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

Address 5200 Sherrier Place NW

Square and lot number(s) Square 1415S, Lot 0802

Affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission ANC 3D

Date of construction 1936 Date of major alteration(s) _____

Architect(s) Vint, Thomas Chalmers Architectural style(s) Colonia Revival

Original use Recreation Present use Recreation

Property owner United States of American/District of Columbia

Legal address of property owner 1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, WDC 20004-3003

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 Road, NW

Washington, DC 20010

Name and title of authorized representative Kent Boese

Signature of representative Date 5/18/15

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

#15-13 Date received 5/19/15
H.P.O. staff

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: Palisades Playground and 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: 5200 Sherrier Place 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Not For Publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐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**

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	X
Public – Federal	X

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

Building(s)	☐
District	☐
Site	X
Structure	☐
Object	☐

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
1	0	sites
		structures
7	0	objects
9	0	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

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: BRICK (foundation and walls), ASPHPALT (roof), COPPER (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 Palisades Playground occupies a 596,772 sq. ft. site located between a residential neighborhood and the C&O Canal to the SE of the intersection of Arizona Avenue and Canal Road. In addition to containing tennis courts, a soccer field, a basketball court, a skate spot, baseball field, and play areas, the Palisades Playground contains a one-and-one-half-story, three-part, side-gable, field house built in 1936 and centrally located on the southeastern portion of the property. The field house's final design draws inspiration from the field house type developed by Municipal Architect Albert Harris in 1931 for Mitchell Park and similar small recreation facilities, however for the Palisades playground architect Thomas Vint greatly enlarged the structure creating a unique design reminiscent of vernacular domestic architecture. The field house's overall design is that of a Colonial Revival dwelling. This building is of red brick construction and includes second floor dormers on the eastern wing. The site also includes the remains of three fire grates original to the site, as well as four park benches placed to provide a scenic overlook of the Potomac River Gorge below.

Narrative Description

General Description:

Site:

The Palisades playground is located southeast of Arizona Avenue and northeast of Canal Road and the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal National Park, NW (Lot 0802 in Square 1415S). The property is bounded on the southeast and northeast by detached residential single-family dwellings.

General Description:

The Palisades playground is located on a roughly rectangular parcel that is approximately 13.7 acres. The entrance to the playground is off of Sherrier Place, NW, and includes a parking lot separating the playground from Sherrier Place.

With the exception of the entrance area and the residential structures along the playgrounds northeastern border, the perimeter of the playground is heavily wooded with mature trees. The field house is strategically located where the northwest/southwest axis of the playground would intersect with Edmunds Place, NW, if extended. Original to the site is a terrace, located on the south side of field house, which is surrounded by a half-height brick wall capped in stone. This terrace, along with four park benches located to the southeast and southwest of the terrace, create a scenic overlook of the Potomac River Gorge, Virginia, and the Georgia Washington Memorial Parkway. Along the northeastern border of the playground, at its northern end, are three tennis courts. Between the tennis courts and the field house is a large baseball diamond. Both the tennis courts and baseball diamond are on their original sites and may be considered contributing in that regard. A picnic area between the baseball diamond and tennis courts contains the remains of two fire grates original to the site. The remains of a third fire grate is located in the woods along the northeastern section of the property. More recent additions to the playground include a soccer field located to the south of the tennis courts and west of the baseball diamond; a basketball court and skate spot are located to the west of the field house, and a newly renovated playground area to the east of the field house.

Palisades Field House

The Palisades Playground Field House is a one-and-one-half-story, three-part, side-gable, building constructed of brick laid in American bond fashion that is rectangular in plan. The building is set upon a low brick foundation which contains a basement beneath the eastern wing of the building. The building is covered with a steeply pitched three-part gable roof, with the central part slightly higher than the eastern and western wings. With the exception of the porch roof which is clad in a standing seam copper roof, the roof is clad with asphalt shingles (originally slate) and is pierced by an interior end brick chimney with a corbelled cap on the east end of the central section.

Exterior Description

The north elevation (façade) features a four bay center section that is both higher and deeper than its flanking sections. The center section contains four, one-over-one windows within their original molded-wood trim and rounded-wooden sills. The windows' upper sashes are filled with plywood. All of the building's windows are covered by metal grills.

The three-bay east section of the north elevation features two, nine-over-one, double-hung windows with similar wood trim and a double, metal door with a one-light transom. Three dormers pierce the roof. Their wood siding and six-over-six, double-hung wood sash windows appear to be original. A full-width, three-bay porch is covered by a pent roof that is integrated into the main roof and extends from it as a catslide that is supported by four chamfered wood posts and a boxed lintel; the ceiling is clad in beadboard and the porch floor is covered in flagstone on a brick base. A poured concrete foundation on the east end of the porch forms one side wall to concrete steps to the basement entrance. Steps and a concrete handicapped ramp enter the west side of the porch and extend to the entrance.

The two-bay, west flanking section of the north elevation features a single metal door at the top of a two-step concrete and brick stoop and a six-over-six, double-hung, wood sash window with trim similar to the other north elevation windows.

The south elevation differs from the façade. The elevation's cross-gable addition extends from the building between the east and center sections. The gable end features two, six-over-six windows on the first story and one on the second story. Single metal doors pierce the east and west sides of the addition.

The east section's south elevation contains one window on the first story and one dormer window in the roof. The center section's south elevation features four double metal doors with one-light transoms and double metal doors on its west elevation. The west section's south elevation has two, one-light vinyl windows and is covered by a metal grill that is set within the original wood surround.

The recreation center appears to be in mostly original condition with the exception of the window sashes that are not in six-over-six configuration and the metal doors.

Interior Description

The interior floor plan is organized in three parts, a central one-and-one-half-story auditorium flanked by two smaller one-and-one-half-story wings to the east and west. The primary entrance to the building is located on the north of the eastern wing. The entrance opens immediately into a lobby. The first floor of the eastern wing also includes an office for staff, two restrooms, and stairs to the basement and second floor. The basement of the eastern wing includes a small gym (originally the boys' playroom), the boiler room, a storage room, and a lobby. This level also provides access to the partially excavated basements of the central and western wings of the building. The second floor of the eastern wing contains the girls' playroom and a projection room. The central auditorium is a large open space which rises to the full height of the structure. The western wing contains the stage area, vestibule, two small dressing rooms, and a small kitchen.

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.
- [x] 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.
- [x] 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

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)
ARCHITECTURE
SOCIAL HISTORY
ARCHEOLOGY

Period of Significance
17th Century
1936

Significant Dates
1936

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
Vint, Thomas Chalmers

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 Palisades Playground field house qualifies for listing in the National Register under Criterion C as a unique example of the city's recreational buildings, designed under the direction of Thomas Chalmers Vint, an architect and landscape architect with the National Park Service. The field house, designed in the Colonial Revival style, further developed and enlarged the building type originally established by Municipal Architect Albert Harris (1921-1933) for the Mitchell Park field house in 1931. The Palisades field house was widely praised with plans to build similar structures at other play centers. Yet, the Palisades Playground field house remains a unique example of its type. Furthermore, the playground and field house appear to be the only playground facilities in the District of Columbia funded as part of the Public Works Administration, designed by the National Park Service, Eastern Division, Branch of Plans and Design, and which incorporates a scenic overlook as part of its design.

The Palisades 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.

The Palisades Playground qualifies for listing in the National Register under Criterion D as the site is located in an area extremely sensitive to historic and prehistoric archaeological resources. National Register-listed sites are in the immediate vicinity; two formal archaeological sites, 51NW217 and 51NW226, are located on park grounds. Historic materials associated with potentially early C&O Canal industrial sites, as well as prehistoric materials from villages and hunting camps located along the river's bluffs are both very likely on the site. Archeological testing in 2010 and 2013 indicates that the area has never been plowed nor has it had significant grading. Thus, subsurface resources have a strong chance of being undisturbed

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

Summary Paragraph:

The grounds for the Palisades Playground were acquired as part of the National Park Service's efforts to protect the C&O Canal system in the first decades of the 20th century. By 1920, the portion of the grounds northwest of Edmunds Place were under federal control. By 1929, the site's existing buildings were demolished. The parcels southeast of Edmunds Place were purchased with Public Works Administration funds in early 1936 as part of the overall playground improvement project that included the field house. In addition to the field house, amenities included a wading pool, an active game area (which was surfaced), three soft ball diamonds, a picnic area with fire grates, and a scenic overlook.

The field house was built using funds from the Public Works Administration and is a one-and-one-half-story, three-part, side-gable, brick building that is rectangular in plan. It was built in response to persistence advocacy from the Conduit Road Citizens' Associations for playground improvements. Its design follows the Colonial Revival aesthetic originally 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. The final design for the Palisades field house was greatly enlarged under the direction of Thomas Vint but incorporates Harris's field house design as a wing of the much larger structure.

Establishment of Palisades Playground & Field House

Advocacy for a fully improved playground and field house in the Palisades neighborhood dates to ca. 1922, at which time the northwestern areas of the present day playground were purchased for that purpose by the National Capital Parks.[1] 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. Acknowledging the need for a much improved system of dedicated playgrounds, the United Citizens Playground Committee studied the issue and in August 1921 recommended that the District Commissioners adopt a system of equitable distribution of playgrounds throughout Washington.[2]

[1] "New Field House is City's Model." *The Evening Star*, February 28, 1937, p. D-4.
[2] "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.

Despite the purchase of land for the Palisades Playground, improvements were not immediately undertaken. The playground areas available to the community during its first decade consisted largely of unimproved open space. The Conduit Road Citizens' Association's Fourth of July celebration hosted on the playgrounds in 1931 indicates the types of activities typical at that time. The celebration consisted of games, athletic contests, patriotic ceremonies, and an outdoor music program. An unrealized plan for Palisades Playground dated the same year also provides insight into the improvements then advocated for by the Conduit Road Citizens' Association. The plan includes four tennis courts, two basketball courts, a baseball field, and three small structures – a club house, a play house, and a field house. In early 1934, as field houses and recreation centers were being constructed at Takoma, Banneker, Twin Oaks, and Lincoln playgrounds, the Conduit Road Citizens' Association began lobbying in earnest for the completion of the Palisades playground.

Beginning in February 1934, the Conduit Road Citizens' Association went on record as favoring the completion of the Palisades Playground and began to take up the issue with the National Capital Parks Commission. The following month, residents urged the Association to include a field house as part of the completed playground. This was quickly followed in April 1934 when Alton M. Lyddane appealed to Chairman Norton of the House District Committee to procure funds for the erection of a field house at Palisades playground, citing that 500 area children lacked adequate facilities for their recreational needs. The Association also formed a Special Committee specifically focused on securing a field house at Palisades playground. These efforts were not in vein. By February 1935 the playground property had been surveyed and was considered ready for construction of a field house, dedicated play areas, and recreation equipment. It was hoped that the work would be undertaken by members of the Civilian Conservation Corps.

The decision to construct a field house at the Palisades playground was officially announced on June 15, 1935, by Frank T. Gartside, assistant superintendent of the National Capital Parks. Yet even by this time, the National Park Service had been developing site plans and field house designs for the Palisades. The funding for the field house and playground improvements was part of a $1,000,000 Public Works Administration park improvement program, with the funds coming out of the original $3,300,000,000 Public Works Administration appropriation.

