

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE



**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD**  
**APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC LANDMARK OR HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION**

New Designation X

Amendment of a previous designation \_\_\_\_\_

Please summarize any amendment(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Property name Lincoln Playground Field House

*If any part of the interior is being nominated, it must be specifically identified and described in the narrative statements.*

Address 555 L Street, SE

Square and lot number(s) Square 0853N, Lot 811 & 807

Affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission ANC 6D

Date of construction 1934 Date of major alteration(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Architect(s) Albert L. Harris Architectural style(s) Colonial Revival

Original use Recreation Present use Vacant

Property owner District of Columbia/United States of America

Legal address of property owner 1350 Pennsylvania Ave., NW, Washington DC 20004

NAME OF APPLICANT(S) Historic Washington Architecture

*If the applicant is an organization, it must submit evidence that among its purposes is the promotion of historic preservation in the District of Columbia. A copy of its charter, articles of incorporation, or by-laws, setting forth such purpose, will satisfy this requirement.*

Address/Telephone of applicant(s) 202-904-8111

Name and title of authorized representative Kent C. Boese

Signature of representative  Date November 17, 2014

Name and telephone of author of application Kent Boese, 202-904-8111

Date received 11/20/14  
#15-02 H.P.O. staff STB

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

**1. Name of Property**Historic name: Lincoln Playground Field HouseOther names/site number: Joy Evans Therapeutic Recreation Center Playground/Sixth and L Street Playground

Name of related multiple property listing:

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(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**2. Location**Street & number: 555 L Street, SECity or town: Washington State: DC County: N/ANot For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_national \_\_\_statewide \_\_\_local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

\_\_\_A \_\_\_B \_\_\_C \_\_\_D

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**Signature of certifying official/Title:****Date**

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**State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government**

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In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

Title :

State or Federal agency/bureau  
or Tribal Government

#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- \_\_\_ entered in the National Register  
\_\_\_ determined eligible for the National Register  
\_\_\_ determined not eligible for the National Register  
\_\_\_ removed from the National Register  
\_\_\_ other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☐  
Public – Local ☐  
Public – State ☒  
Public – Federal ☒

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☒  
District ☐  
Site ☐

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Structure

☐

Object

☐

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing

Noncontributing

1

2

buildings

sites

structures

objects

1

2

Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE

OUTDOOR RECREATION

SPORTS FACILITY

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OUTDOOR RECREATION

SPORTS FACILITY

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19<sup>TH</sup>-20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY REVIVAL/Colonial Revival

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**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: CONCRETE (foundation), RED BRICK (walls), ASPHALT (roof)

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The Lincoln Playground Field House is located on the now 33,280 sq. ft. Joy Evans Recreation Center site. The recreation center is located east of and abuts the Van Ness Elementary School property. A large parking lot is to the east of the recreation center. The playground's 1 -1/2 story field house was built in 1934 to plans developed by Municipal Architect Albert Harris in 1931. The field house's overall design is that of a Colonial Revival dwelling. This building was constructed of red brick and includes second floor gables and dormers. The field house is located on the northwest corner of the property.

The playground also contains two newer buildings. A red brick recreation center on the northeast corner of the property and a cinderblock pool house and wading pool on the eastern edge of the property located just south of center. These two buildings are unremarkable and as such, are non-contributing structures.

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## Narrative Description

### General Description:

#### Site:

What remains of the Lincoln Playground is located between L Street and M Street, SE, mid-block between 5th and 7th streets, SE (Lot 0811 in Square 0853N). The property is bounded on the west by an elementary school and on the east by a large, surface parking lot and construction site.

### General Description:

Rectangular in plan, the Lincoln Playground Field House is a 1 ½-story brick building with solid American bond brick walls. The building is set upon a low brick foundation and is covered with a steeply pitched gable roof featuring two gabled dormers on the east facade, a substantial exterior end brick chimney on the north end wall, and a single-story porch spanning the east elevation. The porch is covered by a pent roof that is integrated into the main roof and extends from it as a catslide. Single windows originally having 6/1 double-hung wood sash are located in the side walls and dormers.

The Lincoln Playground Field House is characterized by its 1 ½-story Colonial-Revival-style building form.

