood. It is bound by Drake Park Avenue to the north, 23rd Street to the east, Day Street and Cottage Grove to the south, and 24th Street to the west. The shelter is positioned slightly southeast of the center of the park. Construction of the shelter started in 1933 and was completed in 1934. It is a one story, stone wall building with a hipped roof.

The building originally contained boys and girls dressing rooms and an office space to serve an adjoining wading pool. The secondary roof on the north façade covered an open-air porch facing the pool. The office was in the space to the west of the porch and had glass windows to allow light into the space. The exterior wall openings into the changing rooms were filled with wood slates to allow air flow while maintaining privacy. The building was converted to an open-air shelter with restrooms in 1984.

The Parks and Recreation Department is planning a \$765,000 renovation and expansion of the shelter. Construction would start this fall and extend into summer 2021. After completion the shelter would have an occupancy of 75 people.

On May 5, 2018, the Landmark Review Board unanimously approved the recommendation that the “Drake Park Playground Shelter” be designated a local Landmark. The Board is comprised of the Historic Preservation Commission and the Urban Design Review Board. The Board meets as needed to review nominations and proposed alternations to landmarks not located within a local historic district. The Board also reviewed the proposed renovations and is forwarding a recommendation on that to the City Council.

The Landmark Review Board and the Plan and Zoning Commission recommendations will be forwarded to the City Council for review in accordance with Chapter 58-60 and Chapter 82-40 of the City Code. If the site is designated as a Landmark then any alteration, new construction, or demolition would be subject to review by the Landmark Review Board and require approval by the City Council.

- 2. Size of Site:** 4.5 acres.
- 3. Existing Zoning (site):** “P1” Public, Civic and Institutional District.
- 4. Adjacent Land Use and Zoning:**

North – “N5”; Uses are residential.

South – “N5”; Uses are residential and right-of-way.

East – “C-1”; Uses include a church and dwellings.

West – “P2” & “N5”; Uses include a church and dwellings.

5. **Applicable Recognized Neighborhood(s):** The subject building is located within the Drake Neighborhood. All recognized neighborhoods were notified of the meeting by mailing of the Final Agenda on May 15, 2020. All agendas are mailed to the primary contact(s) designated by the recognized neighborhood association to the City of Des Moines Neighborhood Development Division. The Drake Neighborhood Association mailings were sent to Lori Calhoun, 2808 Cottage Grove Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50311.
6. **PlanDSM Land Use Plan Designation:** The subject site is designated as “Park/Open Space” on the Future Land Use Map.
7. **Applicable Regulations:** Pursuant to Chapter 82-40(a) of the City Code, the Plan and Zoning Commission is an advisory body to the City Council and is a key factor in the growth and development of the city. Therefore, the Commission reviews all local Landmark and Historic District nominations in accordance with the Historic Preservation Ordinance and for compliance with the City’s Comprehensive Plan and forwards a recommendation to the City Council.

II. APPLICABLE SECTIONS OF THE CITY CODE

Section 58-56 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance contains the landmark purpose statement. Section 58-58 contains the criteria for the designation of a landmark and Section 58-60 establishes the nomination process.

Sec. 58-56. Purpose.

It is declared as a matter of public policy that the protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of improvements of special character or special historical or aesthetic interest or value is a public necessity and is required in the interest of health, prosperity, safety and welfare of the people. The purpose of this article is to:

- (1) Effect and accomplish the protection, enhancement and perpetuation of such improvements which represent or reflect elements of the city's cultural, social, economic, political and architectural history;
- (2) Safeguard the city's historic, aesthetic and cultural heritage, as embodied and reflected in such improvements;
- (3) Stabilize and improve property values;
- (4) Foster civic pride in the beauty and accomplishments of the past;

- (5) Protect and enhance the city's attractions to residents, tourists, and visitors and serve as a support and stimulus to business and industry;
- (6) Strengthen the economy of the city; and
- (7) Promote the use of landmarks for the education, pleasure and welfare of the people of the city.

Sec. 58-58. Designation criteria.