The earliest known designs for a new playground and field house structure on the site date to February 6, 1935. In this plan, the field house is an "L" shaped modernist building located in the southernmost corner of the property. An alternative plan from May 2, 1935, shows a more formal and traditional design also located in the same location. By July 17, 1935, the design for the building had been reduced in size, redesigned in the Colonial Revival style, and reoriented to face true north. This design continued to be reworked with the final version completed on October 1, 1935, and signed by Thomas C. Vint as Chief Architect, Branch of Plans & Design, Eastern Division, at which time the National Park Service engineers began seeking bids for the project. This final design was subsequently approved by the Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting in New York City on October 4, 1935, and the National Capital Park and Planning Commission on October 16, 1935.

The development of the Palisades Playground and field house was in keeping with the National Park Service's principles and practices of the period. While many of the design principles were standardized, their applications were highly individual based on the unique character of each park and the site and setting selected for construction. The designs were simple and functional, but remained consistent with the architectural themes that had been developed for each park or, in new parks, took on appropriate characteristics drawn from pioneer, indigenous, or other local forms. During the 1930s, specific objectives also guided the work of the Branch of Plans and Design. Buildings were to be in harmony with the natural surroundings and secondary to the landscape. Horizontal lines were to predominate, and finally, rigid, straight lines were to be avoided wherever possible, imparting the feeling that the work was executed by pioneer craftsmen.[3]

Four firms which had submitted bids to construct the estimated $63,000 Palisades Recreation Center field house and landscape improvements project were under review by late November, 1935,with the lowest bid submitted by Lee T. Turner. C. Marshall Finnan, superintendent of the National Capital Parks, favored awarding the contract to Turner and requested that Secretary of the Interior Harry L. Ickes approve the PWA contract.

In addition to improving the playgrounds and constructing a new field house, the plan for Palisades included the purchase of additional land abutting the playground to the southeast. This was completed late in December 1935.[4] The purchase of the additional property was critical to the field house project, as its final location straddles both the original playground property and the newer addition in such a way as to provide a commanding view of the Potomac River Gorge from the structure. The field house and the view from the southern terrace were designed to function as a scenic overlook. It is interesting to note that the George Washington Memorial Parkway has a scenic overlook on the southwestern bank of the Potomac River across from the Palisades field house, making accessible the natural beauty of the Potomac River Gorge to the public. The inclusion of additional land to the Palisades Playground ensured that this view would be protected for future generations. There is no doubt that a scenic overlook was a key element of the site's design, as site plans dated February 6, 1935, and July 17, 1935, both note this feature on them respectively as "view" and "overlook."

Beginning in the late 1920s, overlooks were an important feature in designs created by the National Park Service. Overlooks provided a stopping and resting place and afforded visitors spectacular, and often panoramic, views. They ranged from simple widened areas along the road where traffic could pull over and stop to larger terraces accommodating sizable parking areas with curbing, sidewalks, and protective guardrails. They could also be combined with paths and trails. Overlooks on park roads were derivatives of the terrace form used by landscape architects to present a view. Terraces offered designers endless possibilities for presenting views to the best advantage. The earliest overlooks were designed on existing plateau like promontories of land. They were bounded by curtain like parapet walls that conformed to the natural shape of the

[3] McClelland, Linda Flint. "Historic Park Landscapes in National and State Parks" (Multiple Property Listing, National Register of Historic Places, August 8, 1995), p. 114.
[4] "Park Unit Speeds Recreation Work," *The Washington Post*, Dec. 21, 1935, p. 7.

promontory. One of the earliest overlooks of this type was the Sunrise Ridge Loop (1929-1930) on Mount Rainier's Yakima Park Road. Designed several years later, the overlook at the Palisades playground also took advantage of an existing plateau to provide a panoramic view of the Potomac River Gorge below.[5]

Construction of the field house began in early 1936 and was completed and accepted by the Government on August 21, 1936. The completed field house contained an auditorium and meeting hall, with stage, projection room, kitchen, and dressing rooms. The level above the entrance lobby contained the girls' play room and the projection room. The boy's play room was located in the basement. The Palisades field house was quickly recognized as being one of the most complete types of field houses then constructed in the District of Columbia. Interestingly, it was reported that the field house was built of used brick obtained from an abandoned orphan asylum once located on the Banneker Recreation Center property.[6]

The field house was dedicated on the evening of September 11, 1936, with a crowd of nearly 300 persons in attendance. The total reported estimated cost of the project was $60,000 and in addition to the field house included a baseball diamond, tennis courts, and a child's wading pool. The field house was described as consisting of a large auditorium, paneled chest high with oak, a movie projection room, cloak rooms, and lavatories. The following day, on September 12, the Conduit Road Citizens' Association organized a field day beginning at 2 p.m. at which an estimated 200 children participated.

The new field house at the Palisades was immediately considered the model for future playground structures at D.C. Recreation Centers. Though unfunded, C. Marshall Finnan suggested that future locations where the Palisades field house type should be considered were Langdon Park, Takoma Recreation Center, Battery Kemble, Chevy Chase, Turkey Thicket, Edgewood, Reno and Taft Playgrounds. By March 1937, the Palisades field house was considered to be the first of 26 planned for Washington, and reported to be the only playground structure constructed by the Federal Government in any American city.

The field house was designed under the supervision of Thomas Vint, National Park Service architect, and constructed by Federal works authorization. The structure was maintained by the National Capital Parks Office, with the grounds maintained by federal caretakers who were on duty from early morning to midnight due to the popularity of the playground.[7]

Designed to enrich community life by aiding residents to enjoy their leisure hours, the field house counted nearly 10,000 visitors during its first six months of operation. It also introduced new forms of recreational activity for people of all ages previously unavailable at Washington playgrounds – including dancing, singing, movies, lectures and civic association meetings. The

[5] McClelland, Linda Flint. "Historic Park Landscapes in National and State Parks" (Multiple Property Listing, National Register of Historic Places, August 8, 1995), p. 75.
[6] "Field House Proves Worth to Community," *The Evening Star*, Nov. 22, 1936, p. A-5.
[7] "Federal Provision for Recreation House Here Unique," *The Evening Star*, Mar. 6, 1937, p. B-1.

most popular of these was dancing, with an orchestra providing the music to swaying couples nearly every weekend.[8]

Today, the building remains largely the same as do much of the grounds. Since 1936, a soccer field and basketball court have been added to the grounds. As part of a Department of Parks and Recreation playground improvement program, Play DC, completed in July 2013 the playground area was improved and a skate spot was added next to the basketball court. The Play DC concept for Palisades played on the history of the area through play equipment and designs that featured Native American symbols. The Potomac River, designed into the play area's surfacing, flows through new equipment for younger and older children, a new shade structure, and into a new spray feature. Outside of the footprint of the old play space, new amenities included outdoor fitness equipment, a small skate spot, and an expanded garden area.[9]

Early History of the Area

The first people known to populate the vicinity which includes the Palisades Playground were the Algonquin Indians of the Powhattan Confederacy. They had villages down in the Potomac Gorge as well as atop the bluffs. No one knows when the first indigenous American settled in the Palisades, but the area would have been attractive due to its proximity to the Fall Line and its strategic location atop an ancient river terrace overlooking the Potomac River.

For much of the Colonial period through the Nineteenth Century, the Palisades area was rural and sparsely populated. A review of the Boschke map (1861) shows a small scattering of rural structures amid woods and fields. It was not until the early part of the Twentieth Century, with the establishment of a trolley line running through the community in 1902 connecting D.C. to Glen Echo Park, that property began to be subdivided in anticipation of a suburban community. The growth of the community, and their concern for improvements led to the founding of the Conduit Road Citizens' Association in 1916.

Early maps of the area confirm that the Palisades Playground site has been relatively untouched by time. The Boschke map of 1861 shows that nearly the entire site was owned by R. R. Roberts during that period. The map shows the Roberts property as having two frame structures, some open space, woods, and possibly an orchard. A review of the 1903 Baists maps shows that the property had been nearly equally divided into thirds by that time, but still with few improvements. This remained the case until the property was purchased for the creation of the playground site.

Conduit Road Citizens' Association

The Conduit Road Citizens' Association organized in response to residents along Conduit Road (today MacArthur Boulevard) wanting to improve pedestrian safety and the need for high-

[8] IBID.
[9] "Play DC: Palisades Playground Renovation," DC.Gov Department of Parks and Recreation Web site. Viewed January 18, 2015. Available at: http://dpr.dc.gov/page/play-dc-palisades-playground-renovation

pressure water mains in the westernmost section of the District of Columbia – an area bounded by the Potomac River to the southwest, Foxhall Road to the east, and Loughboro Road to the north. In October, 1916, 50 residents of the section, fearful of the fire hazards surrounding their homes as the result of a lack of adequate water supply, met in the parish hall of St. David's Church and adopted the name Conduit Road Citizens' Association. The Association changed its name to MacArthur Boulevard Citizens' Association in 1942, following the renaming of Conduit Road and eventually to the Palisades Citizens' Association in 1949-50.

Upon its founding, the Association labored for the improvement of civic conditions in their area. In addition to advocating for high-pressure water mains, they quickly identified the need for adequate playground facilities needed by the children of the area, residential zoning of the area (with the exception of places then in commercial use), the widening of Conduit Road, street lights, and underground electrical service. Among the Association's early successes were better street car service to the area, a bus line to Norton Street, the founding of a kindergarten at Reservoir School, and the establishment of a branch public library.

By 1934, the Association's work had helped to establish recreational institutions in their community, including public parks and playgrounds, tennis courts, and baseball fields. It also played a role in organizing Boy Scout Troup No. 61. With these accomplishments in hand, the residents once again focused on improving the Palisades playground. At a meeting held on February 22, 1934, the Association went on record as favoring the completion of the Palisades playground and began their work with the National Capital Parks Commission to that end. By March, members of the community requested that construction of a field house be included as part of the Palisades project, a request that increasingly drew supporters. In response, the National Capital Parks announced on June 15, 1935, that a new field house would be constructed on the Palisades playground and that the project would be among the first jobs contracted for as part of the $1,000,000 Public Works Administration park improvement program. Additional land was purchase for the Palisades playground by the end of December 1934 and construction of the field house commenced, being completed and officially dedicated on September 11, 1936. The Conduit Road Citizens' Association organized a special field day to celebrate the new field house on September 12, 1936, in which approximately 200 children participated.

Architect of the Field House

Thomas Chalmers Vint (1894-1967) Chief Architect of the Branch of Plans in Designs, Washington, D.C. (1934-1938)[10]

For nearly 40 years, Thomas Vint played a major role in the physical development of national parks and monuments. His influence began during the infancy of a defined park architecture program through the beginning of the Mission 66 period. The 1920 University of California graduate studied for a time at the Ecole de Architecture, University of Lyon, France. His

[10] Based on: Culpin, Mary Shivers. "Biographical Vignettes: Thomas Vint." From National Park Service: The First 75 Years. Philadelphia(?): Eastern National Park & Monument Association, 1990. Viewed January 6, 2015. Available at: http://www.cr.nps.gov/history/online_books/sontag/vint.htm

National Park Service career began in 1923 as a draftsman working under the well-known rustic architects Gilbert Stanley Underwood and Herbert Maier in Yosemite National Park. In 1927 he assumed the chief landscape architect's position and remained in command of landscape architecture and architecture for the National Park Service until his retirement in the 1960s.

