

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 *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. 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. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word process, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District

other names Lower Rock Creek Valley Historic District

2. Location

street & number Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway

☐ not for publication

city or town Washington

☐ vicinity

state D.C.

code DC

county n/a

code 001

zip 20008 20009

20242 20037 20007

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, 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 ☐ nationally ☒ statewide ☐ locally. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments).

John M. Buckner Jr. SNPD
Signature of certifying officer/Title

1/31/05
Date

National Historic Preservation Office
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. (☐ See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Janet Snyder Haddock
Signature of certifying officer/Title

3/18/2005
Date

National Park Service
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

I hereby, certify that this property is:

☐ entered in the National Register.

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the National Register.

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ Determined not eligible for the National Register.

☐ removed from the National Register.

☐ other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

Final
(as revised 1/2005)

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☐ other (explain): _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

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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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	3	buildings
8	3	sites
15	9	structures
3	3	objects
28	18	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

Parkways of the National Capital Region, 1913-1965

**number of contributing resource previously
listed in the National Register**

4 (Stone Seawall, C&O Canal, Godey Lime Kilns, Dumbarton Bridge)

6. Function of Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE: natural feature

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING: waterworks

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING: manufacturing facility

LANDSCAPE: park

RECREATION and CULTURE: outdoor recreation

TRANSPORTATION: road-related

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE: natural feature

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING: waterworks

LANDSCAPE: park

RECREATION and CULTURE: outdoor recreation

TRANSPORTATION: road-related

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Designed Historic Landscape

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation

walls

roof

other

vegetation, asphalt, stone, concrete, brick

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

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Summary

The property known as the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway occupies the gorge and rim of the lower Rock Creek Valley (the section of the valley south of the National Zoological Park) and a stretch of land along the Potomac riverfront. The linear park comprises approximately 180 acres; it varies in width from a couple dozen feet at its southern end to more than 500 feet near the northern boundary. The riverfront incorporates a grassy embankment and the valley contains rock outcroppings, a variety of hardwood groves, a myriad of shrubs and dense understory, invasive vines, and a few grassy swards with specimen trees. The historic district incorporates a variety of extant nineteenth-century industrial structures, the earliest dates to 1828. Bridges are the most prominent extant cultural resources. The earliest bridge to span the valley was erected at M Street in 1788; the oldest existing bridge was completed in 1915. The last contributing bridges were erected across the valley in 1941. Of the thirteen contributing bridges, eight span the valley. Several stone retaining walls exist near bridge abutments, steep embankments, and along the creek. The dominating feature of the park is the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway. Authorized in 1913, the parkway was established to provide a landscaped connection between the Mall and Potomac Park, at the heart of the city, and the National Zoological and Rock Creek Parks, in the northwest quadrant. The approximately 3.1 miles of roadway begins at Lincoln [Memorial] Circle, extends along the Potomac riverfront, and then traverses the entire lower valley.¹ The road and the various trails generally follow the path of the creek. Although originally conceived as a parkway for carriages, equestrians, and pedestrian strolling, the protracted funding resulted in design changes that accommodated the automobile. Beginning in the early 1920s, construction lasted for more than two decades. The first area within the park opened in 1923, while the earliest section of road became usable in 1930. The final section of roadway was completed in 1936. Between the two ends are six entrance- or exit-ramps. Over time, various minor changes to the path of the roadway occurred. Initially, the roadway connected to the Zoo ford and road and was useable only if the height of the creek and Zoo hours permitted. Today, the parkway's northern end incorporates three points of termination, with exits to Calvert Street, Connecticut Avenue, and Beach Drive; the permanent connection to Rock Creek Park via Beach Drive, the Zoo Road Bridge, and Zoo Tunnel was constructed in 1966. In turn, the parkway became an important commuter artery. In the 1940s and 1950s, highway engineers and government officials proposed numerous drastic alterations. Citizens' protests and evolving priorities thwarted most of these schemes in the 1960s. Noncompatible development adjacent to the boundaries of the parkway, especially south of M Street, has encroached upon views; the noise caused by heavy traffic also compromises the park setting.

¹ The portion of the parkway that extends between Lincoln Circle and the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bridge is also located within the boundaries of West Potomac Park (Reservation 332) and managed by National Capital Parks-Central. The remainder of the parkway comprises Reservation 360. National Capital Parks-Central manages the area in Reservation 360 between the Roosevelt Memorial Bridge and Virginia Avenue; Rock Creek Park manages the rest of the Reservation 360.

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Conditions of the Lower Rock Creek Valley Prior to the Twentieth Century

Most of the lower Rock Creek Valley (south of the National Zoological Park) remained in its natural state throughout the eighteenth century and for the first half of the nineteenth century. The creek (in this section) flowed, initially, toward the southwest, then changed course for nearly a mile toward the southeast, and reversed course to the southwest again as it approached the Potomac River. The landscape changed in character from a steep and wooded ravine at the northern end, full of large beech, oak, and tulip poplar trees, to a broad, open terrace south of Pennsylvania Avenue. A few dirt roads, such as Mill Street and Waterside Drive, and dirt lanes and footpaths traversed the valley banks. The final segment of the lower Rock Creek Valley functioned as a portion of the northwestern border of Washington City as designed by Peter Charles L'Enfant. It comprised part of the natural boundary encircling the city. The natural ring included Rock Creek along the northwest, and virgin forests extending from the northwest to the northeast, the Eastern Branch in the southeast, and the Potomac River in the southwest.

The creek provided the waterpower for early industrial enterprises for the inhabitants of Georgetown and Washington City. The valley accommodated a variety of mills and kilns. Since 1830, barges along the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal had used the mouth of the creek to access the Potomac River. By the second half of the nineteenth century, the lower Rock Creek Valley remained sylvan in its northern portion, but became intensively used and highly degraded at its southern end. The valley below P Street served as a dumping ground, a site for small businesses, warehouses, and light industries, as well as a residential area for poor white and black families. The years of dumping garbage, ash, and construction debris had erased the natural contours of the valley. Rock Creek, once navigable up to P Street, also began to lose depth as more and more of its watershed in Washington County was developed. In addition, the creek's role as an open sewer contributed to water pollution levels that rose throughout the century. The industrial character of the southern end of the lower valley continued along the Potomac riverfront, with the immense gas tanks and various accompanying structures of the Washington Gas Light Company, as well as a sand and gravel works.

Description

The following description is discussed from south to north, from the parkway's beginning to its (three) ends.

The Arts of Peace: (Two Contributing Objects) From Lincoln Circle, one enters the parkway by passing between *The Arts of Peace*, by James Earle Fraser, which demarcate the southern boundary.² This neoclassical pair of sculptures functions as a complement to the nearby *The Arts of War*, designed by Leo Friedlander, at the eastern terminus of the Arlington Memorial Bridge. The architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White designed all the granite bases. The pairs were commissioned together in 1925. The designs were approved in 1933, however WWII limited materials and funds so that their execution became dubious. In an effort to build

² Fraser apprenticed with Augustus Saint-Gaudens.