- (a) For purpose of this article, a landmark or landmark site designation may be placed on any site, natural or improved, including any building, improvement or structure located thereon that possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association and that:
 - (1) Is significant in American history, architecture, archaeology and culture;
 - (2) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
 - (3) Is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
 - (4) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
 - (5) Has yielded or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Sec. 58-60. Procedures.

- (a) The historic preservation commission shall consider the nomination of landmarks and landmark sites located within historic districts, and make a report and recommendation on such nomination to the city plan and zoning commission and city council as provided below. The landmark review board shall consider the nomination of landmarks and landmark sites located outside historic districts and make a report and recommendation on such nomination to the city plan and zoning commission and city council as provided below.
- (b) Notice that an application for designation of a landmark or landmark site is being considered shall be given to the owner of the parcel on which the proposed landmark is situated or which is part of the proposed landmark site in accordance with the following:
 - (1) Such notice shall be served by certified mail, addressed to the owner at his or her last known address as such appears in the records of the county treasurer's office, or if there is no name on such records, such notice may be served by regular mail addressed to "owner" at the street address of the property in question.
 - (2) Such owner shall have the right to confer with the historic preservation commission or landmark review board, as applicable, prior to final action by the commission or board on the application.

- (3) The historic preservation commission or landmark review board, as applicable, may, in addition, hold the public hearing of the proposed designation by giving notice as required by law.
- (c) After such investigation by the historic preservation commission or landmark review board as is deemed necessary, but in no case more than 60 days after the receipt of the complete application, the application for designation shall be recommended for approval or disapproval. Such recommendation shall be in writing and signed by the chair of the historic preservation commission or landmark review board, as applicable, and shall state the reasons for recommending approval or disapproval. The recommendation may limit itself to the proposed landmark or landmark site as described in the application or may include modifications thereof. Such recommendation shall be forwarded to and filed with the plan and zoning commission, within five days after making such recommendation.
- (d) Upon receipt of such recommendation, the plan and zoning commission shall schedule a public hearing at a specific place, date and time, not more than 30 days after such receipt, by giving notice as required by law.
- (e) Within 30 days after the public hearing, the plan and zoning commission shall forward such application to the city council, together with the recommendation of the historic preservation commission or landmark review board. The plan and zoning commission may adopt the recommendation of the historic preservation commission or landmark review board as its own or may prepare a written recommendation of its own. The plan and zoning commission may limit itself to the proposed landmark or landmark site or may include modifications thereof. If the modification requires an additional public hearing, the plan and zoning commission shall hold such hearing before forwarding the application to the city council.
- (f) Upon receipt of such recommendation, the council shall schedule a public hearing to consider the recommendation at a specific place, date and time, not more than 30 days after such receipt, by giving notice as required by law.
- (g) The city council, after public hearing, may approve, approve with modification, or disapprove the recommendation of the plan and zoning commission by a majority vote of its membership. If the plan and zoning commission shall have failed to act within the time limit set forth in this section, the city council may, nevertheless, approve, approve with modification, or disapprove the proposed landmark or landmark site as originally proposed or modified by a majority vote of its membership.

III. ANALYSIS

1. **Landmark Nomination Criteria:** A nomination must demonstrate that the subject building or site possesses integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association and meets one or more of the following criterion.

- (1) Is significant in American history, architecture, archaeology and culture;

- (2) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
- (3) Is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- (4) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- (5) Has yielded or may be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

The nomination suggests the shelter meets Criterion 2 and 4. The following points from the submitted form make the case for how the shelter “is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.”