Vint began his National Park Service career at a very challenging time. The late 1920s and early 1930s were times of extensive construction of roads, housing, visitor lodging, and campgrounds. Assembling a staff of fine, creative landscape architects and architects, Vint instilled the philosophy of harmonizing the buildings or structures with the environment. Vint co-authored an agreement with the Bureau of Public Roads in which the bureau supplied the technical documents and the construction of major road projects, and the National Park Service provided the landscaping design and details. He also developed the idea of master plans for parks, which provided comprehensive planning for all important phases of planning, design, and construction. Vint took a major role in the organization of the Historic American Building Survey sponsored by the National Park Service, the Library of Congress, and the American Institute of Architects to preserve a record of buildings important in American history. Toward the end of his career, he demonstrated far-sighted leadership as chairman of the Steering Committee in developing Mission 66. At many parks or monuments today, Thomas Vint's influence can still be seen in the fine rustic buildings or bridges or, more subtly, in the manner in which the developed areas blend with the environment.

Under Vint, the National Park Service landscape program expanded into a single process of park planning and development based on the principles of landscape preservation and harmonious design. Vint offered the service a varied background of practical skills in architecture and landscape architecture. He had many years of field experience working out practical and aesthetic solutions. He was able to translate the vision of administrators and park superintendents into plans for interconnecting systems of scenic roads, trails, and developed area and into drawings that fulfilled the functional and aesthetic requirements of park facilities. He developed a highly successful program of training his staff, assembled from several fields of study and areas of expertise. He was the "genius" behind a program of master plans on which the National Park Service relied for many years, and he coordinated a service wide program of landscape preservation and harmonization.[11]

During Vint's leadership, five-year plans evolved into a program of comprehensive planning that coordinated the NPS's growing programs and brought together the divergent interests of landscape preservation and park development into a single, fully orchestrated vision for the future. In 1929, park development plans became mandatory. The plans were intended to give a general picture of the park showing the circulation system (roads and trails), the communication system (telephone and telegraph), wilderness areas and developed areas.[12]

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[11] McClelland, Linda Flint. "Historic Park Landscapes in National and State Parks" (Multiple Property Listing, National Register of Historic Places, August 8, 1995), p. 67.
[12] McClelland, Linda Flint. "Historic Park Landscapes in National and State Parks" (Multiple Property Listing, National Register of Historic Places, August 8, 1995), p. 106.

In 1934, Vint became Chief Architect of the Branch of Plans in Designs in Washington, D.C., then Chief of Planning in 1938 and, with the start of World War II, Chief of the Division of Design and Construction.

The Palisades field house and playground was designed under Thomas Vint's supervision as a Public Works Administration project.[13] An inspection of the drawings associated with the field house and grounds indicates that Vint played an active role in its design and setting. Plans for the improvement of the playground dated 1931 show a grouping of small buildings at the northern end of the site. Failure to execute this plan led to earnest community advocacy for the construction of a field house in early 1934, coinciding with Vint's move to Washington as Chief Architect of the Branch of Plans in Designs. The Palisades field house project was approved in June 1935 and given priority as one of the first to be contracted for as part of a $1,000,000 Public Works Administration park improvement program. Preliminary designs for the field house were completed by July 22, 1935, and show an adaptation of the Albert Harris field house design first constructed at Mitchell Park in 1931. However, the Hall-and-Parlor Colonial Revival field house designed by Harris was greatly increased in mass and expanded by making it the central part of a three part design, which is rigidly symmetrical. The design shows the building constructed of natural stone.

The final design, dated October 1, 1935, retains the three-part massing, but adopts a red-brick asymmetrical design. In this design, the eastern wing closely resembles the Hall-and-Parlor design developed by Harris and incorporates it into the larger structure. The result is a building that has less formality that the preliminary design. Large playground structures prior to the Palisades field house – i.e. Anacostia, Banneker, and Takoma – where designed as formal Colonial Revival buildings. The departure from this precedent for a large recreation facility is significant.

The overall design's asymmetry, the structure's placement toward the southern-central section of the playground, and the building's orientation facing north and south show the hand of both a master architect and landscape designer. The siting of the building not only allowed for impressive views of the Potomac River Gorge and the Virginia shoreline from the structure, but were also on axis with the entrance to the playground via Edmund Place, thus creating a scenic vista upon its approach. As the playground itself does not have a north-south orientation, placing the structure whereby it faced true north further created an impression of informality as one approached the building as it was on the bias rather than in alignment with the property's borders, enhancing the buildings scenic character to the overall playground design. Furthermore, the incorporation of a scenic overlook, picnic areas, fire grates, and wooded trails are all in keeping with Vint's idea of creating park master plans.

The Public Works Administration and National Parks

The Public Works Administration (PWA), part of the New Deal of 1933, was a large-scale public works construction agency in the United States headed by Secretary of the Interior Harold

[13] "Federal Provision for Recreation House Here Unique." *The Evening Star*, March 6, 1937, p. B-1.

L. Ickes. It was created by the National Industrial Recovery Act in June 1933 in response to the Great Depression. It built large-scale public works such as dams, bridges, hospitals, and schools. Its goals were to spend $3.3 billion in the first year, and $6 billion in all, to provide employment, stabilize purchasing power, and help revive the economy. Most of the spending came in two waves in 1933-35, and again in 1938. Originally called the Federal Emergency Administration of Public Works, it was renamed the Public Works Administration in 1935 and shut down in 1943.

The PWA spent over $6 billion in contracts to private construction firms that did the actual work. It created an infrastructure that generated national and local pride in the 1930s and remains vital seven decades later. The PWA headquarters in Washington planned projects, which were built by private construction companies hiring workers on the open market.

Between July 1933 and March 1939 the PWA funded and administered the construction of more than 34,000 projects including airports, large electricity-generating dams, major warships for the Navy, and bridges, as well as 90% of the new schools and one-third of the hospitals built in 1933–1939.

Beginning in the spring of 1933, New Deal programs made possible the development and improvement of national parks at an unprecedented speed. In the early 1930s, several parks, including the proposed Shenandoah park, were already receiving aid through a fledgling program of emergency appropriations instituted as the nation's concern for economic stabilization grew. The programs implemented by President Franklin D. Roosevelt to boost employment in early 1933 proved the impetus for a massive expansion of park development, from the construction of roads and administrative facilities to forest preservation, landscape naturalization, roadside cleanup, and campground construction. Above all, the programs of the 1930s put into operation and proved the value of the master planning process that had been spearheaded by the NPS Landscape Division under Thomas Vint.[14]

The national parks used PWA funds to build a wide variety of structures, from administrative and utilitarian projects such as patrol cabins, fire lookouts, and blacksmith shops, to landscape structures such as gates and steps, to utility systems and facilities for visitor use. In all of these projects, emphasis was placed on principles of landscape protection and harmonious design.[15]

Some of the most famous PWA projects are the Triborough Bridge and the Lincoln Tunnel in New York City, the Grand Coulee Dam in Washington state, the longest continuous sidewalk in the world along 6 ½ miles of Bayshore Blvd. in Tampa, Florida, and the Overseas Highway connecting Key West, Florida, to the mainland. The PWA also electrified the Pennsylvania Railroad between New York and Washington, DC. At the local level it built courthouses, schools, hospitals and other public facilities that remain in use in the 21st century. PWA records indicate that 14 of their projects were in Washington, D.C. These include the Small Mammal

[14] McClelland, Linda Flint. "Historic Park Landscapes in National and State Parks" (Multiple Property Listing, National Register of Historic Places, August 8, 1995), p. 110.
[15] McClelland, Linda Flint. "Historic Park Landscapes in National and State Parks" (Multiple Property Listing, National Register of Historic Places, August 8, 1995), p. 113.

House and the Elephant House at the National Zoo, the Recorder of Deeds building, the Library of Congress's John Adams Annex, the Blue Plains Disposal Plant, and the Municipal Center.

In this context, the development of the Palisades Playground and Field House as a PWA project is somewhat unusual as it is much smaller in scale than many PWA projects. Playground projects – when undertaken – were generally accomplished through other New Deal programs and often considered of lesser priority. The Palisades was undoubtedly an important project to the National Park Service through which it was able to continue to develop ideas related to architecture and landscape design that were applied in National Parks nationwide. While the Palisades Playground itself was not "officially" a National Park, it's development and design by the National Park Service resulted in a large D.C. playground that adhered to the master planning principles of the Park Service making it unique among Washington's recreation centers.

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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:

_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
_X_ Other State agency
____ Federal agency
____ Local government
____ University
____ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 13.7 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:

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

Square 1415S, Lot 0802 in the District of Columbia

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

Original extent of playground.

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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: March 5, 2015

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.)

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: Palisades Playground and Field House

City or Vicinity: Washington

County: N/A State: DC

Photographer: Kent Boese

Date Photographed: January 1, 2015; January 24, 2015; February 8, 2015

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

1) Entrance to Palisades Playground, general view west from Sherrier Place
   1 of 30

2) General view southeast towards field house from soccer field
   2 of 30

3) View northwest from field house toward basketball court and skate park
   3 of 30

4) View northeast from field house toward playground
   4 of 30

5) View south toward field house from home plate of baseball diamond
   5 of 30

6) View north toward tennis courts from picnic area
   6 of 30

7) View south toward field house from north end of tennis courts
7 of 30

8) View southwest toward soccer field from tennis courts
8 of 30

9) View of wooded area at northwest end of property
9 of 30

10) Remains of fire grate #1 located at eastern end of picnic area
10 of 30

11) Remains of fire grate #2 located at northern end of picnic area
11 of 30

12) Remains of fire grate #3 located in wooded area at northeastern border of property
12 of 30

13) Field House, north elevation
13 of 30

14) Field House, east elevation
14 of 30

15) Field House, south elevation
15 of 30

16) Field House, west elevation
16 of 30

17) Field House southern terrace, view from southeast
17 of 30

18) Field House southern terrace, view from west
18 of 30

19) Scenic Overlook, view south from field house with view of Potomac Gorge, Virginia, and George Washington Memorial Parkway
19 of 30

20) Scenic Overlook park bench located southwest of field house
20 of 30

21) Scenic Overlook park benches located southeast of field house
21 of 30

22) Palisades Field House interior, vestibule, view from south
22 of 30

23) Palisades Field House interior, vestibule, view from the southwest
23 of 30

24) Palisades Field House interior, office, view from west
24 of 30

25) Palisades Field House interior, auditorium, view from east
25 of 30

26) Palisades Field House interior, auditorium, view from west
26 of 30

27) Palisades Field House interior, second floor hallway
27 of 30

28) Palisades Field House interior, second floor projection room
28 of 30

29) Palisades Field House interior, second floor girls' playroom, view from east
29 of 30

30) Palisades Field House interior, second floor girls' playroom, view from west
30 of 30

Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
February 8, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
Entrance to Palisades Playground, General View west from Sherrier Place
1/30

Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
February 8, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
General View Southeast Towards Field House from Soccer Field
2/30

Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
February 8, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
View Northwest from Field House Toward Basketball court and Skate Park
3/30

Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
February 8, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
View Northeast From Field House Toward Playground
4/30

Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
February 8, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
View South Toward Field House From Home Plate of Baseball Diamond
5/30

Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
February 8, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
View North Toward Tennis Courts from Picnic Area
6/30

Palisades Playground and Field House
Name of Property

Washington, D.C.
County and State

Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
February 8, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
View South Toward Field House From North End of Tennis Courts
7/30

Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
February 8, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
View Southwest Toward Soccer Field From Tennis Courts
8/30

Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
February 8, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
View of Wooded Area at Northwest end of Property
9/30

Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
February 8, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
Remains of Fire Grate #1 Located at Eastern End of Picnic Area
10/30

Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
February 8, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
Remains of Fire Grate #2 Located at Northern End of Picnic Area
11/30

Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
February 8, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
Remains of Fire Grate #3 Located in Wooded Area at Northeastern Border of Property
12/30

Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
February 8, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
Field House, North Elevation
13/30

Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
February 8, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
Field House, East Elevation
14/30

Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
January 1, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
Field House, South Elevation
15/30

Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
January 1, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
Field House, West Elevation
16/30

Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
January 24, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
Field House Southern Terrace, View from Southeast
17/30

Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
January 24, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
Field House Southern Terrace, View from West
18/30

Palisades Playground and Field House

Washington, DC

February 8, 2015

Kent Boese

Historic Washington Architecture

Scenic Overlook, View South from Field House with View of Potomac Gorge, Virginia, and George Washington Memorial Parkway

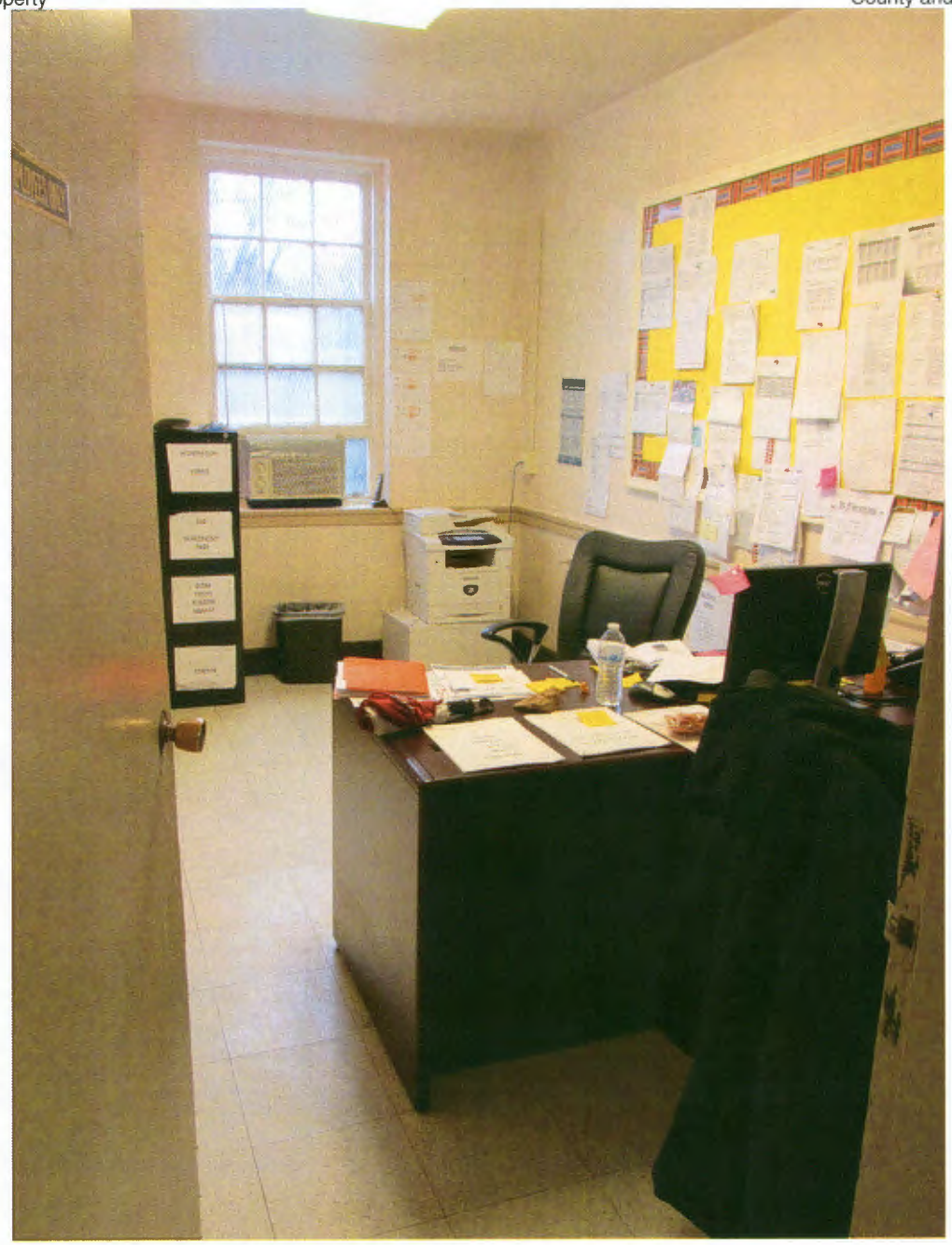
19/30

Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
February 8, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
Scenic Overlook Park Bench Located Southwest of Field House
20/30

Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
February 8, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
Scenic Overlook Park Benches Located Southeast of Field House
21/30

Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
February 8, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
Palisades Field House Interior, Vestibule, View from south
22/30

Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
February 8, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
Palisades Field House Interior, Vestibule, View from southwest
23/30



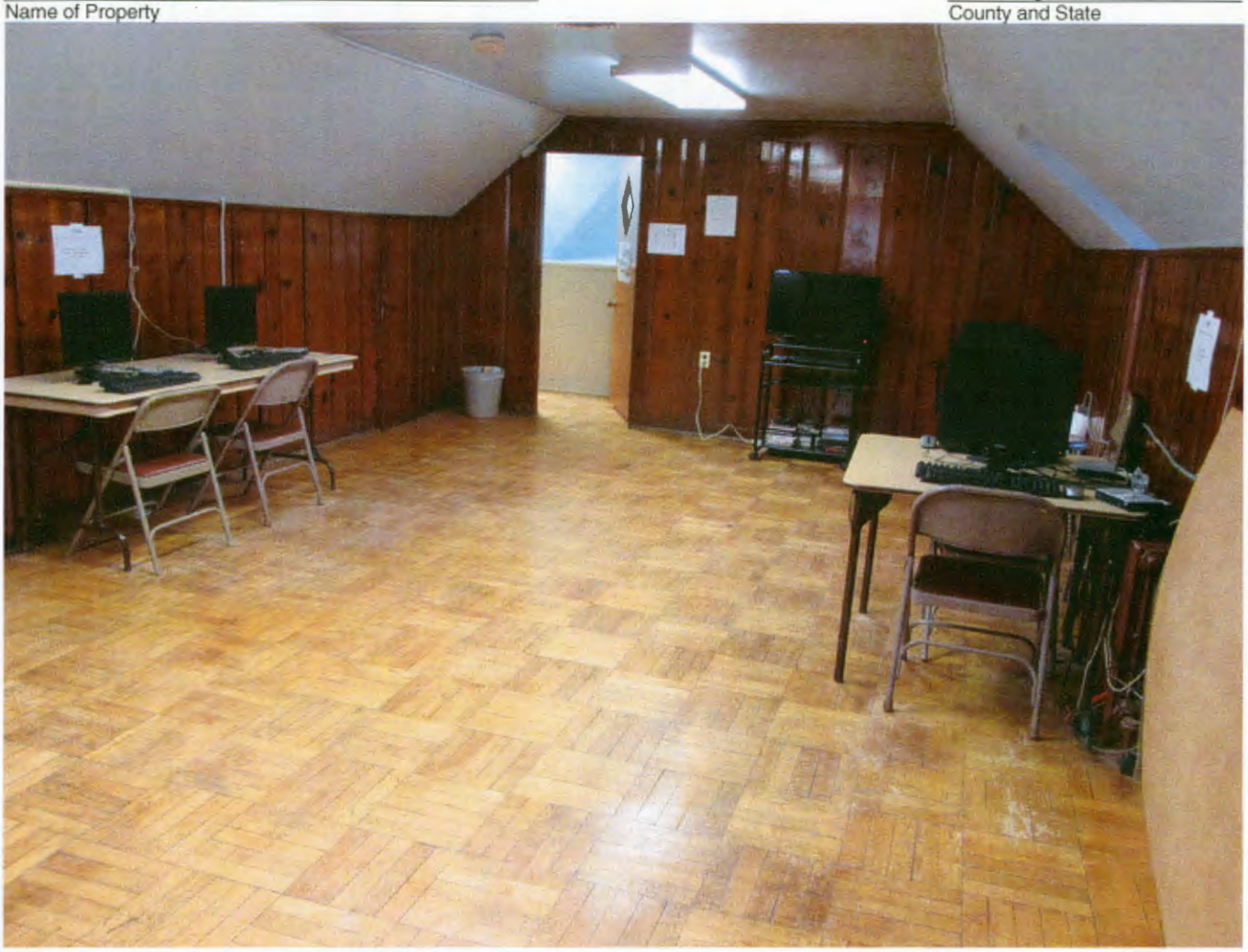
Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
February 8, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
Palisades Field House Interior, Office, View from west
24/30

Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
February 8, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
Palisades Field House Interior, Auditorium, View from east
25/30

Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
February 8, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
Palisades Field House Interior, Auditorium, View from west
26/30

Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
February 8, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
Palisades Field House Interior, Second Floor Hallway
27/30

Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
February 8, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
Palisades Field House Interior, Second Floor Projection Room
28/30



Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
February 8, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
Palisades Field House Interior, Second Floor Girls' Playroom, View from east
29/30

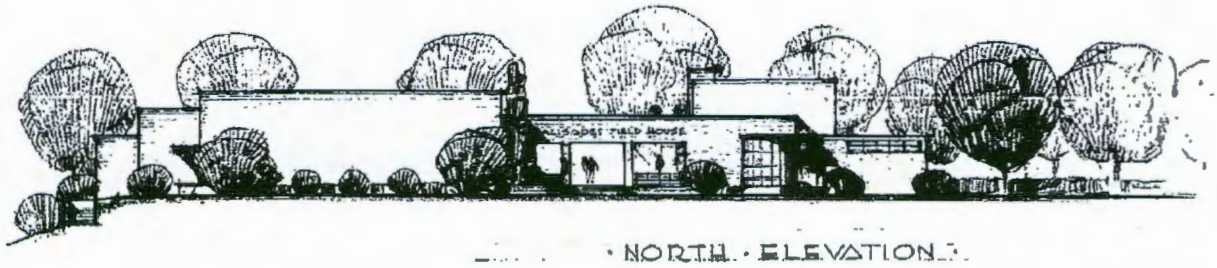
Palisades Playground and Field House
Washington, DC
February 8, 2015
Kent Boese
Historic Washington Architecture
Palisades Field House Interior, Second Floor Girls' Playroom, View from west
30/30