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understanding with the United States, the Italian Government, in 1949, offered to cast (bronze) and gild all four sculptures. The groupings were dedicated in 1951; the date marks the end of the period of significance for the property.

The Arts of Peace mark the parkway's incorporation into the formal design associated with the Mall and its axial extension to the Lincoln Memorial and Memorial Bridge. The sculptures suggest layered meanings based on Greek mythology and Renaissance allegorical symbolism and attributes. Both pieces incorporate a large winged horse, flanked by figures, and a small reptile set on a stone pedestal with a classical wreath and thirty-six gilded bronze stars, one for each state at the end of the Civil War. The open-winged steeds recall Pegasus, the horse that Perseus rode, which became the symbol of Fame during the Renaissance. *Music and Harvest*, on the south side of the parkway, incorporates a female figure with a lyre, the attribute of the muses of love, poetry, song, and dance, as well as the fifth sense, touch. A turtle, located at her feet, is also the attribute of touch and suggests the quality of slowness. A male figure carries a bundle of wheat and a sickle, the attribute of the Greek gods of agriculture. The northern component, *Aspiration and Literature*, incorporates a man holding a stringless bow while the other carries an open book. To string a bow was the test of manhood, accomplished by Odysseus.³ The book, associated with the learned and wisdom, is the attribute of Philosophy, Rhetoric, Grammar and Prudence. A snake, located beneath the figure with the book, is associated with logic in Renaissance allegory and rebirth and immortality in Greek mythology.

Roadway: (Contributing Structure) The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway (RCPP) starts at Lincoln Circle. The initial segment of the parkway has a multi-layered history. Lincoln Circle, as envisioned by the Senate Park Commission, was to serve as a focal point that would link principal roads and key design elements in their comprehensive design plan. The RCPP, thus, served as the "gateway" to the greater park system designed for the city beyond the urban core.⁴ Three inter-related commissions (Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission, Arlington Memorial Bridge Commission, and the Lincoln Memorial Commission) had jurisdiction over this area and its associated structures and landscape design.

Historic plans, moreover, reveal that the beginning segment of the parkway has been labeled various things over the years. The roadway associated with the seawall built in conjunction with the Arlington Memorial Bridge should be recognized as part of the parkway and called the parkway approach. (N.B. In the area known as the Lincoln Memorial Grounds, it is important to recognize the distinction between the roadway of the RCPP and that of Ohio Drive. The two roads are intertwined and interconnected, and thus confusing. The southern exit-ramp from the Arlington Memorial Bridge [and Lincoln Circle] leads to Ohio Drive—just west of Ohio Drive's connection to Independence Avenue. The northbound exit-ramp from Ohio Drive, located just north of the Watergate Steps, leads to Lincoln Circle and the beginning of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway. North of

³ A string may not have been included due to the technical difficulty of creating a bow that was separate from the horse's wing.

⁴ Charles Moore, ed. *The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902) 51.

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the Watergate Steps, Ohio Drive bears northeasterly and then northwesterly before it re-connects to the parkway just east of the Belvedere.)

The asphalt roadway of the RCPP extends, from the starting point, northerly for approximately 3.1 miles. The northern end of the RCPP incorporates a three-pronged terminus, with connections to Beach Drive and two city streets. Near the base of Shoreham Hill, one prong of the terminus veers easterly to join Beach Drive. (Beach Drive crosses the Zoo Tunnel Road Bridge and enters the Zoo Tunnel—its southern end is located at the northernmost edge of RCPP parkland. Rock Creek Park begins at the other end of the tunnel and thus, the Congressional mandate of connecting the Mall and Monument Grounds to Rock Creek Park via the RCPP is satisfied.) The second prong extends through the western arch of the Calvert Street Bridge to join Cathedral Avenue. The third prong runs up Shoreham Hill ending at Calvert Street.

The parkway is four lanes wide, except for the two-lane stretches of roadway at the parkway approach and the prongs of the terminus. The roadway structure of the RCPP also includes entrance and exit ramps at K Street, Pennsylvania Avenue (exit ramp only), P Street, South Waterside Drive, and North Waterside Drive (entrance ramp only). The roadway also incorporates two medians. The southern median, surfaced with Durax blocks, extends between the Belvedere and the K Street exit ramp (eastern side). It was constructed in conjunction with the Kennedy Center. This median does not contribute because it was built after the parkway's period of significance. The northern, irregular-shape median features grass and specimen trees—see detailed description below.

Work on the roadway began in 1929 and was completed by 1936. Two major modifications have occurred to the roadway. First, in 1941, after the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge was erected to replace the 1901 causeway, the roadway was widening underneath the new bridge. Second, in 1966, the original terminus at the Zoo ford was abandoned when the southern (south of Rock Creek Park) extension of Beach Drive was completed through the Zoo Tunnel. There are 317 drop-inlets along the parkway.

Guard Rails: (Noncontributing Structure) When the parkway was under construction, during the 1930s, WPA crews erected log-rail guard rails at various points, including along the waterfront and at the junctures between the roadway and some on- and off- ramps. None of the original log-rail guard rails survive, in part because the path of the roadway has shifted slightly over time.⁵ Today, timber, steel-backed timber, and metal guard rails exist in a variety of places along the parkway, for example at the northern end of the grassy median, along South Waterside Drive, and near L Street. The existing guard rails do not contribute because they were erected outside of the nomination's period of significance. Nevertheless, the existing timber and steel-backed timber guard rails are in keeping with the original log-rail guard rails.

⁵ A rendering of the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge in 1942 reveals that a type of stanchion may have been used at the northern end of the median. See: *The Evening Star*, 10 January 1942, A-16.

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Lampposts: (Contributing and Noncontributing Objects) Lights have existed at regular intervals along the roadway since the beginning. Historic photographs document that the Millet Lamppost was installed between *The Arts of Peace* and the Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge. A circa 1904 cast-iron light standard incorporating a gooseneck-top, with curvilinear ornament, was installed north of M Street; these lights were identical to those previously installed in Rock Creek Park. Today, Millet Lampposts extend between *The Arts of Peace* and the Belvedere and none of the gooseneck lights remain. North of the Belvedere, the parkway is presently lit by painted metal standards that incorporate a small base with scrolls at the corners, a fluted shaft, and a shallow-curved neck. The Millet lampposts are contributing objects, the others are noncontributing objects because their design is not in keeping with the original design intent for lampposts above Pennsylvania Avenue.