- The development of the Drake Park Neighborhood soared after the establishment of nearby Drake University in 1881. Lots were sold with a quarter of the proceeds being donated to the University. Land speculation further west soon reduced the demand on lots in the area, allowing lots to remain unsold. For this reason, one can experience a wide range of architectural styles built over several decades throughout the neighborhood.
- The 1901 Sanborn maps show the location of what is now Drake Park as a “vacant lot – not platted.” It is surrounded by mostly two-story homes. A few vacant lots are sprinkled throughout. By the publication of the 1920 map, those vacant lots were filled with additional housing and the area is now noted as “Drake Park.”
- In 1907, The Des Moines Register reported that renderings were provided for plans to “beautify Drake Park.” Landscape artist M. J. Wragg’s plans were described as having “tennis courts, croquet grounds, a band stand, a fountain and the beautifying of the walks with plants and shrubbery.” Future plans for a possible statue honoring Governor Francis M. Drake was also noted. Additional plans were revealed in 1910, which noted that “Cement walks will cross the square diagonally, meeting at the center, where a fountain is to be erected...” The plans also called for widening the intersection of Cottage Grove Avenue and Kingman Boulevard at 24th Street to improve the view of the park. It is unclear if either of these plans were carried out, as public park improvements were not documented on the Sanborn Maps. Regardless of their execution, the work described in the various newspaper articles over the many decades of the park’s history show that the City of Des Moines was consistently interested in improving the public spaces available to the residents of this neighborhood.
- Iowa was not spared from the high unemployment numbers during the Great Depression. Nationally, nearly a quarter of the workforce was looking for jobs. Then-president Franklin D. Roosevelt and his administration sought ways to put people back to work. The Civil Works Administration employed approximately four million people at its height in early 1934, the time The Drake Park Playground Shelter was constructed. This project is a textbook example of the type of permanent, public improvement projects that Roosevelt felt would encourage the American people and get the economy moving once again.

- The Shelter’s association with the Civil Works Administration is an important cultural context in not only local history, but for the nation as well. It maintains its original feeling of place as its setting has changed little over the years, making it an excellent example of a place worth preserving.

The following points from the nomination make the case for how the shelter “embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.”

- The Drake Park Playground Shelter was designed by architect Amos B. Emery and constructed under the Civilian Works Administration, a short-lived relief program during the Great Depression. It is a quintessential example of architecture constructed during this time in American history by these types of work release programs.
- Amos B. Emery was born in northwestern Kansas in 1895. He, along with his parents, who were also native Midwesterners, would move to Des Moines around 1901. At age 18, Emery began working for Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson, a local firm. Emery’s relationship with Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson would be off and on for the rest of his life. During World War I, Emery enlisted in the army and served as a pilot. While waiting to be sent back home he would take advantage of the educational opportunities available to troops and enroll in the Ecole de Beaux-Arts in Paris. As an architect, Emery could receive a certificate of credit after four months.
- Back in the United States, Emery received a B. Arch from the University of Pennsylvania while working for Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson during school breaks. In 1923 Emery worked as a draftsman in New York City before returning to Des Moines and Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson.
- In 1927, Emery was registered by exemption and entered into private practice with John Normile, forming the firm Normile & Emery. For the next few years, Emery was an active member of the Des Moines architectural community, serving as the president of the Iowa Chapter of the AIA in 1930 (and again in 1941 and 1942) and serving on the City of Des Moines Park Board alongside board president Jay “Ding” Darling. He designed a variety of project types including the then-modern Leo Weeks home and the sun dial at the rose garden in Greenwood Park. Emery was also responsible for the design of the Walker Playground Shelter, the first park shelter constructed by the City of Des Moines Playground Commission.
- In 1933, Emery was selected to become a Park Inspector for the National Parks Service, Department of the Interior where he would oversee many projects throughout the Midwest. It was during this transition that Emery completed the drawings for the Drake Park Shelter.
- The original design of the Drake Park Playground Shelter featured a dressing room for both boys and girls, as well as a “Director’s Room.” Dressing rooms were fitted with toilet and washing facilities, designed to service patrons of the adjacent circular wading pool. The Director’s Room’s chamfered corners give the room a half octagon footprint. A porch area covers the entrances to these rooms on the north;

on the south elevation a drinking fountain flanked by two built-in benches were shown in the original plans.

Exterior walls consisted of load-bearing limestone, with stud walls delineating the rooms. An asphalt hip roof with gable over the porch enclosed the spaces. Wood louvers were used for the dressing rooms and wood windows each with eight divided lights and wired glass were used in the Director's Room. 10' x 10' timber posts with decorative brackets are used for support of the porch roof.

The combination of natural materials of limestone and heavy timber give the building its rustic, "park architecture" feel that certainly became identifiable with the many projects completed during the Civilian Works Administration and other Roosevelt-era relief programs. Because of the sluggish economy during the 1930's, new building construction had slowed considerably, allowing these Civilian Works Administration and Works Progress Administration projects to become an iconic style of the decade. Thousands of these public beautification projects, built by millions of out-of-work Americans, reflect this honest, back-to-basic style of architecture that is unique to this time period and has become synonymous with this project type.