Site Plan:

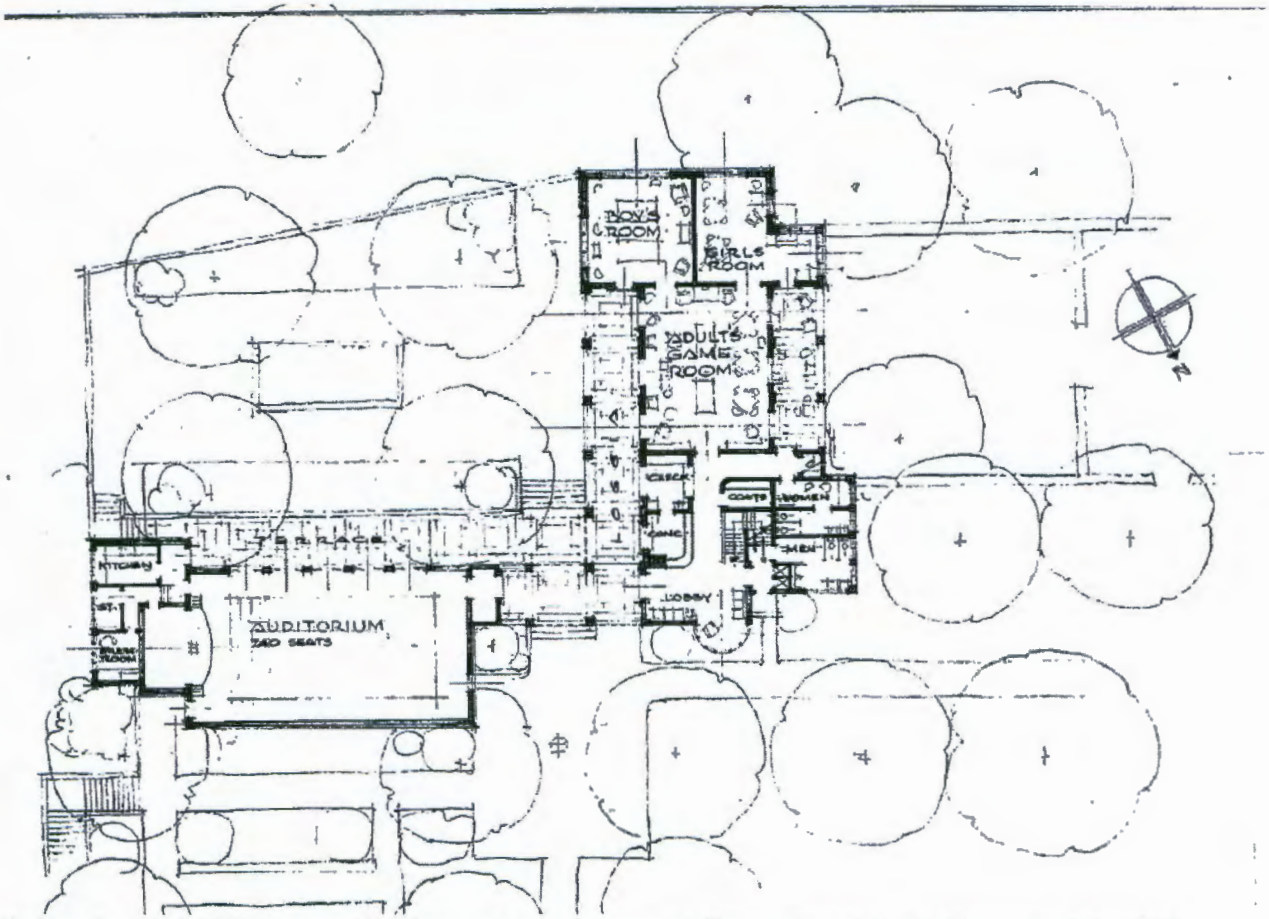
Site Plan from ArcGIS (viewed December 25, 2014)

Historic Photographs

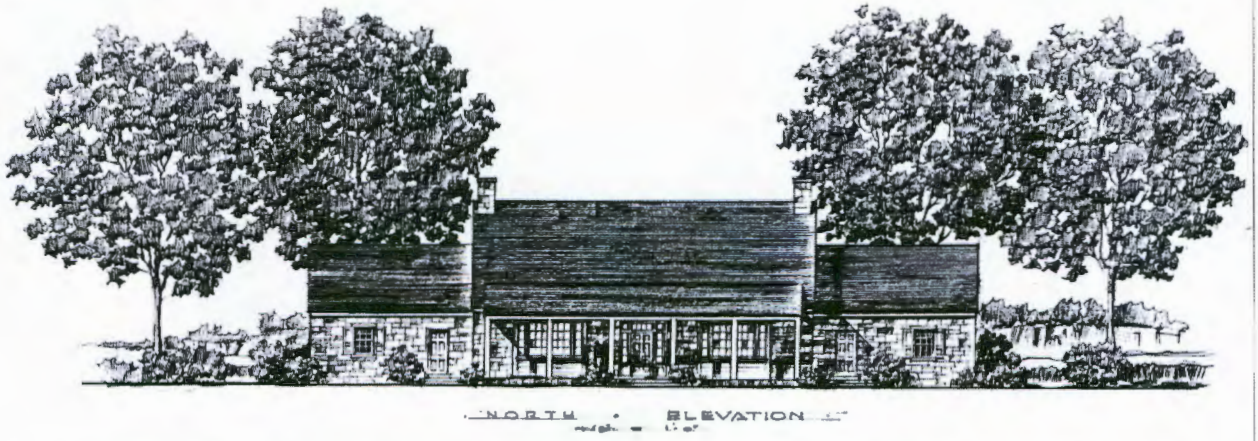
Palisades Field House, view from the east. Photo from the D.C. Public Library Washingtoniana Star Collection, dated February 17, 1939.



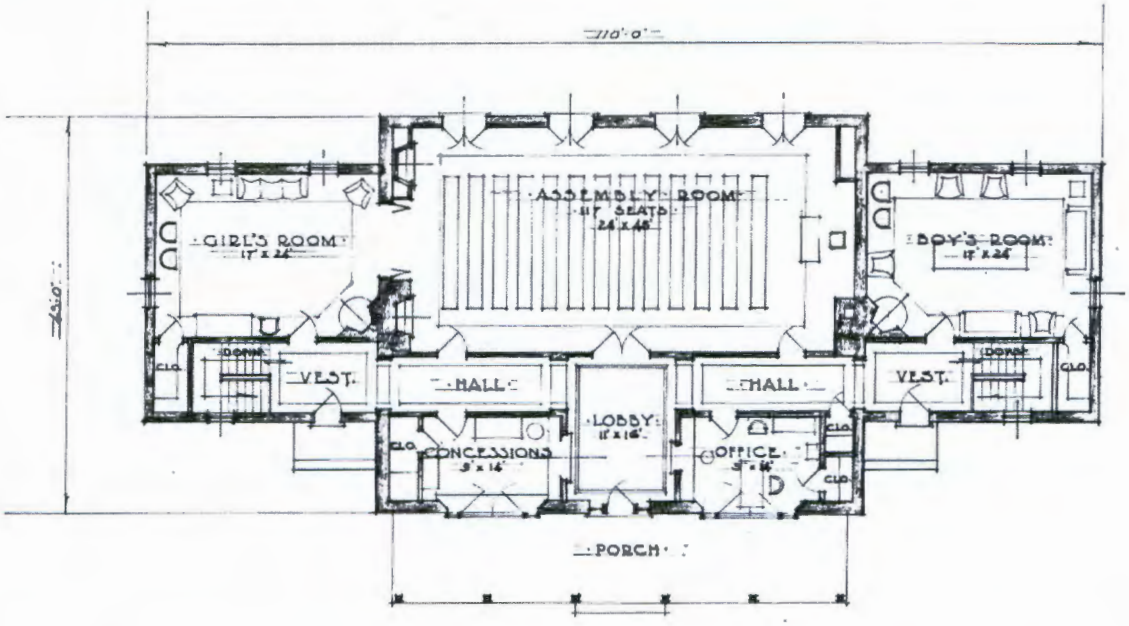
Palisades Field House, preliminary design concept from plans dated February 20, 1935



Palisades Field House, preliminary design concept floor plan dated February 20, 1935

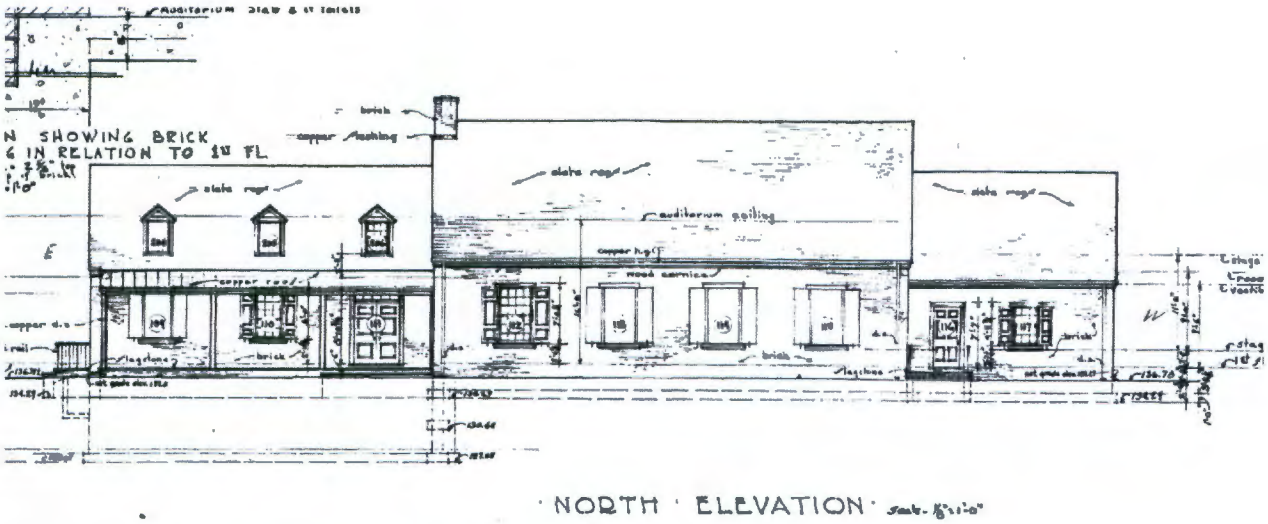


Palisades Field House, preliminary design concept from plans dated July 22, 1935.