### Exterior Description

The entire building is a solidly constructed red brick structure laid in American bond fashion. The eastern elevation is dominated by a single-story porch spanning the length of the building. It is punctuated by three sets of double-hung windows (six over one) and an entrance door evenly placed, with the entrance off center to the south. Two gabled dormers are located on the steeply pitched roof directly above. Both dormers are clad with vertically laid wood siding.

The northern elevation consists of a substantial single-story and gable consisting of American bond brick construction. A brick chimney is located in the center of the elevation. An entrance door is located to the west of the chimney and a window is to the east. The porch is to the east of the brick structure and is clad in wood clapboarding.

The west elevation consists of single-story American bond brick construction beneath a steeply pitched half-story roof. The brick is punctuated by three windows and a door (the door has since been bricked in) at equal intervals dividing the space into quarters. The two window openings to the north are double hung six-over-one sash windows. The entry door (now bricked in) and a half window are on the southern end of the structure.

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The south elevation continues the American bond brick construction. To the east the porch roof area continues with wood clapboarding. The first-story is divided symmetrically into thirds. The center and western openings contained double hung six-over-one windows (the western window is now bricked in) with the eastern opening containing an entrance door into the building (also now bricked in). Above the central window, the gable is pierced by a half-round window.

### Interior Description

The interior floor plan generally resembles that of the Hall-and Parlor House (Hall-and-Chamber). In the case of the field house, the large northern room rises to the full height of the structure. It contains a four-log fireplace in the center of the northern wall and an open staircase in the southwest corner ascending to the second level loft on the southern end of the building. Both elements remain intact. A smaller single-story room occupies the southern end of the interior.

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Property 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 lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years



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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

SOCIAL HISTORY

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**Period of Significance**

1934

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**Significant Dates**

1934

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**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

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**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

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**Architect/Builder**

Harris, Albert L.

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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Lincoln Playground field house qualifies for listing in the National Register under Criterion C as a good example of the city's recreational buildings, designed according to an established building type during the tenure of Municipal Architect Albert Harris (1921-1933). The field house, designed in the Colonial Revival style followed a standard plan for field houses from that period. The Lincoln Playground field house remains a notable example of its type and is the product of Municipal Architect Albert L. Harris, whose work is closely identified with civic architecture in Washington, D.C. Furthermore, it is the only example of this type located outside of NW Washington – in this case, located in SE – the only example constructed entirely of brick, and the only example constructed on a “colored” playground during the period when Washington playgrounds were segregated. It is also one of two examples of this type constructed as a Civil Works Administration project.

The Lincoln Playground field house retains its integrity of location, setting, design, craftsmanship, materials, feeling and association. The field house is a purpose-built recreational structure of the District of Columbia; it was constructed according to an established design model and embodies characteristics illustrating the evolution of recreational architecture in the District; it stands on its original site; and it retains its original building massing and materials.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

**Summary Paragraph:**

The Lincoln Playground, originally located both to the north and south of L Street between 5th and 7th streets, SE, was informally organized as early as 1927 to better support the recreational needs of the District's African American community. Development of the property as a formal playground with amenities was not considered until late 1933, and then as part of the Civil Works Administration's efforts to provide work to the city's unemployed. Lincoln Playground's 1 ½-story field house is a direct result of those efforts. Its design follows the Colonial Revival design developed by municipal architect Albert L. Harris after the vernacular Hall-and-Parlor houses of the Tidewater region. This type was regionally appropriate to the Mid-Atlantic States, less formal, and appropriate for recreation areas.