- 2. PlanDSM Creating Our Tomorrow:** The PlanDSM Comprehensive Plan was approved on April 25, 2016. The nomination is supported by numerous PlanDSM Goals and Policies including:

Land Use Goal 6

Recognize the value of Des Moines' historic building stock and landscapes and ensure their preservation

LU 35: Encourage expansion and establishment of National Historic Districts, local historic districts, and local landmarks.

Community Character and Neighborhood Goal 1

Embrace the distinct character offered in each of Des Moines' neighborhoods.

CCN1: Celebrate the City's culture and diversity through the creation of vibrant neighborhood nodes and corridors.

Community Character and Neighborhood Goal 4

Protect Des Moines' historic and cultural assets that contribute to neighborhood and community identity.

CCN25: Partner with the historic preservation community to promote Des Moines' rich history through education and outreach on historic structures, districts, and landscapes.

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION

Jann Freed asked if any member of the public or the commission desired to speak on the item. None requested to speak.

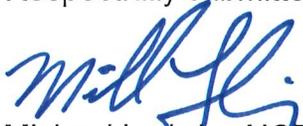
COMMISSION ACTION:

John "Jack" Hilmes made a motion for the "Drake Park Playground Shelter" be designated as a local Landmark.

The Landmark Review Board and the Plan and Zoning Commission recommendations will be forwarded to the City Council for review in accordance with Chapter 58-60 and Chapter 82-40 of the City Code.

Motion passed: 12-0

Respectfully submitted,



Michael Ludwig, AIOP
Planning Administrator

MGL:tjh

City initiated request for property located at 2300 Drake Park Avenue.				File #	
				20-2020-4.02	
Description of Action	Designate the "Drake Park Playground Shelter" as a Local Landmark.				
Plan/DSM Future Land Use	Current: Parks and Open Space. Proposed: N/A.				
Mobilizing Tomorrow Transportation Plan	No planned improvements.				
Current Zoning District	"P1" Public, Civic and Institutional District.				
Proposed Zoning District	N/A.				
Consent Card Responses	In Favor	Not In Favor	Undetermined	% Opposition	
Outside Area (200 feet)	0	0			
Within Subject Property					
Plan and Zoning Commission Action	Approval	X	Required 6/7 Vote of the City Council	Yes	
	Denial			No	X

City initiated, Drake Park Playground Shelter, 2300 Drake Park Avenue

20-2020-4.02



1 inch = 178 feet

Landmark Nomination Form

Landmark Review Board

IDENTIFICATION:

SITE NAME Drake Park Playground Shelter

LEGAL DESCRIPTION:

ALL S OF DRAKE PK AVE LT 1 OP NW FRL 1/4 SEC 5-78-24

OWNER(S) NAME City of Des Moines

OWNER(S) SIGNATURE _____
(signed owner's letter of support or petition can be attached in lieu of signature here)

OWNER(S) ADDRESS _____
(street address) (city) (state) (zip)

CATEGORY:

STRUCTURAL/ARCHITECTURAL **LANDSCAPE** **ARCHEOLOGICAL**

COMPONENTS One story, stone park shelter comprised of both enclosed space (male and female restrooms) and open air park shelter; all spaces covered by a hip roof and minor gable roof.

USE (present) Park Shelter and Restrooms (past) Boys & Girls Dressing Rooms, Office

DESCRIPTION:

DATE OF CONSTRUCTION 1933/34 **ARCHITECT/BUILDER** Amos B. Emery, Architect

BUILDING TYPE:

Single-family dwelling Industrial Other institutional Religious
Multiple-family dwelling Educational Public Agricultural
Commercial

EXTERIOR WALLS: clapboard ___ stone X brick ___ board and batten ___ shingles ___
stucco ___ other _____

STRUCTURAL SYSTEM: wood frame with interlocking joints ___ masonry load-bearing walls X
wood frame with light members (balloon frame) ___ iron frame ___ steel frame with curtain walls ___
reinforced concrete ___ other ___