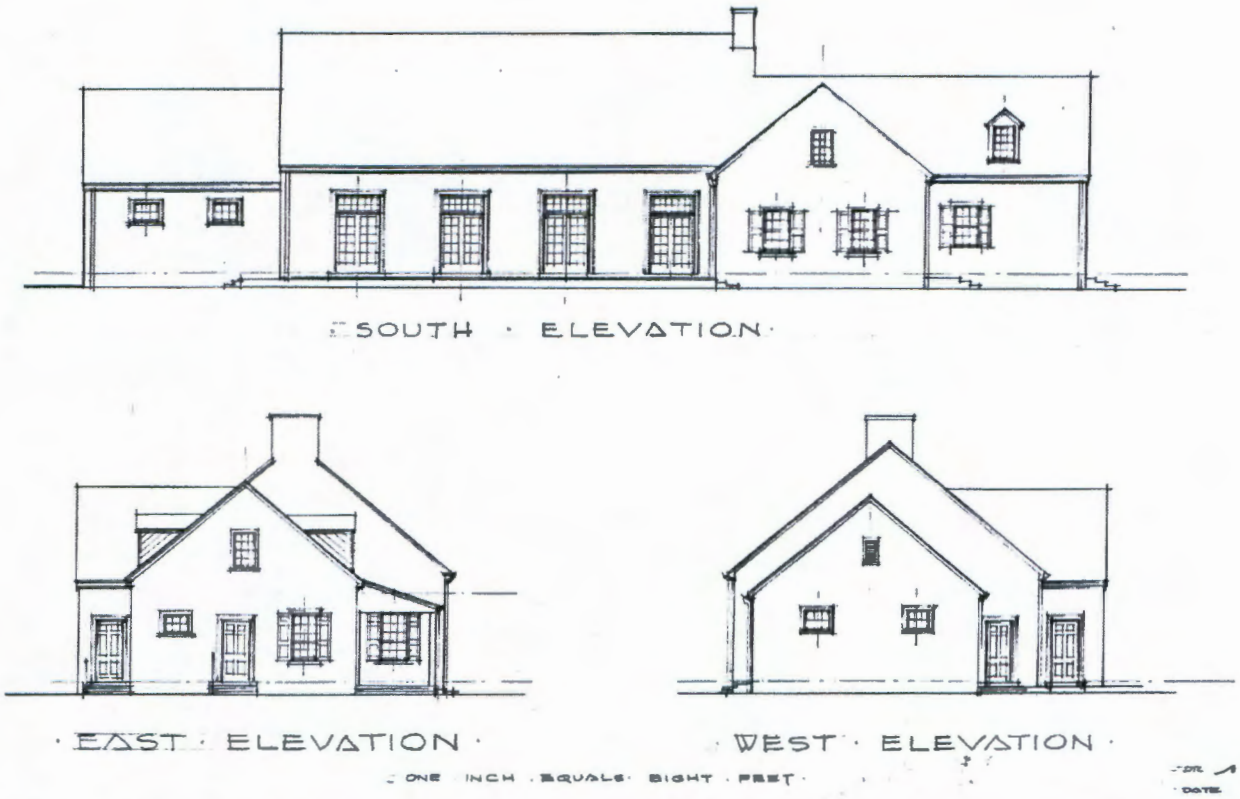


Palisades Field House, preliminary design concept floor plan dated July 22, 1935.

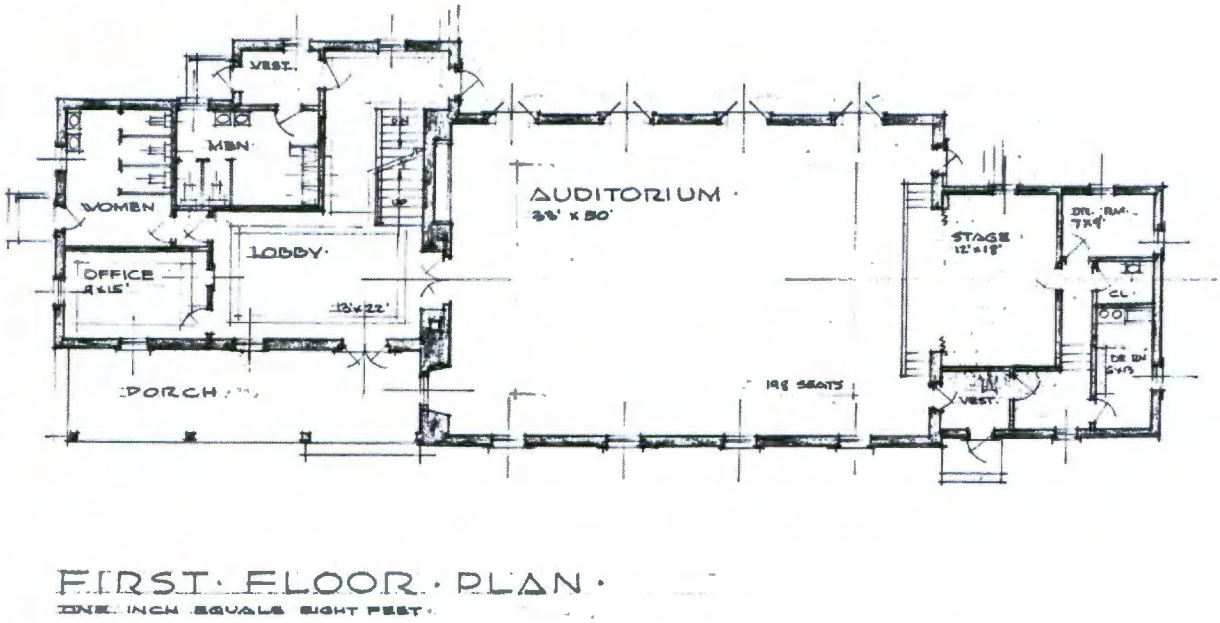
Palisades Field House, final design from plans dated October 1, 1935 with signatures of Thomas C. Vint and C. Marshall Finnan and stamped approval from the Commission of Fine Arts dated October 4, 1935.



Palisades Field House, final design from plans dated October 1, 1935.

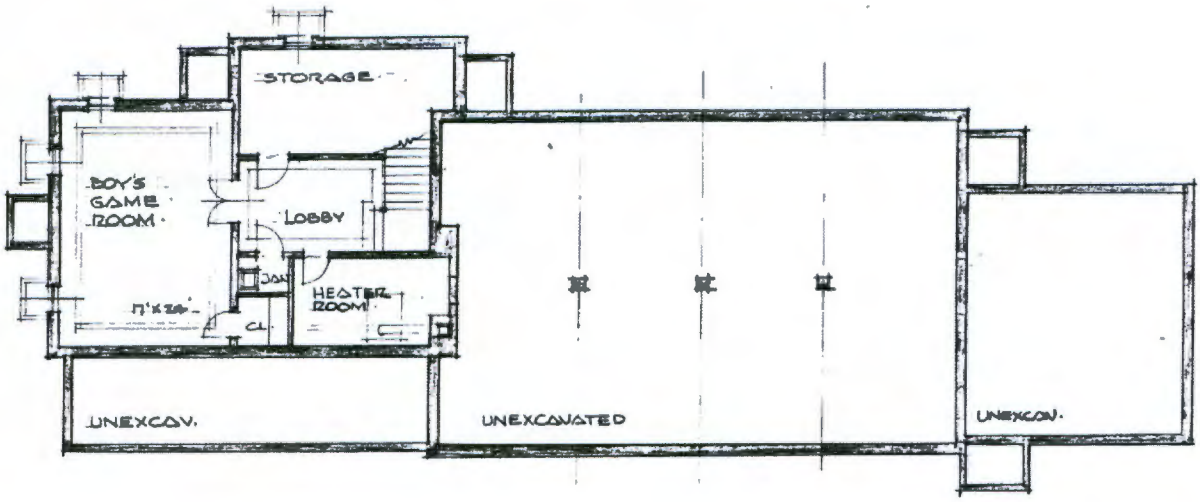


Palisades Field House, final design for south, east, and west elevations from plans dated October 1, 1935.



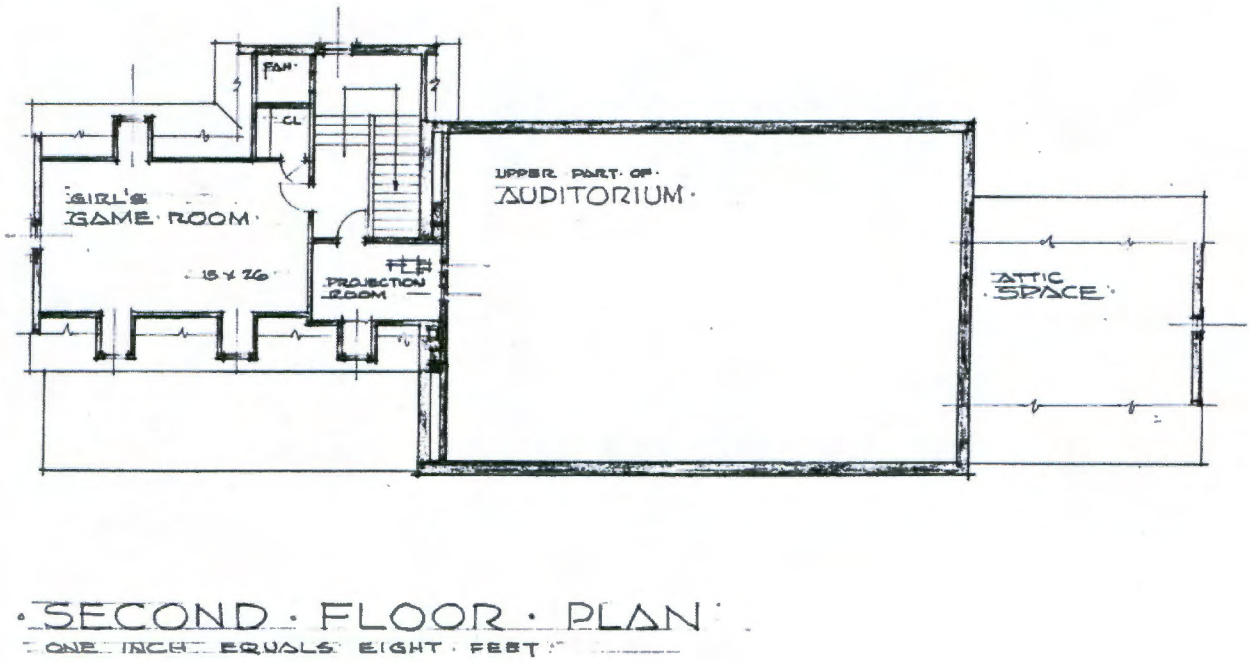
FIRST · FLOOR · PLAN ·
ONE INCH EQUALS EIGHT FEET.

Palisades Field House, final design first floor plan dated October 1, 1935.