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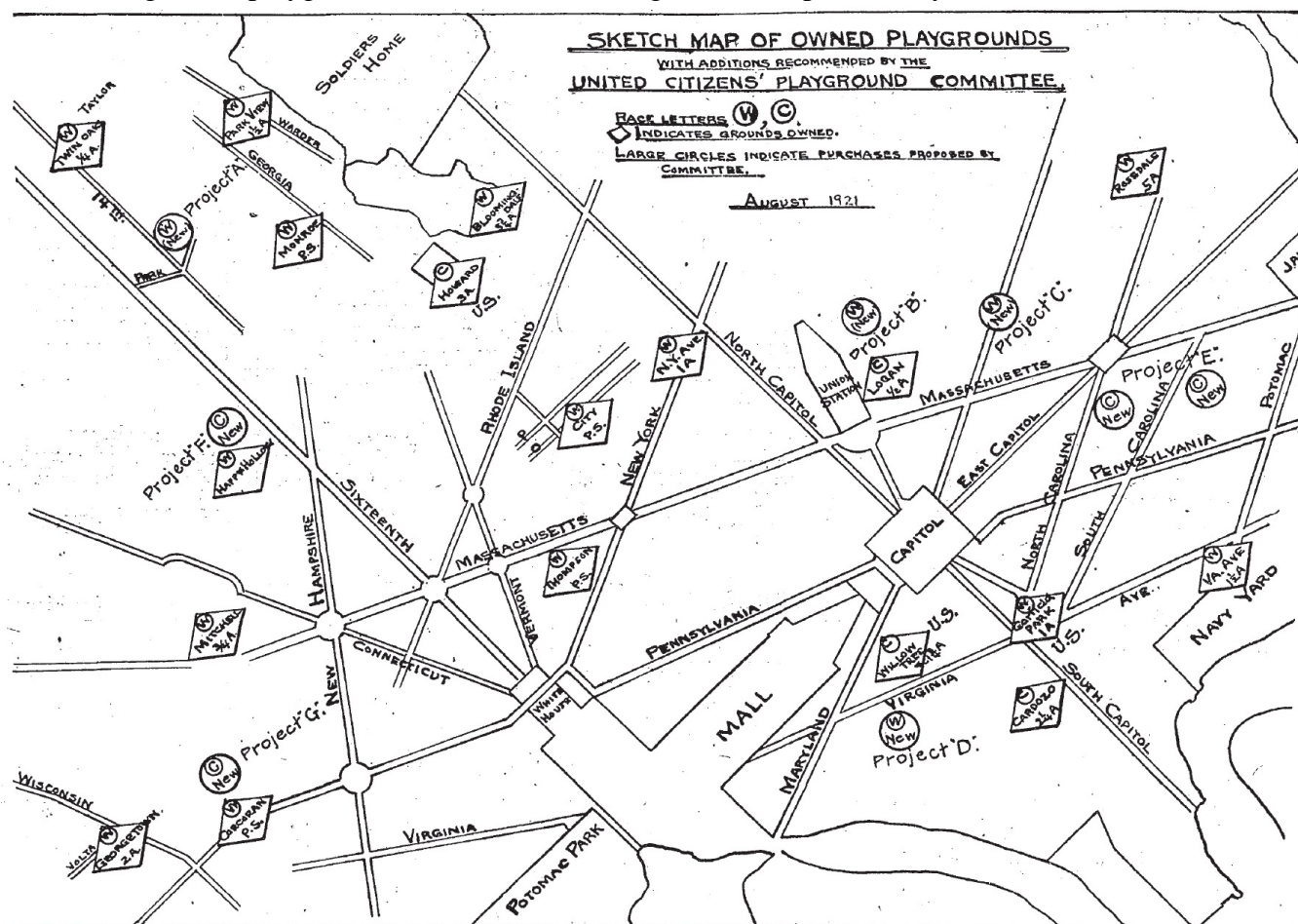
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History of Lincoln Playground

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During the early Twentieth Century, there was growing support for dedicated playground space in the District of Columbia. Often times, parks, school grounds, and empty lots provided opportunities for unofficial recreation areas throughout the city. However, many of these areas proved to be temporary solutions with those not owned by the District of Columbia unable to support improvements such as buildings or equipment. Prior to 1954, the District's playgrounds were also racially segregated, further restricting access to the precious few playgrounds in existence prior to 1920. Acknowledging the need for a much improved system of dedicated playgrounds, the United Citizens Playground Committee studied the issue and in August 1921 recommend that the District Commissioners adopt a system of equitable distribution of playgrounds throughout Washington. Their report urgently advocated that three new white and two new "colored" playground sites be created – in addition to the purchase of two playgrounds already in use but unowned by the District. To better serve the black community, the report noted the importance of purchasing Rose Park Playground, establishing a playground in the vicinity of the Wilson School at 17th Street between Euclid Street and Kalorama Road, NW, and establishing a new playground in southeast Washington. It was particularly noted that there were



Map showing location of both existing, and projected, District playgrounds, divided by race, in 1921. Within a few years, Lincoln playground would be added to this network (Map from the *Washington Post*, Aug. 14, 1921, p. 2)