Network of Trails: (Contributing Structure) Much of the trail system within the parkway environs follows historic alignments; it incorporates paved and earthen segments. The spine of the system, the multi-use trail, follows the path of the primary historic bridle trail along the western side of the roadway. Bridle paths were an integral part of the original design. Equestrians used the park through the 1950s. With the decline of horseback riding as a popular park pursuit, the closing of nearby public stables, and the increasing popularity of the commuter and recreational bicyclist, the principal bridle trail was paved in the 1970s.⁶ With the exception of the mounted park police, horses are no longer permitted within the park.⁷ Today, bicyclists, joggers, in-line skaters and pedestrians use the multi-use trail. A variety of other paths are also maintained by the NPS: P Street to M Street via Rose Park (paved); Francis Junior High playing fields to P Street Beach (earthen); Saddle Club Footbridge to underneath Connecticut Avenue Bridge via [beneath] Shoreham Hill Road Bridge (earthen and paved); Saddle Club Footbridge to Lovers' Lane (earthen); Edgewater Stables to Zoo Tunnel (earthen); and Zoo Tunnel to Calvert Street (earthen). Most of the footpaths intersect with the multi-use trail and several of them incorporate railroad ties to accommodate steep grade changes. A variety of other earthen paths, created by informal use, exist throughout the parkway.

Stone Seawall: (Contributing Structure⁸) A concrete seawall was constructed in the years following 1882 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as part of the Potomac Flats reclamation project to create Potomac Park.⁹ The beginning of the RCPP roadway bears northwesterly, along the seawall to the northwestern corner of West Potomac Park. Designed by the architectural firm of McKim, Mead and White (designer: William Mitchell Kendall) in the late 1920s, and completed by 1932, the seawall features granite-facing, recessed panels and a balustrade. Its architectural elements correspond to those of the Arlington Memorial Bridge, which extends southwesterly, at the same angle, from the Lincoln Memorial and Watergate steps. The balustrade terminates at the Belvedere located at the former end of Constitution Avenue. It features an exedra and a small circular

⁶ Historically, several public and private riding academies existed between New Hampshire Avenue and P Street.

⁷ Today, D.C. law restricts the general public to horseback riding in Rock Creek Park.

⁸ The stone seawall is also a contributing structure in the "Arlington Memorial Bridge and Related Structures" as well as the "East and West Potomac Parks Historic District" National Register of Historic Places Nominations.

⁹ Potomac Park is now known as East and West Potomac Parks.

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planting bed and turnaround.¹⁰ The exedra's benches establish viewing points for the bridge and the Washington Monument (predominantly obscured by the trees along 23rd Street).

Durax block Median: (Noncontributing Site) Just north of the point where Ohio Drive reconnects to the parkway (near the Belvedere), a Durax block median begins. It separates northbound and southbound lanes and extends to just past the K Street exit ramps. The median was created in conjunction with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, after the parkway's period of significance.¹¹

The parkway then passes underneath a stone-clad archway of the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bridge. The open character of the riverfront with its panoramic views was significantly altered with the erection of the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bridge, 1960-1964, the Watergate complex, 1964 ff., and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, 1965-1971.¹² Each project generated a controversial design review process at the Commission of Fine Arts.¹³

Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bridge: (Noncontributing Structure) Built between 1960 and 1964, this structure incorporates a shallow-arched, steel structure with hinged joints attached to granite-faced piers. The bridge spans the Potomac River and crosses over Theodore Roosevelt Island. Only the eastern end of the structure is within the parkway boundaries. The bridge compromises the views of the river and island and obstructs the view of Arlington Memorial Bridge. Of all the alterations made to the parkway over the years, it is this bridge

¹⁰ The western end of Constitution Avenue was altered to accommodate the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bridge, 1960-1964.

¹¹ See Topographic Survey, 6/01/65, by Edward D. Stone for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. NPS Technical Information Center, file drawing 80379, sheet 2.

¹² Originally, the intersection of the parkway and New Hampshire Avenue had been marked by the Titanic Memorial. This sculpture was relocated to the southwest waterfront when construction for the Kennedy Center began. The granite memorial, dedicated to those who died with the sinking of the R.M.S. *Titanic* and designed by sculptor Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, was completed in 1916, but was not erected until 1930. It incorporated a man with outstretched arms standing on a pedestal with an integrated exedra designed by Henry Bacon. John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts: In 1958, four sites across the city were considered for a National Cultural Center. The riverfront site at the end of New Hampshire Avenue was selected the following year along with an architect, Edward Durrell Stone. Although the Commission of Fine Arts supported the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway site, the ASLA and AIA opposed the location as well as the design of the building. The original scheme featured a curvilinear form 900 feet long situated on the river's edge with a cantilevered element over the water. This design was substantially reworked due to its exorbitant projected cost. The revised design for the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (renamed by Congress in 1963) featured a white marble-clad rectilinear structure with a full length (600') terrace cantilevered over the northbound lanes of the parkway. After years of controversy, ground was broken in 1965 and the center opened in 1971. The cantilevered terrace establishes a rather bleak experience at this end of the parkway. The Watergate: This apartment, hotel and office building complex, located just outside of the parkway boundaries, arose on the former site of the Washington Gas Works. It was designed by Italian architect Luigi Moretti, who stressed the plastic and volumetric aspects of Modern architecture. The Commission of Fine Arts review process focused on massing and height—imposing a 140' height limit. CFA also urged greater respect of the park and Moretti responded by removing the villas initially intended to be located at the base of the tall buildings. Although the complex originally incorporated a gated public passage through the property, security concerns resulted in their closure to the general public.

¹³ For a brief discussion of these project histories, see Sue Kohler, *The Commission of Fine Arts: A Brief History 1910-1915*. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1996) 76-80.

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and its obstruction of the view to Arlington Memorial Bridge that created the most negative effect on the parkway.

Sycamore Allée: (Contributing Site) Along the riverfront, the roadway runs between narrow strips of grass. Originally, this area was planted with rows of widely spaced sycamore trees to function as a graceful transition between the monumentally designed national Mall (and Potomac Park) and the natural landscape of the Rock Creek Valley. A remnant of this allée remains today. Although compromised, the site maintains integrity.

At the corner of Virginia Avenue, the motorist encounters a stone gas station and one of the two traffic lights along the parkway (the other is associated with the Kennedy Center parking garage).¹⁴ A distant view down the avenue reveals the Washington Monument and establishes a relationship between the parkway and the L'Enfant Plan.

Rock Creek: (Contributing Site) Opposite the Watergate building complex, the terrain widens and incorporates an open grassy area with views of the Potomac River and Theodore Roosevelt Island. In this area, overgrown shrubs and volunteer trees obscure the mouth of Rock Creek. The spring-fed Rock Creek flows for approximately thirty-three miles from its source near Laytonsville in Montgomery County, Maryland, through the northwest quadrant of Washington, D.C., to the Potomac River. It incorporates a seventy-six-square-mile drainage basin from its source 450' above sea level; eighteen-square-miles are located within the District of Columbia. Historically, boats navigated Rock Creek as far as P Street. The (approximately) two miles of creek banks, located within the park boundaries, incorporate rip-rap and stone retaining walls; the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) rip-rapped the banks in the 1930s. There are thirty culverts along the creek.