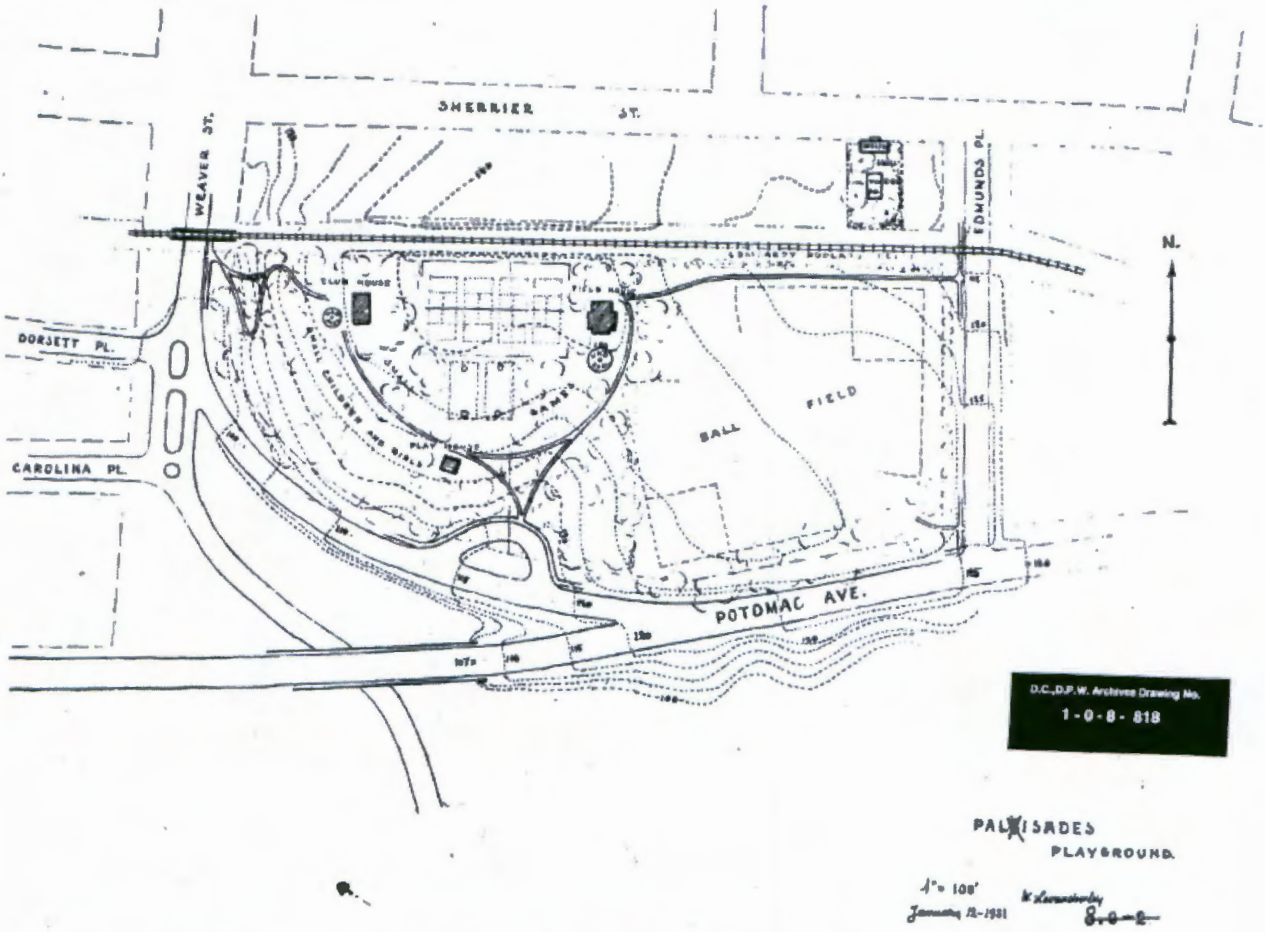


BASEMENT · PLAN ·
ONE INCH EQUALS EIGHT FEET.

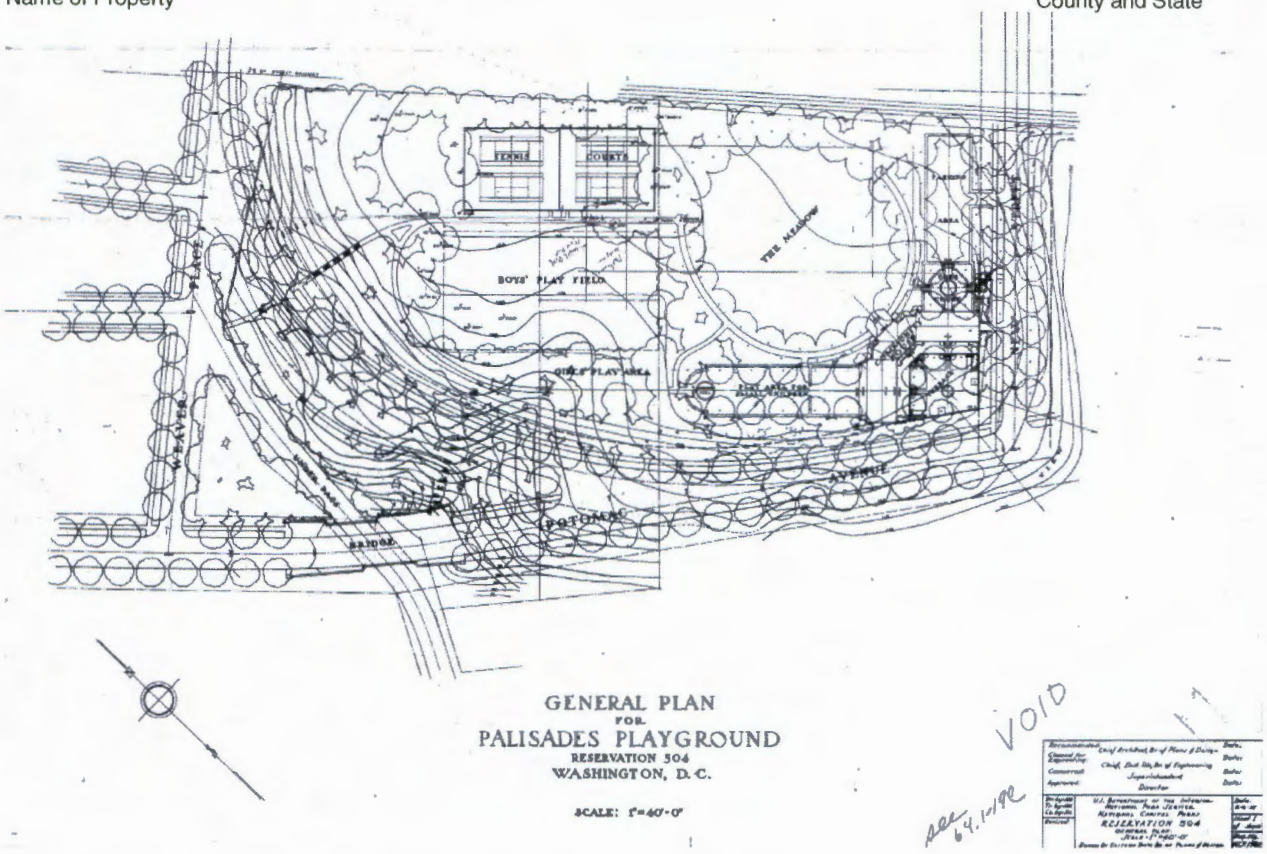
Palisades Field House, final design basement floor plan dated October 1, 1935.



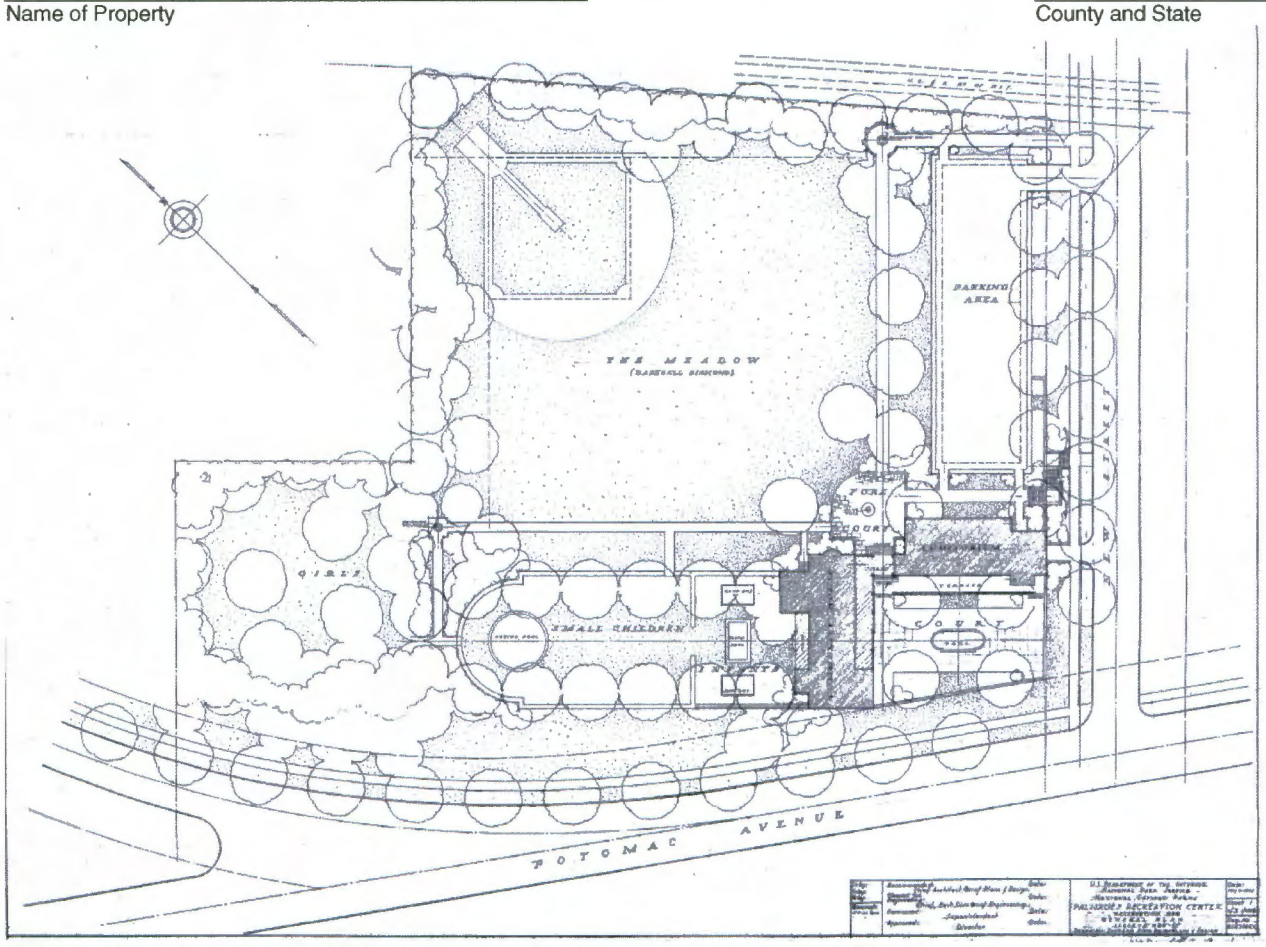
Palisades Field House, final design second floor plan dated October 1, 1935.