CONDITION: excellent ___ good ___ fair X deteriorated ___

INTEGRITY: original site X moved--if so, when _____
from where _____

Information on alterations, additions (with dates & architect, if known) and any other notable
features of building/site: _____

August 1984 - non-masonry partitions removed; new partitions build to create restrooms; open-
ings created to provide an open-air park shelter. (City of Des Moines Engineering Department;
Stamped by Registered Architect William Block)

RELATED OUTBUILDINGS AND PROPERTY: barn ___ other farm structures ___ carriage house
___ garage ___ privy ___ other _____

SURROUNDINGS OF THE SITE: open land X woodland ___ scattered outbuildings ___
commercial ___ industrial ___ residential ___ densely built-up ___ other City Park

Prepared by Michelle A. Cunliffe, AIA

Date 4/2/2020

Address 301 Grand Ave, Des Moines, Iowa 50309

-

Telephone (515) 288.3141 Email mcunliffe@rdgusa.com

-

Organization RDG Planning & Design

SIGNIFICANCE: (Indicate all sources of information for all statements)

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Drake Park Playground Shelter was designed by architect Amos B. Emery and constructed under the Civilian Works Administration,¹ a short-lived relief program during the Great Depression. It is a quintessential example of architecture constructed during this time in American history by these types of work release programs.

Amos B. Emery was born in northwestern Kansas in 1895. He, along with his parents, who were also native Midwesterners, would move to Des Moines around 1901. At age 18, Emery began working for Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson, a local firm. Emery's relationship with Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson would be off and on for the rest of his life. During World War I, Emery enlisted in the army and served as a pilot. While waiting to be sent back home he would take advantage of the educational opportunities available to troops and enroll in the Ecole de Beaux-Arts in Paris. As an architect, Emery could receive a certificate of credit after four months.²

Back in the United States, Emery received a B. Arch from the University of Pennsylvania while working for Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson during school breaks. In 1923 Emery worked as a draftsman in New York City before returning to Des Moines and Proudfoot, Bird & Rawson.³

In 1927, Emery was registered by exemption and entered into private practice with John Normile, forming the firm Normile & Emery. For the next few years, Emery was an active member of the Des Moines architectural community, serving as the president of the Iowa Chapter of the AIA in 1930 (and again in 1941 and 1942)⁴ and serving on the City of Des Moines Park Board alongside board president Jay "Ding" Darling.⁵ He designed a variety of project types including the then-modern Leo Weeks home⁶ and the sun dial at the rose garden in Greenwood Park. Emery was also responsible for the design of the Walker Playground Shelter, the first park shelter constructed by the City of Des Moines Playground Commission.

In 1933, Emery was selected to become a Park Inspector for the National Parks Service, Department of the Interior⁷ where he would oversee many projects throughout the Midwest.⁸ It was during this transition that Emery completed the drawings for the Drake Park Shelter.

The original design of the Drake Park Playground Shelter featured a dressing room for both boys and girls, as well as a "Director's Room." Dressing rooms were fitted with toilet and washing facilities, designed to service patrons of the adjacent circular wading pool. The Director's Room's chamfered corners give the room a half octagon footprint. A porch area covers the entrances to these rooms on the north; on the south elevation a drinking fountain flanked by two built-in benches were shown in the original plans.

Exterior walls consisted of load-bearing limestone, with 4" stud walls delineating the rooms. An asphalt hip roof with gable over the porch enclosed the spaces. Wood louvers were used for the dressing rooms and wood windows each with eight