Chesapeake & Ohio Canal: (Contributing Structure. National Register listing 10/15/1966. HABS No. DC-147.) The mouth of Rock Creek incorporates the first components of the C&O Canal, constructed in this area between 1828 and 1831.¹⁵ A fragment of a dilapidated dam extends across part of the mouth of the creek with the Tide Lock just to the north. The deteriorated Aquia freestone lock is the first lock for the C&O Canal. A granite "0" mile marker for the 185 mile long canal stands on the patch of land between the two structures. Canal boats traveled .3 mile up the creek before entering the canal proper.

Harry T. Thompson Boat Center: (Noncontributing Building and Site) William Haussmann, an NPS architect with the Eastern Office of Design and Construction, designed this public boathouse, 1959-1960, situated just to

¹⁴ For documentation on the 1933, Arts and Crafts style, stone gas station located at this corner see: HABS No. DC-665. The other light on the parkway is located at the exit of the Kennedy Center's parking garage.

¹⁵ The canal, constructed between 1828-1850, operated until 1924. The first section, between Georgetown and Seneca, MD, was completed in 1831; canal operation began in the fall of 1830. 1875 marked the heyday of the canal. Loaded barges from the north went through the Tide Lock and up the Potomac River to the Georgetown waterfront for unloading. As the Georgetown lock-keeper responsible for Locks 1-4 was also responsible for the Tide Lock, there was never a lock-house associated with the Tide Lock; only a small wood shanty existed in between the dam and the Tide Lock.

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the north of the creek mouth. Erected after the parkway's period of significance, the building reflects Mission 66 design principles. Its brick and metal siding walls incorporate large overhead doors and modular windows and support a shallow gable roof. The unsympathetic siting establishes a highly prominent blank southeastern end wall, disregard for the mouth of the creek, and vehicular parking along the roadway, all of which present noncompatible intrusions in the parkway.

WMATA Substation: (Noncontributing Building) This one-story, utilitarian, high-voltage electrical station located at the northeast corner of Virginia Avenue and the parkway is predominantly screened by vegetation. It is owned by the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority and provides power for the Metro subway system. It was erected in the mid-1970s, after the period of significance.

Whitehurst Freeway Overpasses: (Noncontributing Structures) The two unadorned concrete overpasses, supported by concrete columns, extend over the parkway on either side of the K Street Bridge. Although the freeway was completed (1949) within the period of significance, its form and lack of a natural stone aesthetic or architectural details establishes the structure as noncontributing. The freeway underwent a substantial rehabilitation in the late 1990s. During this work, two ramps that spanned the parkway but lead to nowhere were removed.

K Street Bridge: (Contributing Structure. HAER No. DC-20) The first bridge located at Water Street (K Street) was constructed in 1792. Poor construction caused its early condemnation; however, its replacement was not erected until 1869. This second bridge was replaced in 1907, but plans developed in 1938 for an improved connection between the parkway and K Street necessitated the removal of the third structure. The fourth K Street Bridge, begun in 1939, was designed by the engineering firm Harrington and Cortelyou and architect Louis Justement.¹⁶ This shallow-arched bridge has a concrete rigid frame supported by triangular buttresses; the structure employs a random-range, quarry-faced gneiss veneer. The K Street Bridge opened in 1941. Within a decade, the structure was altered to accommodate the Whitehurst Freeway, completed in 1949. The gneiss veneer was replicated for the walls that flanked the western end of the bridge and supported the Whitehurst access ramps.

Sewer Pumping Station: (Contributing Building) Built in 1915, this one-story-plus- lower-level building, owned by the D.C. Water and Sewer Authority, is situated at the top of sloping terrain at the northeast corner of K Street and the parkway. It is brick, laid in Flemish bond, with granite trim. The building features a granite watertable, sills and triple-keystones. The jack-arch openings are covered with metal panels. The parapet features granite piers and capstones with recessed brick panels. A flagpole extends from the center of the roof. The building's significance is associated with the water-related and community development aspects of the property.

¹⁶ This team concurrently designed and erected the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge, which also spanned the parkway.

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Culverts: (Contributing and Noncontributing Structures) There are approximately thirty culverts along the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, seventeen of which incorporate headwalls. Typically, the approximately 5' by 6' concrete box is faced with coursed, rough-hewn stone with a segmental arch above the conduit. Variations on this type include: a brick head wall with a corbelled architrave; a stone-faced structure that incorporates a circular opening with stone voussoirs; and a rectilinear opening, with a projecting sill, within a retaining wall. The remaining culverts are terra cotta, concrete or metal pipes that project from the creek bank, with or without a concrete fan-lip. Only the culverts that incorporate headwalls with masonry facing are contributing structures, the others do not embody artistic value or distinctive characteristics and therefore are not contributing structures. Two-thirds of the culverts are connected to a combined sewer system.¹⁷

Godey Lime Kilns: (Contributing Site. National Register listing 11/2/73. HABS No. DC-441.) Five kilns were erected at this site in 1854. William H. Godey began operating the works ten years later under the name Washington Lime Kilns. Canal boats transported limestone from quarries near Harper's Ferry via the C&O Canal to Rock Creek (since diverted west of the original path).¹⁸ The five wood-burning "patent kilns" could produce 2000 barrels of quicklime a week; one charge of limestone required 3 days of burning to create calcinate lime with one-sixth of its original volume. In the 1880s, the enterprise was run by William Godey's son, Edward. John McL. Dodson purchased the business in 1897 and operated it until the kilns ceased production in 1908. Its various sheds were demolished in the mid-1920s during parkway construction. Twenty years later, three kilns were demolished to make way for a Whitehurst Freeway access road that was never completed. At that time, the eastern end of the site was regraded. As a result, turf grows across the tops of the truncated ruin. A boulder, near the remaining kilns, marks this site; however, a plaque has been removed from its face.

North of the Godey Lime Kilns, the parkway begins to lose its urban character. The creek becomes discernible as the roadway crosses over it, just beyond the kilns. The beginning of the C&O Canal towpath, which incorporates brick paving at this point, intersects with the multi-use trail along the western side of the parkway.

L Street Road Bridge: (Noncontributing Structure) Erected outside of the period of significance, this 1983 bridge, comprised of steel girders—spanning 88 feet—supported by concrete piers, carries the parkway over Rock Creek. On the western side, a similar girder structure carries the multi-use trail over the creek.

¹⁷ The D.C. Water and Sewer Authority is in the process of rehabilitating its pumping stations to increase their capacity and thus, reduce the amount of combined sewer overflows by 2008.

¹⁸ The C&O Canal had reached Harper's Ferry, sixty-one miles away, in 1833.

