

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

Address 1801 23rd Street, NW

Square and lot number(s) Square 2529 Lot 0821

Affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission ANC 2D02

Date of construction 1930 Date of major alteration(s)

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

Original use recreation Present use recreation

Property owner District of Columbia

Legal address of property owner 2000 14th Street, NW; Washington DC 20009-4487

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) 608 Rock Creek Church Rd, NW, Washington DC 20010/
202-904-8111

Name and title of authorized representative Kent C. Boese, President

Signature of representative *Kent C. Boese* Date 11/17/2017

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

#1807 Date received 12/16/17
H.P.O. staff JG

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: Mitchell Park Field House

Other names/site number: _____

Name of related multiple property listing: _____

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

2. Location

Street & number: S & 23rd streets, NW

City or town: Washington State: DC County: N/A

Not For Publication: Vicinity: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

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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

Mitchell Park Field House
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

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
- Structure
- Object

Mitchell Park Field House
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	_____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE

OUTDOOR RECREATION

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

OUTDOOR RECREATION

Mitchell Park Field House
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

LATE 19TH-20TH CENTURY REVIVAL/Colonial Revival

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: CONCRETE (foundation), WOOD (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.)

Summary Paragraph

The Mitchell Park Field House is a 1 -1/2 story Colonial Revival structure built in 1930-31 and prominently located in the center of Mitchell Park. The field house was designed by Municipal Architect Albert Harris in 1931 and was the first purpose-built playground building in the District of Columbia. The Mitchell Park field house became the prototype for other playground field houses constructed in the District of Columbia during the 1930s. The field house's overall design is that of a Colonial Revival dwelling. This building is of wood frame construction sheathed in wood clapboards upon a red brick foundation. It includes second floor gables and dormers.

Mitchell Park Field House
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

Narrative Description

Site:

The Mitchell Park playground is prominently located on S Street, NW (Lot 0821 in Square 2529). The property is bounded on the west by 23rd Street, on the north by Bancroft Place, and on the east by private residences.

General Description:

Mitchell Park Field House

Exterior Description

The west elevation (façade) contains a centrally located bay and a doorway located between the bay and the north end of the building. It is dominated by a single-story porch spanning the length of the building. Three equally spaced gabled dormers are located on the steeply pitched roof directly.

The north elevation consists of a single story capped by a gabled half-story. A substantial brick chimney laid in American Bond fashion is located in the center of the elevation.

The east elevation consists of a single-story beneath a steeply pitched half-story roof. The elevation is punctuated by three equally spaced bays.

The south elevation consists of a single story capped by a half-story gable. A centrally located doorway is flanked by a bay to the east and west. Above the door and centrally located within the gable is a louvered vent.

The entire building is sheathed in wood clapboarding with six-over-six double hung windows (modern replacements).

Mitchell Park Field House
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

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

Mitchell Park Field House
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1930-1931

Significant Dates

1919, 1930, 1972, 2014

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Harris, Albert L.

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.)

Mitchell Park Field House

Washington, D.C.

Name of Property

County and State

The Mitchell Park 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 type during the tenure of Municipal Architect Albert Harris, 1921-1933. The field house was designed in the Colonial Revival style by Municipal Architect Albert L. Harris. The Mitchell Park field house was the first of its type designed by Harris.

The Mitchell Park field house qualifies as a landmark building and for listing on the National Register of Historic Places because it:

- Is a purpose-built recreational structure of the District of Columbia;
- Was constructed following an established model and embodies characteristics illustrating the evolution of recreational architecture in the District;
- Stands on its original site; and
- Still shows its original building materials and design.

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

Mitchell Park Field House and Albert Harris-designed Field Houses

The Mitchell Park Field House, constructed in 1930-1, was the first such structure built according to plans drawn up by Municipal Architect Albert L. Harris¹ to replace the storage shacks then found on most municipal playgrounds. Later examples include those built at Park View (1932), Happy Hollow (1933 – since razed), Twin Oaks (1934), Lincoln (1934), and Chevy Chase (ca. 1933), for a total of six. The field house at Palisades (1936) incorporates the 1-1/2-story Colonial-Revival-style structure as a wing of the much larger structure. While all field houses of this type are similar, no two are exactly identical.

¹ "New Type House for Playgrounds." *Washington Evening Star*, Oct. 4, 1930, p. A-16.

Mitchell Park Field House
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

Harris' development of the 1 -1/2 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), Banneker and Takoma (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 who lived across the street from Mitchell Park prior to becoming President. 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 1930. 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.²

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 Hollow 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. At Park View, Harris adapted the brick variant for his design. This house type is closely associated with the mid-Atlantic Tidewater region and is also known as the Virginia house.

Harris's field house became a central component of a larger design to create modern playgrounds in Washington. When the Park View playground was modernized in 1932, improvements included a field house, a wading pool, and other amenities. This pattern was again repeated when a "modern playground" was constructed at Happy Hollow in 1933. One can presume additional

² "Tree in Playground Will Be Planted to Honor Mrs. Hoover." *The Washington Post*, Sept. 28, 1931, p. 18.

Mitchell Park Field House

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

playgrounds of this design would have been built were it not for Albert Harris's sudden and unexpected death in February 1933.³

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. In 1900 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 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

³ "Playground Activities." *The Washington Post*, Jan. 15, 1933, p. 33.

Mitchell Park Field House
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

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.

Mitchell Park Field House
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

9. Major Bibliographical References

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

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: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 0.05

Mitchell Park Field House
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

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: 38.914575 Longitude: -77.049994

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:

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

Area around field house on Square 2529, Lot 0821 in the District of Columbia.

Mitchell Park Field House
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Site of field house.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Kent C. Boese
organization: Historic Washington Architecture
street & number: 608 Rock Creek Church Rd., NW
city or town: Washington state: DC zip code: 20010
e-mail kcboese@hotmail.com
telephone: 202-904-8111
date: 11/17/2017

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.
- **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.)

Mitchell Park Field House
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

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: Mitchell Park Field House

City or Vicinity: Washington

County: N/A

State: D.C.

Photographer: Kent Boese

Date Photographed: May 16, 2015

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

- 1) Field House, view from northwest
1 of 4
- 2) Field House, view from north
2 of 4
- 3) Field House, view from south
3 of 4
- 4) Field House, view from southeast
4 of 4

Mitchell Park Field House
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State



Mitchell Park Field House
Washington, DC
May 16, 2015
Kent Boese
Field House, view from northwest
1/4

Mitchell Park Field House
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State



Mitchell Park Field House
Washington, DC
May 16, 2015
Kent Boese
Field House, view from north
2/4

Mitchell Park Field House
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State



Mitchell Park Field House
Washington, DC
May 16, 2015
Kent Boese
Field House, view from south
3/4

Mitchell Park Field House
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State



Mitchell Park Field House
Washington, DC
May 16, 2015
Kent Boese
Field House, view from southeast
4/4

Mitchell Park Field House

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

Site Plan:



Site Plan from ArcGIS (viewed May 16, 2015)

Mitchell Park Field House
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

Historic Photographs



—Star-News Photographer Paul Schmick

Aftermath of early morning fire, November 16, 1972.

Mitchell Park Field House
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State



View of Mitchell Park Field House from the east, March 1995.

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.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.