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no playgrounds in southeast Washington then in existence open to the black community, and that the creation of one near Lincoln Park be adopted. To accomplish this plan, the United Citizens' Playground Committee requested \$330,000 be dedicated for the purchase of seven playground sites as part of a total request of \$455,000 that also funded playground improvements, maintenance, and staffing.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the urgent need, official action for a dedicated playground for the African American community did not move quickly. Rather, the use of the federally owned Reservations 15 and 16 at the intersection of Sixth and L streets, SW, for recreational purposes came into being informally and gradually. By June 1927 the reservations were hosting organized sandlot baseball games.<sup>2</sup> Following years witnessed the inclusion in organized track meets, horseshoe tournaments, and other recreation activities. The playgrounds were known as the Sixth and L Street Playground by 1929 and eventually as the Lincoln Playground by 1932.<sup>3</sup>

Development of the federally owned Reservations 15 and 16 into a formal playground with amenities was not considered until late 1933. At the end of December, Miss Sibyl Baker, Director of the District Playground Department, informed Washington residents that – as a result of the Civil Works Administration – nine new wading pools and three new recreation houses would be constructed at District playgrounds. Construction of the wading pool at Happy Hollow had already begun by December 30th, with additional wading pools planned for the Bloomingdale Playground, the Raymond School, the Hamilton School, the Lincoln Playground, the Takoma Park Playground, the Rose Park Playground, the New York Avenue Playground, and the Twin Oaks Playground. Recreation houses were planned for the Lincoln, Bloomingdale, and Twin Oaks playgrounds. Of these improvements, only two of the nine wading pools would benefit African American children (Rose Park and Lincoln). Similarly, of the three field houses planned, only the Lincoln Playground recreation house served the needs of black children.<sup>4</sup>

No time was wasted in building the field houses at Lincoln and Twin Oaks. During the week of December 25, 1933, permits were issued to the United States Government to construct a 1-½ story wood frame field house at Twin Oaks costing \$1,500 and a 1-½ story brick field house at Lincoln at an expense of \$2,000. Both structures were completed. The structures followed the design developed by municipal architect Albert Harris in 1931 for Mitchell Park and subsequently constructed at Park View and Happy Hollow. Also, by including a wading pool at Happy Hollow, Twin Oaks, and Lincoln, these playgrounds followed the pattern of the “modern playground” first created at Park View Playground in 1932. Ultimately, Lincoln Playground

<sup>1</sup> “Playground Plans Cover Entire City.” *The Washington Post*, Aug. 14, 1921, p. 2; “Adopt \$455,000 Playground Plan.” *The Evening Star*, Aug. 12, 1921, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> “Sandlot Tossers Facing a Busy Program Today.” *The Evening Star*, June 5, 1927, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> “Colored Horseshoe Champions play Grand Finale Tomorrow.” *The Evening Star*, Sept. 20, 1929, p. 45; “Colored Pitchers Look to Tourneys.” *The Evening Star*, Aug. 13, 1933, p. 52; “Sectional Net Finals for Playground Girls.” *The Washington Post*, Aug. 7, 1932, p. 14.

<sup>4</sup> “Playground Near Finish, 30-Year Job.” *The Washington post*, Dec. 20, 1933, p. 15; “Lorton Project to Start Monday.” *The Evening Star*, Dec. 30, 1933, p. A-10.

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would be the only black playground in D.C.'s segregated system to be developed with the Colonial Revival Tidewater-style field house by Harris in 1931.<sup>5</sup>

The Tidewater-style field houses at Lincoln and Twin Oaks playgrounds are the only Civil Works Administration playground projects of this type completed in the District of Columbia. Two larger Civil Works Administration projects – namely the Banneker and Takoma Recreation Centers – were also begun as part of the CWA though completed through subsequent programs. The wading pools for Bloomingdale, Raymond, Hamilton, Lincoln, Takoma Park, and Twin Oaks had not begun by March 1934, at which time they were listed as projects that would be completed by the Emergency Works Administration, the successor to the Civil Works Administration.<sup>6</sup> The planned field house for Bloomingdale had also not begun due to opposition from the Commission of Fine Arts in January 1934 which rejected the Colonial Revival Tidewater-style field house as an appropriate structure for the grounds of the McMillan Reservoir. Ultimately, the design for Bloomingdale would be reworked by architect Nathan C. Wyeth. The new plans were completed by March 3, 1934, with construction to begin as soon as weather permitted.<sup>7</sup>

Lincoln, along with Happy Hollow, Raymond, Hamilton, and New York Avenue playgrounds, did have its wading pool project completed and in use by the summer of 1935.<sup>8</sup> The wading pool planned for Twin Oaks never materialized. Of these playgrounds, only the Lincoln Playground property retains a wading pool.