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Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge (Montgomery Meigs Memorial Bridge): (Contributing Structure. HAER No. DC-37.) A bridge carrying Washington's principal avenue into Georgetown was proposed as early as 1836. Despite the significance of the avenue, Congress did not approve funds for a structure until two decades later, as part of Washington's first public water system.¹⁹ Between 1853 and 1863, the Army Corps of Engineers, under the supervision of Montgomery Meigs, constructed the Washington Aqueduct. The system carried water from the Potomac River at Great Falls, Maryland to downtown Washington, requiring a crossing at Rock Creek. Initially, Meigs intended to tunnel under the creek. By early 1855, he proposed an arcuated structure at Pennsylvania Avenue that could support a roadbed, because the nearby M Street Bridge was becoming unable to handle the traffic between the two cities. Upon completion, the Aqueduct Bridge (1858-1860) became one of the largest single-span, iron pipe, arched structures in the world.²⁰ It incorporated stone abutments supporting two 200'-long cast iron pipes, 1-1/4" thick with 48" internal diameters. The joints were concealed by rings of cast iron leaves and 3"-thick pine staves lined the pipes to guard against freezing. The abutments incorporated vaults for connecting pipes and flow-regulating valves; the western abutment housed a Worthington water pressure engine to pump water to the High Service Reservoir.²¹ In 1863, the track of Washington's first horse-drawn railway ran across the bridge. In 1913, funds were appropriated to replace the deteriorated Aqueduct Bridge. The D.C. Bridge Division proposed a new girder structure that was disapproved by the Commission of Fine Arts, which sought to encourage arcuated structures across the creek. The present bridge represents the compromise. The Aqueduct Bridge was rehabilitated and refaced as the Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge between 1915 and 1916. Reinforced concrete and dressed, coursed granite was used to envelop the older structure; two parallel openings located on the underside of the bridge reveal portions of the Aqueduct pipes. The parapets feature rectangular panels delineated by quarter-round moldings. The Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge is 276' long and 73' wide.

M Street Bridge: (Contributing Structure. HAER No. DC-37) In 1788, the City of Georgetown erected the first structure for vehicles across Rock Creek at the end of Bridge Street (M Street).²² This covered wooden drawbridge collapsed during a fierce storm. A second drawbridge was erected in 1800. It was replaced by another covered bridge four decades later. In 1871, a fourth bridge was erected at this point, a light iron truss bridge typical of the late-19th-century structures spanning Rock Creek Valley. The following year, the streetcar line was re-routed from the Aqueduct Bridge (Pennsylvania Avenue) across this bridge. The city condemned the iron bridge in 1925. Faced with a meager budget, David V. McComb, Chief of the D.C. Bridge Division, designed a bridge comprised of steel girders. It was built the following year, over vociferous protests regarding

¹⁹ As the result of the devastating fire that destroyed much of the Library of Congress in 1852, Congress wanted a public water system to prevent fires. Providing potable water for District residents was not the legislative intent.

²⁰ Dunlaps Creek Bridge, Brownsville, Pennsylvania, 1836-1839, was the only other all iron bridge in the country at the time; however, its span was significantly less: 80'. Dunlaps incorporated five elliptical, cast iron ribs and was designed by Captain Richard Delafield, Army Corps of Engineers, for the National Road.

²¹ The High Service Reservoir was located at the site of the present-day Georgetown Public Library at Wisconsin Avenue and R Street.

²² A ford had previously existed at this point.

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form and appearance, from the Commission of Fine Arts.²³ Despite the Commission's dislike of the design, the M Street Bridge incorporates handsome details including: rusticated, round-end concrete piers, terminated by moldings and punctuated by arched openings; concrete panels with recessed centers that obscure the outer faces of the girders; scored concrete brackets that support the sidewalks; and buff-colored balustrades that incorporate a large aggregate (recast in the late 1990s).

In this general region, three segments of the park along the rim of the valley connect the parkway with the adjacent neighborhoods at street-level: the tract of land between 26th and M Streets and Pennsylvania Avenue; the area between the east side of 27th Street, M Street, and the rear of First Baptist Church, Georgetown; and the land to the east of 23rd Street between P and Q Streets. Each grassy area incorporates a few benches. Initially, the stretch of land between P and Q Streets extended to 22nd Street, but this land was sold to the Church of the Pilgrim in the 1920s.²⁴ In addition, Rose Park, located on the Georgetown side of the parkway between Dumbarton and P Streets, also abuts the parkway in this general region.²⁵ This land, originally within the parkway boundaries, was transferred to the D.C. Government in 1972. South of P Street, the western slope of the valley was planted with informal massings of daffodils in the 1960s as part of Ladybird Johnson's Beautification Program. Over time, this area became overgrown with invasive vegetation, however it has been treated recently. Across the valley, the land occupied by the municipal swimming pool and tennis courts, was also originally located within the parkway boundaries, but was transferred to the D.C. Government in 1971.²⁶

P Street Beach: (Contributing Site.) The bend in Rock Creek, below P Street, was re-channeled in 1940. The creek was moved several hundred feet to the west and slightly straightened. Subsequently, fill was added as far east as 22nd Street and the grassy slope, known as P Street Beach, was created to the west of 23rd Street.²⁷ The sloping grade was designed to give the impression of a natural open meadow. Early parkway designers had high hopes for developing the scenic potential of this site. Through the 1940s, plans called for highlighting expansive southerly vistas from this area to provide a contrast with the narrow and sylvan northern portion of the lower Rock Creek Valley. However, dense volunteer trees and understory along the creek banks have obstructed the views across the creek toward the river; thus, the original design intent is presently compromised. Nevertheless, the deteriorated condition is revocable. The thick growth along 23rd Street contributes to the

²³ CFA Chairman Charles Moore asked the municipal architect Albert L. Harris to design an arched bridge (suitable for parks) for the site soon after McComb presented his girder bridge; the drawings for Harris' concrete arch bridge have not been located.

²⁴ The Church of the Pilgrim occupied a small building on part of the present site in 1910. The present structure was designed by B.C. Flounoy of Flounoy & Flounoy with offices in Washington and Baltimore. The Presbyterian Church in the U.S. presented it as a gift to the nation, opening Easter Sunday, 31 March 1929. See: *The Sunday Star*, 31 March 1929, sec. 1, p. 9.

²⁵ Rose Park (Reservation 360) contains a playground, basketball and tennis courts, a baseball diamond, and field house. N.B. When the land was transferred to the D.C. Government, the area was not assigned a new reservation number.

²⁶ This discontinuous parcel is named Reservation 639.

²⁷ At the same time, improvements were made to the storm sewer system to accommodate neighborhoods located to the north and east. The 1936 Embassy Gulf (Chevron) Service Station (individually listed on the National Register), located at the corner of 23rd and P Streets, occupies the site of the former Washington Hunt and Riding Club, 1913-1936, the city's only enclosed riding academy. The Club had occupied a structure built ca. 1903 as the West End Market.