¹ The Des Moines Register, 1933

² Shank 1999

³ Shank 1999

⁴ Shank 1999

⁵ The Des Moines Register, 1932

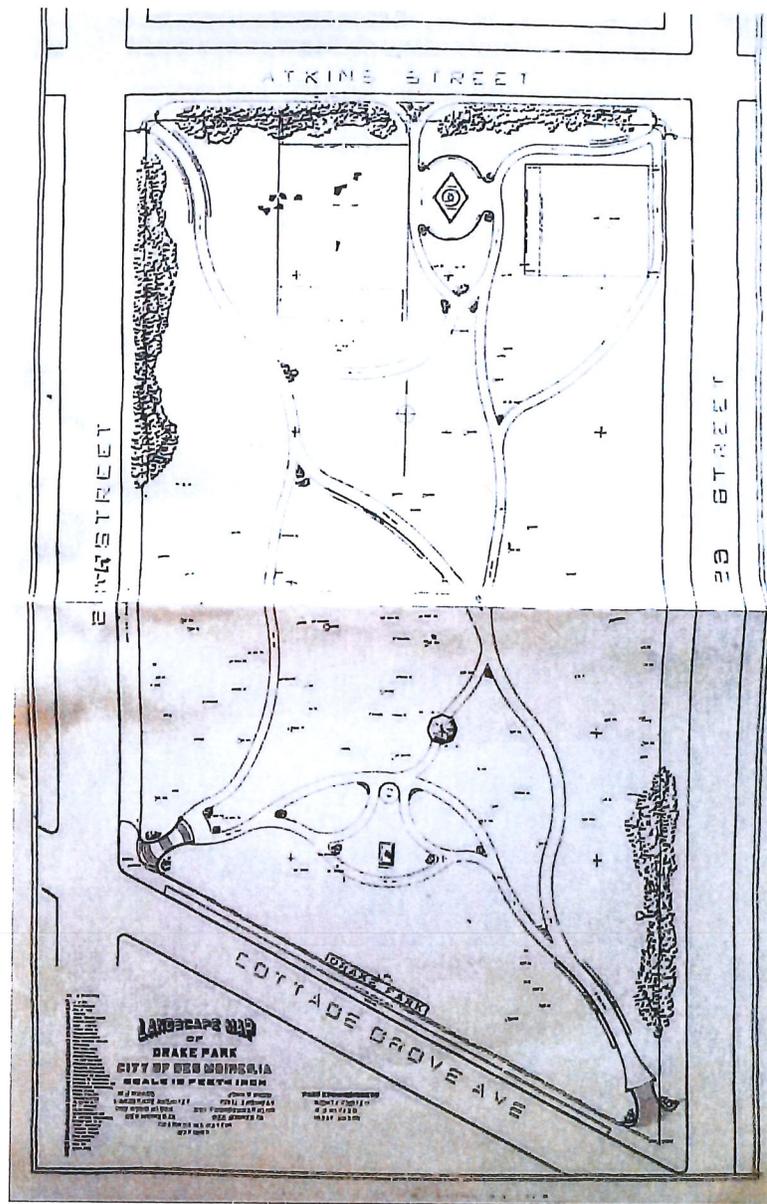
⁶ The Des Moines Sunday Register 1932

⁷ The Des Moines Register, 1932

⁸ Shank 1999

divided lights and wired glass were used in the Director's Room. 10' x 10' timber posts with decorative brackets are used for support of the porch roof.

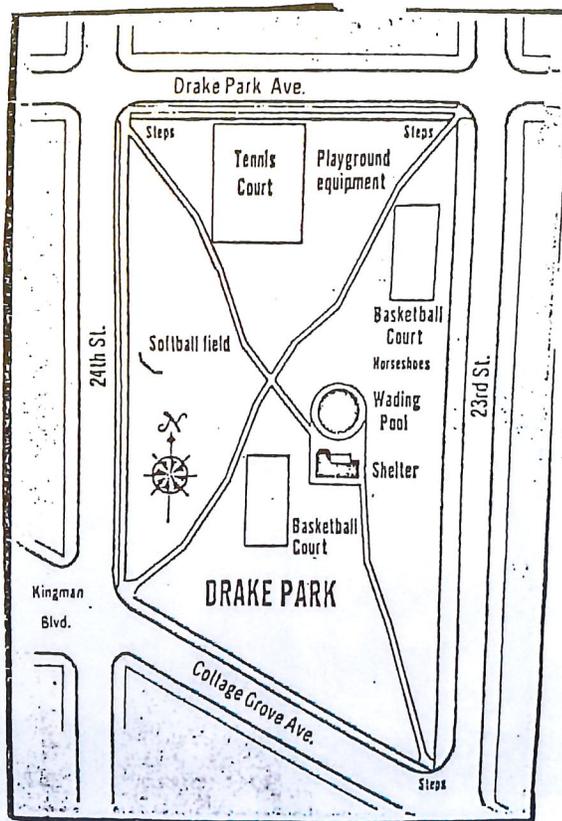
The combination of natural materials of limestone and heavy timber give the building its rustic, "park architecture" feel that certainly became identifiable with the many projects completed during the Civilian Works Administration and other Roosevelt-era relief programs. Because of the sluggish economy during the 1930's, new building construction had slowed considerably, allowing these Civilian Works Administration and Works Progress Administration projects to become an iconic style of the decade. Thousands of these public beautification projects, built by millions of out-of-work Americans, reflect this honest, back-to-basic style of architecture that is unique to this time period and has become synonymous with this project type.