Unfortunately, the community only enjoyed Lincoln Playground in its fullest form for about eight years. In April 1942 the Navy Yard took over Reservation 15 – the larger northern portion of the playground – for a storage lot leaving the smaller, southern Reservation 16 containing the wading pool and field house as a community playground. The larger reservation had been used mainly by older children for baseball and football. Its loss meant that the playground could only accommodate about half the children previously supported. A baseball diamond was installed at nearby Randall Playground in 1943 to assist with the resulting crowded conditions in the southeast and southwest sections north of the Anacostia River.<sup>9</sup>

#### Albert Harris-designed Field Houses

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<sup>5</sup> "D.C. Real Estate Ends Hectic Year." *The Evening Star*, Dec. 30, 1933, p. B-6.

<sup>6</sup> "8,500 to Go Under Banner of E.W.A. Here Next Week." *The Evening Star*, Mar. 29, 1934, p. B-1.

<sup>7</sup> "Field House Plans Being Redrafted." *The Evening Star*, Jan. 29, 1934, p. B-5; "Plans Field House Building at Once." *The Evening Star*, July 3, 1935, p. A-7.

<sup>8</sup> "Wading Pool Program of Hours Announced." *The Evening Star*, July 3, 1935, p. A-7.

<sup>9</sup> "Anacostia Park Tract Sought for Navy Yard." *The Evening Star*, Mar. 8, 1942, p. A-1; "Parley to Study Curb on Youth Delinquency." *The Evening Star*, Apr. 28, 1943, p. B-1.

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The Lincoln Playground Field House, built in 1934 concurrently with the Twin Oaks Field House, was the fourth such structure built according to plans drawn up by Municipal Architect Albert L. Harris<sup>10</sup> originally in 1931 to replace the storage shacks then found on most municipal playgrounds. The first structure of this type was constructed at Mitchell Park (1931)). Other examples include those built at Park View (1932), Happy Hollow (1933 – since razed), Twin Oaks (1934), and Chevy Chase (1936), for a total of six. The field house at Palisades (1936) incorporates the 1 ½-story Colonial-Revival-style structure as a wing of the much larger structure. Among this field house type, Lincoln Playground is unique. It is the only example constructed entirely of brick, it is the only example constructed for use by Washington's African-American community during the period when playgrounds in D.C. were segregated, and it is the only example existing outside of Washington's North West quadrant – in this case being located in the South East quadrant. It is also notable – along with the structure at Twin Oaks – for being one of two field houses constructed as a result of the short-lived Civil Works Administration.

Harris' development of the 1 ½-story Colonial-Style field house was an extension of his attempt to find appropriate Colonial-style types for the District's municipal buildings. More formal Colonial types were well established for public schools and firehouses when Harris turned his attention to playground structures. Rather than embrace a formal Colonial style, Harris drew inspiration from Colonial domestic architecture which, presumably, he considered more appropriate for the less formal activities of play, rest, and recreation.

While Harris's development of a vernacular field house type to support the informal activity of recreation may seem to be an obvious development, there was likely more behind this choice than is apparent. Some of the city's larger contemporaneous recreation facilities were designed in the more formal Colonial Revival architecture akin to public schools – examples include the buildings at Anacostia (1925) and Banneker (1934). Harris's decision to design a small vernacular Colonial structure likely had more to do with the small size of the playgrounds where they were built and a strong association between Mitchell Park – site of the first field house of this type -- and President Herbert Hoover. By extension, the association with President Hoover also would have called to mind the strong association between Hoover and outdoor recreation; the Presidential Rapidan Camp in the Blue Ridge Mountains; and the creation of Shenandoah National Park – all of which were frequently in the news while Harris designed the 1-1/2 story field house for Mitchell Park in 1931. While the general form of the Mitchell Park field house type is in keeping with many examples of Appalachian cabins, Harris's design is more in keeping with Colonial Hall-and-Parlor house types from the 18th century.

Prior to becoming President, Mr. and Mrs. Hoover lived across the street from Mitchell Park at 2300 S Street, NW, during his service as Secretary of Commerce. The Hoovers resided on S Street from 1921 until 1929. The S Street house's close proximity to Mitchell Park was noted and among the reasons why Mrs. Hoover was invited to plant a tree at Mitchell Park – in her honor – on October 23, 1931. The selection of Mitchell Park for the ceremonial tree planting was entirely due to Mrs. Hoover's former residence.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> "New Type House for Playgrounds." *The Evening Star*, Oct. 4, 1930, p. A-16.