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visual isolation of this area. In 1957, the roadway in this area received safety measures. Protective curbing was installed along the P Street bend and the road was widened and straightened between P and K Streets.²⁸

P Street Bridge: (Contributing Structure. HAER No. DC-48.) A bridge had existed at this location since 1855, in part because it was the first portion of the creek that was not affected by the tidal changes of the Potomac. The first covered wooden bridge, known as the Paper Mill Bridge, aligned with Boundary Street (Florida Avenue) in Washington City.²⁹ It was replaced in 1871 by a metal, Pratt truss bridge that aligned with P Street; its superstructure was rebuilt in 1893. The design of the existing bridge is credited to District of Columbia municipal architect Albert Harris. This double elliptical concrete arch bridge was erected in 1934-1935. Random-range, quarry-faced, multi-colored ashlar faces the spandrels, with coursed, dressed granite piers, voussoirs, exaggerated keystones and parapets. Both central piers terminate as scenic overlook niches projecting beyond the parapet wall. In the last couple of years, the insides of the parapets have been regularly marred by graffiti. The Department of Public Works has attempted to dissuade the perpetrators by sandblasting the graffiti soon after its completion. Consequently, the ashlar has become polished and lightened in rectilinear patches, compromising the appearance and integrity of the granite.

P Street Road Bridge: (Contributing Structure.) This concrete continuous frame bridge spans the creek between Q and P Streets. It is curved, 122'-long and incorporates two shallow arches, with a stone-faced central pier. The road bridge occupies the approximate site of a Colonial-era ford used by the Baltimore Light Dragoons and the French reinforcements led by the Marquis de Lafayette, Count Rochambeau and the Duc de Laurzan. They had marched down the road, that later became Boundary Street (Florida Avenue), and crossed the creek on their way to Yorktown, Virginia in 1781. A bronze tablet, presented by the D.C. Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in 1934 (prior to the erection of the bridge), mounted at the center of the eastern stone parapet, memorializes this event. Completion of this bridge in June 1936 enabled motorists, for the first time, to drive the entire length of the parkway without having to climb out of the valley to use the adjacent city streets to bypass a disconnect within the roadway.

While most of the vegetation south of P Street dates from well after the parkway's construction, the northern end of the parkway was heavily forested before the parkway's creation and many old trees remain. North of P Street, the valley becomes deeper, giving the impression of increasing seclusion and greater space. The roadway winds between the steep valley-walls characterized by dense stands of mature mixed hardwoods, extensive understory, and large rock outcroppings.

²⁸ Timothy Davis, "Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, Washington DC: The Evolution of a Contested Urban Landscape," *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes* (Vol. 19, No. 2, Summer 1999) 210.

²⁹ The Patterson Paper Mill, erected by Maj. Gustavus Scott and Nicholas Lingam, ca. 1800, was located on the west bank. Scott was one of the first three commissioners for the District of Columbia.

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Dumbarton Bridge (Q Street Bridge): (Contributing Structure. National Register listing 7/16/1973. HAER No. DC-38.) The Dumbarton Bridge, designed by the father and son architectural team of Glenn and Bedford Brown, was erected between 1912-1915 before the parkway legislation was enacted.³⁰ The engineer was David V. McComb of the D.C. Engineer's Office.³¹ Dumbarton Bridge recalls Roman aqueducts, while the sculptural elements draw from the American heritage. The bridge incorporates a 12-degree horizontal curve (in plan) and five reinforced-concrete arches. The width of the central arch measures 43', while the flanking arches have narrower spans. The center of each abutment is pierced by an arched opening. The creek, the road and the trail pass through separate arches. The quoins and voussoirs are reddish-buff-colored stone. The concrete was tinted to match the stone and tooled to resemble hewn stone. Each spandrel is punctuated by a small rectangular panel, inscribed with a leafy vine entwined with a "D" and "C." The parapets are supported by corbelled arches springing from sandstone Indian heads. The faces (28 per side), most likely designed by Glenn Brown, gaze down upon the parkway. The four corners of the bridge are marked by monumental, bronze bison designed by sculptor Alexander Phimister Proctor. Thus, the bridge is often referred to as the "Buffalo Bridge."³² A 6'-high, stone retaining wall holds back the steep, eastern valley wall above the parkway along the northbound lanes immediately north of the bridge. This retaining wall and the upper section of the wall supporting the southbound lanes in this area was rebuilt and expanded after a substantial landslide blocked this section of the roadway in 1935.

Median: (Contributing Site) At the northern end of the 1935 stone retaining wall, the roadway separates and becomes more curvilinear, establishing a grassy, irregular-shaped median planted with specimen trees. The northbound lanes run along a slightly higher elevation, allowing for greater preservation of the natural topography. The median was introduced to the parkway design in 1933. Over time, its northern end became reduced to a narrow strip, paved with asphalt. The four lanes merge again north of the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge. Remnants of the Lyons Mill complex appear to be located in the median south of the Waterside Drive Overpass. Lyons Mill had been considered an important picturesque element, a typical feature of landscapes designed in the natural style, by Olmsted, Morrow and Markham. Lyons Mill had been the largest mill along the creek, erected ca. 1780, with three sets of millstones.³³ Due to a flood and the invention of steam-powered milling machinery, it stopped grinding wheat in 1875. The area became a popular picnic ground in the 19th century and the main building functioned as a dance hall until it collapsed in 1913. Three majestic sycamores mark the mill site.

Lyons Mill Footbridge (Devil's Chair Footbridge): (Contributing Structure. HAER No. DC-35.) One of eight footbridges constructed across Rock Creek during the Depression by the Public Works Administration, this 1934 concrete structure measures 88' long and 10' wide. It features a very shallow arch and concrete rails.

³⁰ The legislation was enacted in 1913, but the funds were not appropriated until 1916.

³¹ McComb was also the engineer for the fifth M Street Bridge.

³² The bridge is located in the area that Robert Fulton, who resided with his friend Joel Barlow—the owner of the adjacent Kalorama Estate, dammed Rock Creek to demonstrate "Torpedo Vessel," his newly invented submarine.

³³ This site is likely to yield significant archeological information.

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At the southwestern end of the Lyons Mill Footbridge, the abandoned roadbed of Mill Street extends up the valley wall between Mount Zion and Oak Hill cemeteries.³⁴ The abandoned roadbed eventually runs into 27th Street. Both the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commissioners and the parkway engineers considered the views of Oak Hill Cemetery, with its steep terraces and its impressive stone markers, to be a significant amenity for the parkway user.

South Waterside Drive Overpass: (Contributing Structure. HAER DC-16) South Waterside Drive follows the narrow, historic roadbed of Waterside Drive that descended the eastern bank of the valley south of Massachusetts Avenue. It incorporates on and off accesses that merge half-way up the valley wall; the South Waterside Drive Overpass crosses over the northbound parkway lanes and merges into the left southbound lane, near the southern end of the median. This 1932-1933 structure incorporates a concrete t-beam deck supported by two rigid cellular abutment structures buttressed by piers. The shallow arch spans 52' and is 36.2' wide; large voussoirs enhance the shallow arch. The overpass is faced with locally-quarried gneiss, with colors ranging from gray-blue to reddish-brown, and coping of brown-colored sandstone. The structure incorporated a small tower at its southern end as an observation point for park police, with a storage room for the park maintenance force and public restrooms. Safety concerns prompted park management to close the public amenity in the 1970s.