Drake Park Plan (date unknown)



Drake Park prior to shelter construction (c1934).



Drake Park Plan (date unknown)

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The development of the Drake Park Neighborhood soared after the establishment of nearby Drake University in 1881. Lots were sold with a quarter of the proceeds being donated to the University. Land speculation further west soon reduced the demand on lots in the area, allowing lots to remain unsold. For this reason, one can experience a wide range of architectural styles built over several decades throughout the neighborhood.^{9 10 11}

The 1901 Sanborn maps show the location of what is now Drake Park as a “vacant lot – not platted.” It is surrounded by mostly two-story middle and upper class homes. A few vacant lots are sprinkled throughout.¹² By the publication of the 1920 map, those vacant lots were filled with additional housing and the area is now noted as “Drake Park.”¹³

In 1907, The Des Moines Register reported that renderings were provided for plans to “beautify Drake Park.” Landscape artist M. J. Wragg’s plans were described as having “tennis courts, croquet grounds, a band stand, a fountain and the beautifying of the walks with plants and shrubbery.” Future plans for a possible statue honoring Governor Francis M. Drake was also noted.¹⁴ Additional plans were revealed in 1910, which noted that “Cement walks will cross the square diagonally,

⁹ RDG Planning & Design 2011

¹⁰ Sanborn Fire Insurance 1901

¹¹ Sanborn Fire Insurance 1920

¹² Sanborn Fire Insurance 1901

¹³ Sanborn Fire Insurance 1920

¹⁴ The Des Moines Register 1907

meeting at the center, where a fountain is to be erected..." The plans also called for widening the intersection of Cottage Grove Avenue and Kingman Boulevard at 24th Street to improve the view of the park.¹⁵ It is unclear if either of these plans were carried out, as public park improvements were not documented on the Sanborn Maps. Regardless of their execution, the work described in the various newspaper articles over the many decades of the park's history show that the City of Des Moines was consistently interested in improving the public spaces available to the residents of this neighborhood.

Iowa was not spared from the high unemployment numbers during the Great Depression. Nationally, nearly a quarter of the workforce was looking for jobs. Then-president Franklin D. Roosevelt and his administration sought ways to put people back to work. The Civil Works Administration employed approximately four million people at its height in early 1934, the time The Drake Park Playground Shelter was constructed. This project is a textbook example of the type of permanent, public improvement projects that Roosevelt felt would encourage the American people and get the economy moving once again.

In 1984, plans were issued by the City of Des Moines' Engineering Department to make changes to the existing building. These changes included removing portions of the limestone walls and interior partitions to create an open-air park shelter. Bathrooms were then created in what was once the Girls Dressing and Director's Room. New columns were installed to provide the necessary structure. These columns were designed to reflect the original columns.

The Drake Park Neighborhood is now a middle-class neighborhood with a higher demographic of diverse, young adults than other neighborhoods across the Des Moines Metro Area. Still an integral part of nearby Drake University, the area continues to provide much of the housing for university students and staff. The park is used extensively for the surrounding community from impromptu gatherings such as pick up basketball games to more structured, neighborhood association events.

The Shelter's association with the Civil Works Administration is an important cultural context in not only local history, but for the nation as well. It maintains its original feeling of place as its setting has changed little over the years, making it an excellent example of a place worth preserving.

SOURCES (for primary and secondary sources give complete facts of publication: author, title, place of publication, date, etc.):

References

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