<sup>11</sup> "Tree in Playground Will Be Planted to Honor Mrs. Hoover." *The Washington Post*, Sept. 28, 1931, p. 18.

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Most early Hall-and-Parlor Houses were timber frame and clad in weatherboards. The field house type developed for Mitchell Park and subsequently built at Happy Hallow and Twin Oaks conformed to this aesthetic. However, most surviving examples of Hall-and-Parlor Houses were the less typical but more durable brick houses. The Lincoln Playground Field House adapted Harris' design by constructing a brick variant. This house type is closely associated with the mid-Atlantic Tidewater region and is also known at the Virginia house.

### The Civil Works Administration and Recreation Projects

The Civil Works Administration (CWA) was a short-lived U.S. job creation program established by the New Deal during the Great Depression to rapidly create manual labor jobs for millions of unemployed workers. The jobs were merely temporary, for the duration of the hard winter of 1933–34. President Franklin D. Roosevelt unveiled the CWA on November 8, 1933, and put Harry L. Hopkins in charge of the short-term agency. Roosevelt was convinced that jobs were much better for everyone than cash handouts.

President Roosevelt formally created the new CWA by Executive Order on November 9, 1933. He diverted \$400 million from the Public Works Administration budget to finance short-term, light construction and named Federal Emergency Relief Administration head, Harry Hopkins, in charge of the operations through his state and county relief organization. The CWA would employ 4 million on public projects. Conceived as an emergency stop-gap, the CWA was an uneasy hybrid of social-work compassion and engineering know how. Initiated by welfare reformers, it stood out as the most advanced federal work relief experiment ever undertaken.<sup>12</sup>

From the beginning, the CWA was different. Hopkins assured applicants that the procedures for employment rather than those for dispensing relief would be followed. Earlier work programs accepted only heads of families with dependents, automatically turning away single youths, and examined the family budget for "relative needs." In contrast, CWA applicants were classified solely on the basis of skill, training, and experience. Several persons from one family could be signed on, while others with many dependents might be passed by.<sup>13</sup>

Hopkins envisioned CWA undertakings as "stop-gap public works," that had to commence immediately in November and terminate on short notice. At the same time, he had to avoid competition with private enterprise and conflict with the Public Works Administration. This meant that no city halls, schools, state institutions, or sewage disposal projects would be included. But, Hopkins was determined to make the jobs socially useful and was determined not to permit CWA funds to be used for garbage collection or for cleaning streets or snow removal. While Hopkins left the responsibility of identifying suitable project to local officials and encouraged them to use their imagination, he suggested park and playground construction, feeder

<sup>12</sup> "Schwartz, Bonnie Fox, *The Civil Works Administration, 1933-1934* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 38.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

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roads, water mains and sewer extensions, excavations, and special projects for white collar and professional workers.<sup>14</sup>

In Washington, D.C., projects at Arlington National Cemetery, Fort Myer, the Army War College, Bolling Field, and building recreational facilities were among those that put the unemployed to work. Notably, recreational facility projects had been abandoned by most states and the District at the onset of the Depression as they were considered luxury budget items. For the CWA, however, they offered an ideal opportunity to provide opportunities to a wide range of labor and make substantial community improvements without competing with other programs. Unskilled laborers cleaned and regarded municipal parks, while professional landscape artists designed new one. In Washington, four notable recreation projects were undertaken. Two large recreation centers – Banneker and Takoma – and two field houses at smaller playgrounds – Twin Oaks and Lincoln Playgrounds. Discrimination based on race, religion, and color was prohibited in the CWA<sup>15</sup> and this also proved true in the selection of the recreation facilities undertaken in Washington, where playgrounds were still segregated and would be until 1954. In looking at the improved playground structures within the District's segregated system, CWA improvements were fairly and equitably distributed with one large recreation center, each with a pool, undertaken for white (Takoma) and black (Banneker) residents, and the same occurring in the smaller playground improvement with the construction of Twin Oaks (white) and Lincoln (black) playgrounds.