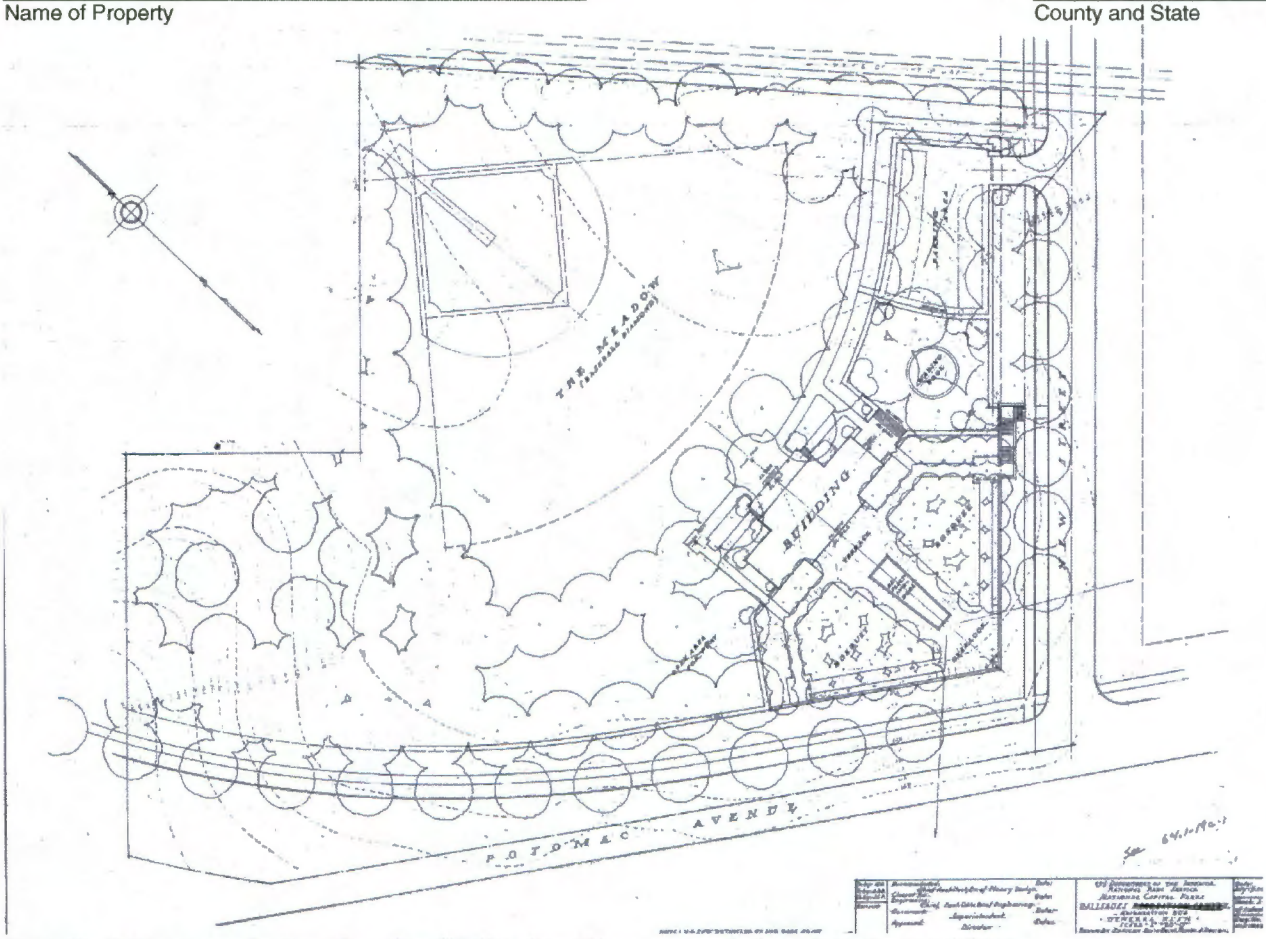
Proposed site plan for Palisades Playground dated January 12, 1931



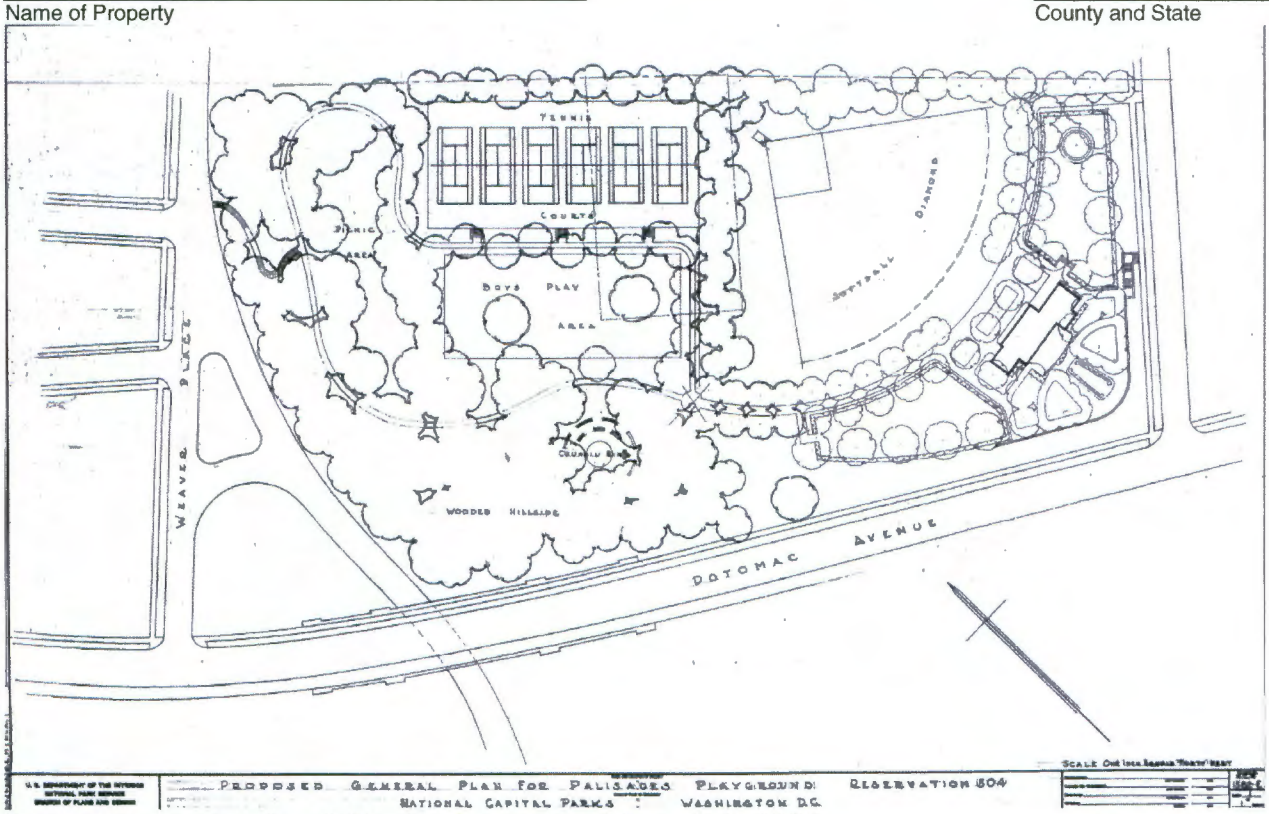
Proposed site plan for Palisades Playground dated February 6, 1935.



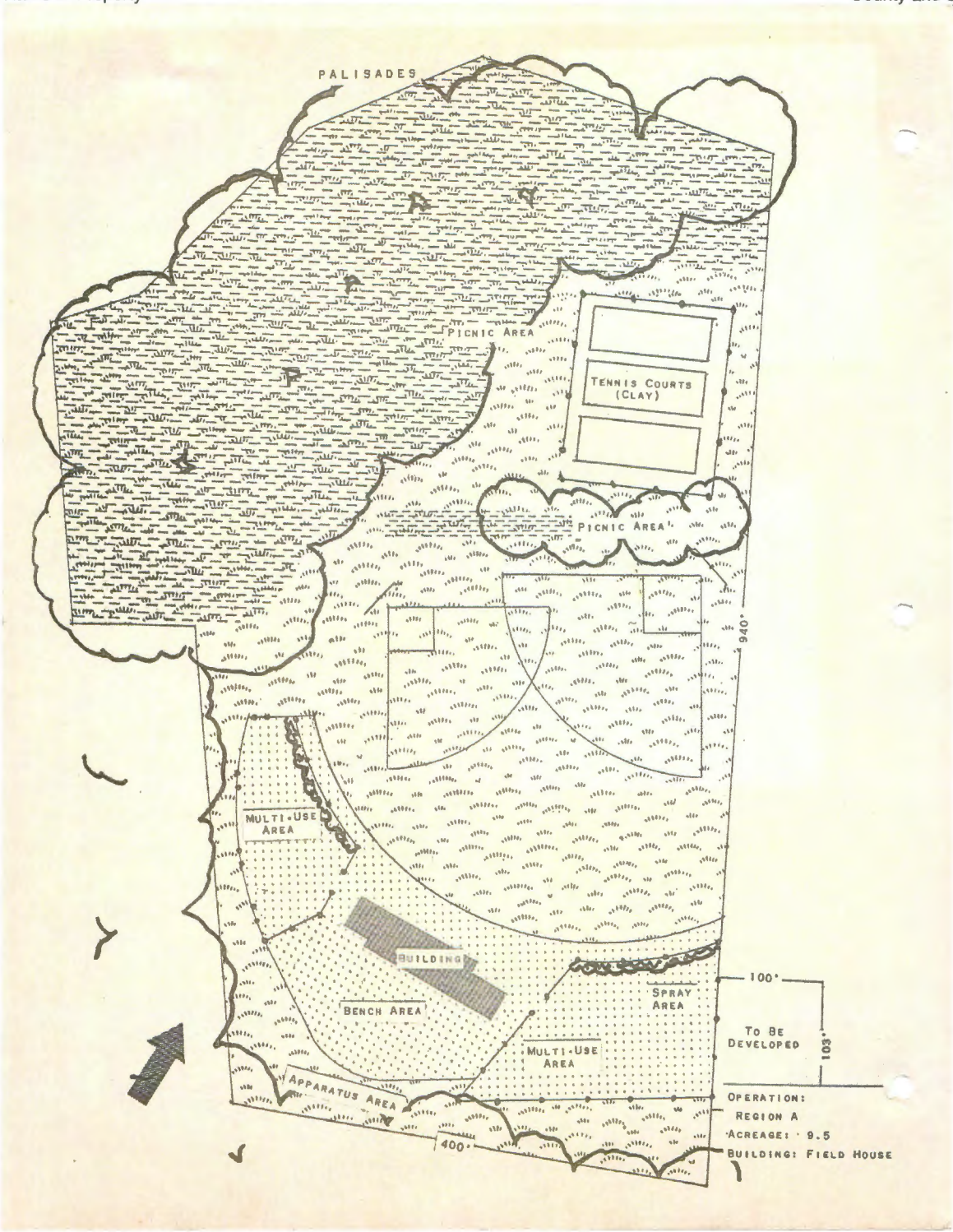
Detail of Proposed site plan for Palisades Playground dated May 2, 1935.



Detail of Proposed site plan for Palisades Playground dated July 17, 1935.



Proposed site plan for Palisades Playground from late 1935.



Site Plan of Palisades Playground from *Manual of Facilities* (Washington, D.C.: Recreation Department, January 1960)

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.