Washington City Tunnel Storage Shed: (Contributing Building.) The Washington City Tunnel (21,000' long) connected Georgetown Reservoir to McMillan Reservoir. It took nearly two decades to complete and was fraught with problems stemming from insufficient underground exploration prior to commencement. Construction began in 1882. Congress ordered the project stopped six years later and had abandoned the project by early 1889. Work resumed in 1898 and water flowed through the conduit in November 1901. This shed was originally located to the west of this site, where the southbound lanes extend today. It covered a Washington City Tunnel shaft and housed a steam pump. In 1941, as a result of the erection of the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge and the widening of the parkway at this point, the shed was relocated to the eastern edge of the roadway. The flat-roof structure incorporates quarry-faced stone and is built into the embankment. It has a large opening with a concrete lintel and metal bi-fold doors. Today, the shed functions as storage.

³⁴ In 1809, the Montgomery Street Methodist Church purchased approximately three acres, east of Mill Street and south of Rock Creek, for their cemetery. In 1842, the Female Union Band Society, a local, black benevolent organization, purchased approximately three acres just east of the Methodist property, for a cemetery for members and other free blacks. In 1849, local banker and art patron William W. Corcoran purchased approximately twenty-five acres, to the west of Mill Street, for Oak Hill Cemetery; its popularity was, in part, because of the Rural Cemetery design. In 1879, Mount Zion United Methodist Church, located at 1334 29th Street, paid one dollar to Dumbarton United Methodist Church (the former Montgomery Street Methodist Church) to lease the Old Methodist Burying Ground for ninety-nine years. Today, the name Mount Zion Cemetery refers to both the Female Union Band Society Cemetery and the Old Methodist Burial Ground, however, the properties remain separate parcels.

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Massachusetts Avenue Bridge (Charles C. Glover Memorial Bridge): (Contributing Structure. HAER No. DC-22) This bridge, constructed 1940-1941, replaced an earthen causeway that had been erected in 1901. The causeway incorporated a culvert (50' wide) to accommodate the creek. In 1925, a narrow, dangerous and prone-to-flooding road was built through the culvert. The road was constructed with the hope of frustrating drivers. The goal was to ensure a notorious condition that would, in turn, garner public support for a Massachusetts Avenue Bridge that could accommodate the continuation of the four-lane parkway below. The gamble eventually paid off and Washington architect Louis Justement and Kansas City engineering firm of Harrington and Cortelyou designed the new structure (the team also designed the contemporary K Street Bridge). Its single, broad, concrete barrel vault spans the roadway, multi-use trail, creek and a narrow segment of the Saddle Club Footbridge to Lovers' Lane trail. The latter is atop a random-laid, rough-faced stone retaining wall. The Massachusetts Avenue Bridge is concrete faced with random-range, rough-faced, multi-colored gneiss and dressed granite voussoirs. Salts are leeching through the gneiss and form significant stalactites between the concrete structure and the voussoirs. Lampposts and simple metal railings extend along the parapet walls. The bridge features four large, integrated, curved retaining walls—with facing identical to the bridge, near the base of the arch, that supported earth for designed planting plans.³⁵ The planting plans by the Planning and Construction Division, National Capital Parks were implemented upon completion of the bridge. Each area featured 16'-18' white pines (*Pinus strobus*), 10'-12' flowering dogwoods (*Cornus florida*), and 6'-8' hawthorns (*Crataegus punctata*), with azaleas and mountain laurel. The bridge's overall length is 420'; its arch spans 150', with a height of 104' and a depth of 75'. A metal railing that incorporates three flat horizontal rails with round supports is located along the earthen trail atop the stone channel wall west of the creek.

After its completion, the District Government named the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge the Charles C. Glover Memorial Bridge. Charles C. Glover (1846-1936) was a prominent banker and an important businessman in conjunction with the development of Washington, especially northwest.³⁶ In 1904, Glover donated land to the District Commissioners "to facilitate the extension of Rock Creek Park and the Zoo to the northern line of Massachusetts Avenue Extended."³⁷ The boundaries established by the 1913 legislation for the RCPP included this land.

³⁵ These massive retaining walls may have been introduced to reduce the amount of excavation required as a result of the 1901 fill causeway.

³⁶ In 1865, Glover began working at Riggs & Company. In 1896, the bank adopted a national charter and he became its first president, holding the position for twenty-five years. As an advocate for parks, Glover was a critical force behind the establishment of the Rock Creek Park (1890) and Potomac Park (1897). In 1923, he donated 77.5 acres of land to establish what would eventually become known as Glover-Archbold Park and three years later donated 31.25 acres of land next to Fort Dupont. Glover also helped to establish the Washington National Cathedral and American University. Glover's large country estate, Westover, was located along Massachusetts Avenue Extended (on its western side and south of Nebraska Avenue).

³⁷ Charles Carroll Glover Papers (Historical Society of Washington, D.C.), Glover Scrapbook, p. 114.

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North Waterside Drive: (Contributing component of Roadway.) This northbound, single-lane access road begins at the southeastern end of the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge, opposite South Waterside Drive. The access road descends the eastern valley bank amidst rock outcrops and boulders; it is supported by a massive retaining wall that extends along the principal roadway and incorporates a large rock outcropping. Construction for the access road began in 1929 and continued until June 1930. Thereafter, the first portion of roadway within the RCPP opened to the public; cars could travel from North Waterside Drive to either Calvert Street (via Shoreham Hill), Cathedral Avenue or to the Zoo Road. In 1999, the regularly spaced boulders were placed along the shoulders to prevent the illegal parking that occurred there.

Saddle Club Footbridge (Shoreham Hill Footbridge): (Contributing Structure. HAER No. DC-36) This footbridge spans Rock Creek at the base of Shoreham Hill. It is one of eight footbridges built (1934) across the creek by the Public Works Administration during the Depression. The arched concrete footbridge is 110' long and 10' wide. It incorporates three arched spans springing from rubblework piers; the creekside abutments curve outward with coursed, ashlar, wing walls. The bridge has simple wooden railings.

An earthen trail at the northern end of the bridge runs along the western side of the creek and connects with the Normanstone and Whitehaven Trails. South of the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge, it turns westward, running along a stream, and eventually terminates at the base of Lovers' Lane, which forms the boundary between Dumbarton Oaks Garden and Park and Montrose Park.

Stone Fireplace: (Noncontributing Object) On the west side of the Shoreham Hill to Lovers' Lane Trail, approximately 150' south of the Normanstone stream footbridge,³⁸ is a remnant picnic grove. It features an intact stone fireplace built ca. 1960. This is the only fireplace within the RCPP. It appears to have been built in conjunction with several other fireplaces erected in Rock Creek Park at this time. It is not contributing, because it falls outside of the period of significance. The amenity, however, is in keeping with the fifty-seven rustic benches and thirty-six picnic-tables that were installed in 1926 in the northern area of the parkway when it was first opened to the public.