Nationally, by the time the CWA ended it had built or improved some 500,000 miles of roads, 40,000 schools, over 3,500 parks, playgrounds and athletic fields, and 1,000 airports. Recreation structures are among the few substantial and easily identifiable long-term improvements that resulted from the CWA. This includes the four facilities constructed in the District of Columbia.

#### Architect of the Field House

Albert Lewis Harris (1869-1933) Municipal Architect (1921-1933)

Albert L. Harris was born in Abergynolwyn Wales in 1869 and emigrated to America with his father Job Harris in 1873. He was in the Washington area by 1890 when he began attending the Arlington Academy for three years. He left without graduating to work for Henry Ives Cobb in Chicago for five years on residential buildings. In 1898 Harris moved to Baltimore where he worked for Wyatt & Nolting until 1900 when he relocated to Washington. He was employed by Hornblower & Marshall from 1900 until 1917, noting that he worked on the firm's two most important public commissions, the Baltimore Custom House (1908) and the Smithsonian's Natural History Museum (1901-1911) while in that office. While employed by Hornblower & Marshall Harris began receiving his formal education at George Washington University, earning a B.S. in architecture in 1912. The same year Harris was appointed assistant professor of architecture at the university; by 1915 he was a full professor, a part-time position he held until

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 45-46.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 43-44.



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1930. In 1924 he prepared a quadrangular plan for the university's campus and with Arthur B. Heaton also designed Stockton and Corcoran Halls.

From 1917 to 1920 Harris worked for the Navy's Bureau of Yards and Docks where he was principally employed writing specifications. He began working for the Municipal Architect's office in 1920 and was named Snowdon Ashford's successor the following year; as members of the Washington chapter of the American Institute of Architects, the two had served on a 1911 committee with Waddy B. Wood condemning bay windows as not being "in accord with the dignity of architecture which the Capital should maintain." In 1914 he served with the same men, as well as Glenn Brown, on the local AIA chapter's committee that first proposed licensing architects. Harris submitted the first application for architectural registration in the District and was the first to be registered on April 6, 1925.

As was true with his predecessors, Washington's schools occupied a major part of the municipal architect's design output during Harris's tenure which ended with his sudden death in February 1933. Harris responded to suggestions made by the Commission of Fine Arts about the appropriateness of the Colonial Revival style for Washington's neighborhood municipal buildings with the majority of his school designs and public buildings. His 1931 Gothic Revival additions to the Park View School were a notable exception. In the case of Park View School, Harris closely adhered to the style of the 1916 building designed by his predecessor, Snowdon Ashford.

Not surprisingly, Harris not only developed types for Colonial Revival-style schools, firehouses, and municipal buildings, but also adapted the style in developing a field house type for Washington playgrounds. In the case of the field house, however, Harris modeled his building type after the vernacular Hall-and-Parlor houses of the Tidewater region. This type was regionally appropriate to the Mid-Atlantic States, less formal, and appropriate for recreation areas. The open interior plan made them adaptable to multiple activities and their small scale made them better suited to smaller playground lot sizes. Lastly, as playgrounds' primary functions were to support outdoor recreation activities, the small scale field house complemented the primary outdoor playground functions appropriately.

While Snowdon Ashford predicted greater sophistication of the District's buildings to keep apace with developments in the city's federal architecture, Harris balanced fine-quality Colonial Revival buildings scaled and styled for Washington's neighborhoods with appropriately urban-scaled ones for the city's governing center adjacent to the heart of Washington's monumental core.

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form.)

### Books & Manuscripts

Department of Recreation. *Recreation's Heritage: A Preliminary Historic Resources Inventory*. Washington, DC: D.C. Department of Recreation, 1984.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☒ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 0.00075 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

**Or**

### UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927    or    ☐ NAD 1983

- |          |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting:  | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

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**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Square 0853N, Lot 0811 in the District of Columbia

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Portion of original building lot.

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**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title: Kent C.  
Boese  
organization: Historic Washington  
Architecture  
street & number: 608 Rock Creek Church Road,  
NW  
city or town: Washington state: DC zip  
code: 20010  
e-mail kcboese@hotmail.com  
telephone: 202-904-8111  
date: November 15, 2014

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**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

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- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

### Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

### Photo Log

Name of Property: Lincoln Playground Field House

City or Vicinity: Washington

County: N/A

State: DC

Photographer: Kent Boese

Date Photographed: November 16, 2014

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1) General view looking southwest from L Street, SE  
1 of 6

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- 2) General view looking northwest from playground  
2 of 6
- 3) General view looking south from L Street, SE  
3 of 6
- 4) General view looking north from playground  
4 of 6
- 5) General view looking east from Van Ness school parking lot  
5 of 6
- 6) General view looking northeast from Van Ness school parking lot  
6 of 6

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**Lincoln Playground Field House**

**Washington, DC**

**November 16, 2014**

**Kent Boese**

**Historic Washington Architecture**

**General view looking southwest from L Street, SE**

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**Lincoln Playground Field House**

**Washington, DC**

**November 16, 2014**

**Kent Boese**

**Historic Washington Architecture**

**General view looking northwest from playground**

**2/6**

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**Lincoln Playground Field House**

**Washington, DC**

**November 16, 2014**

**Kent Boese**

**Historic Washington Architecture**

**General view looking south from L Street, SE**

**3/6**

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**Lincoln Playground Field House**

**Washington, DC**

**November 16, 2014**

**Kent Boese**

**Historic Washington Architecture**

**General view looking north from playground**

**4/6**



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**Lincoln Playground Field House**

**Washington, DC**

**November 16, 2014**

**Kent Boese**

**Historic Washington Architecture**

**General view looking east from Van Ness school parking lot**

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**Lincoln Playground Field House**

**Washington, DC**

**November 16, 2014**

**Kent Boese**

**Historic Washington Architecture**

**General view looking northeast from Van Ness school parking lot**

**6/6**

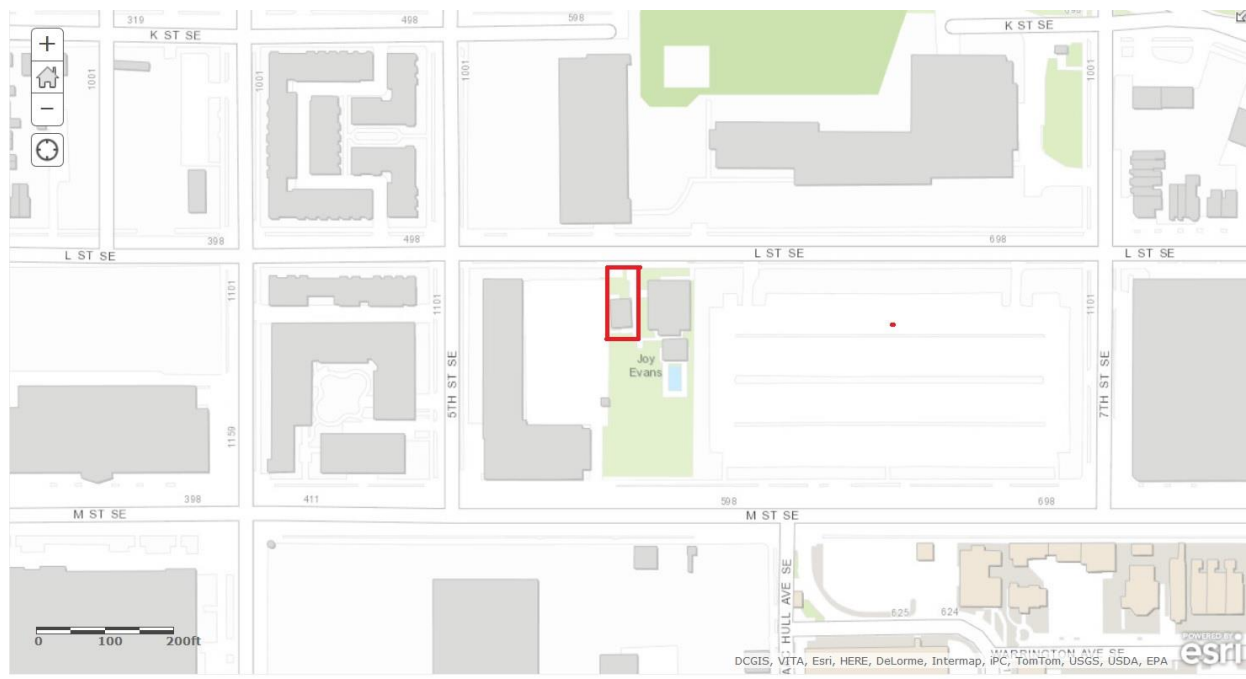
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**Site Plan:**



**Site Plan from ArcGIS (viewed November 15, 2014)**

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).

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