Shoreham Hill: (Contributing Site³⁹) This hill is predominantly an open grassy area along a moderate slope on the west side of the parkway southwest of the Connecticut Avenue Bridge. A few mature specimen shade trees and a large stand of crape myrtles (along the bridge embankment) embellish the hill. It originally served as an arena for equestrian events. It now functions primarily as a picnic and sunbathing area. The name derives from the Shoreham Apartment Hotel, built in 1930, just beyond the western boundary of the parkway; it originally included a riding stable as an amenity. The parcourse (noncontributing structure), installed in the late 1970s, begins on Shoreham Hill and ends near the Lyons' Mill Footbridge.

³⁸ The Normanstone Stream footbridge incorporates a T-section steel structure and rails with a wooden plank crossing.

³⁹ The boundaries of this site are the Saddle Club footbridge at the south, the parkway along the east, the Taft Bridge along the north, and the western boundary line of the RCPP.

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Shoreham Hill Road Bridge: (Contributing Structure. HAER No. DC-10.) At the southeastern end of Shoreham Hill, the parkway crosses to the west side of Rock Creek via the Shoreham Hill Road Bridge. In 1929, a temporary, steel, two-lane bridge had been erected at this site, using a few trusses salvaged from the Aqueduct Bridge rehabilitation. In 1938, the Bureau of Public Roads replaced the temporary bridge with a rigid-frame, reinforced concrete, arched structure. It incorporated two spans and measured 78' by 52'. It was faced with rough and less-rough, blue-gray- and buff-colored mica schist. The coping, voussoirs, quoins and wingwalls featured rough-faced granite. The bridge underwent a significant rehabilitation in 1987.

Quarry: (Contributing Site) This site was originally part of the Langworth-Holmead estate that included the house called Belair, begun in 1750. The estate was renamed Kalorama, meaning 'beautiful view' in Greek, around 1808.⁴⁰ During the Civil War, the government seized the residence to serve as a smallpox hospital. At a post-war celebratory dinner in 1865, the house caught on fire and incurred significant damage. In 1871, the owner, George Lovett, leased the northern portion of the remaining estate to a stone quarrying company to help finance the reconstruction and furnishing of the house. The quarry falls within a Patuxent Formation deposit. The formation contains large amounts of sand commonly mixed with variable amounts of kaolin and mica, gravel composed of large, well-rounded, polished pebbles and lenses of white or various-colored clay.⁴¹ Stone from this quarry was the aggregate for the cast-stone elements of the Connecticut Avenue Bridge.

Motorists exit the northern end of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway by three means: the roadway ascending Shoreham Hill on the western side of the valley; the roadway that merges with Cathedral Avenue, beneath the Calvert Street Bridge; and by turning onto Beach Drive, just before the Connecticut Avenue Bridge, which crosses the Zoo Road Bridge and enters the Tunnel that extends below the Zoo property. The earthen trail atop the southern entrance to the tunnel marks the northern boundary of the parkway property.

Connecticut Avenue Bridge (William H. Taft Memorial Bridge): (Contributing Structure. HAER No. DC-6.) The Connecticut Avenue Bridge was built between 1897 and 1906 to the design of George S. Morison; Edward P. Casey was the consulting architect. The bridge was constructed by the D.C. Engineering Department. In 1931, it was renamed after the former president and chief justice of the Supreme Court William Howard Taft, who lived nearby when he held the latter office. When completed, it was the largest concrete bridge in the world and was known as the "Million Dollar Bridge," in reference to its enormous cost and extravagant decoration. It is also significant for its method of construction, consisting of unreinforced concrete poured inside a frame of pre-cast concrete panels; it is one of the earliest pre-cast bridges in the country. The 1,068' long bridge incorporates seven arches (five spans at 150' and two at 82') and two U-shaped abutments; six arched openings pierce the spandrels of the inner arches. Quoins, voussoirs, balustrades, brackets and modillions are cast-stone, comprised of a gray aggregate extracted from the quarry located at the southwestern

⁴⁰ The wealthy American diplomat and author Joel Barlow purchased the property in 1807 and renamed it. He retained Benjamin Henry Latrobe to renovate the house in the then-popular neoclassical style.

⁴¹ Paul M. Johnston, *Geology and Ground-Water Resources of Washington, D.C., and Vicinity* (Washington: Government Printing, 1964) 29.

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end of the bridge; the rest of the concrete is buff-colored. In 1995, the bridge's roadbed was widened so that the sidewalks became cantilevered elements supported by the brackets and modillions. Elaborate iron lampposts, running the length of the bridge, incorporate columns and eagles. Prominent Washington sculptor Ernest C. Bairstow designed them in 1906. The ends of the bridge feature pre-cast lions, one roaring and one sleeping, designed by Roland Perry. The lions did not weather well. They underwent several restorations beginning in 1964 and were eventually recast in 1999 with internal stainless steel reinforcement systems.

U.S. Park Police Training Center / Edgewater Stables: (Noncontributing Building and Site) In 1959, the National Park Service erected these stables and paddock. The concrete-block and wood structure is located on the eastern side of Rock Creek, just north of the Connecticut Avenue Bridge. It was intended to replace the Edgewater Riding Academy at 26th and D Streets that had been torn down to enable construction of the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bridge. Originally, Edgewater Stables was open to the public. Presently, the stables are solely for the U.S. Park Police. A concrete road bridge leads to an asphalt parking lot and, in turn, the stables. The structures were built after the parkway's period of significance.

Woodley Lane Bridge Abutments: (Contributing Site. HAER No. DC-24) Erected 1888-1889, the Woodley Lane Bridge became the first bridge of significant size across the Rock Creek Valley. It incorporated red Seneca sandstone abutments and an iron Pratt truss with a length of 450' and width of 32'. The bridge stood 54' above the creek. It was erected by the Groton Bridge & Manufacturing Company, Groton, NY, to connect Belmont Road with Woodley Lane, and provided access to "Woodley," Grover Cleveland's summer estate. Within ten years, the bridge had become obsolete and it was demolished in 1905 to enable completion of the Taft Bridge. Two fragments of the abutments remain along the eastern valley bank; the substantial ruin is located just north of the Edgewater Stables and a small ruin, in alignment with the former, stands at the creek edge. The condition of both ruins is deteriorating due to the overgrown vegetation around the structures.

Calvert Street Bridge / Duke Ellington Memorial Bridge: (Contributing Structure. HAER No. DC-23.) The Commission of Fine Arts had considered bridge designs for this site for years. Initially, designs were put forth by George Oakley Totten, Jr. and later by Paul Cret. The Commission finally settled on Cret's concrete bridge with dressed limestone facing. Cret designed the Calvert Street Bridge in collaboration with the engineering firm of Modjeski, Masters & Chase. Constructed between 1933 and 1935, it replaced the iron trestle bridge erected at this location in 1891 by the Edgemoor Bridge Company for Sen. Francis Newland's Rock Creek Railroad Company. It was designed to accommodate streetcars.⁴² Cret's bridge is 825' long with three 156' wide arches separated by pylons; their tops form viewing platforms. The wing-walls incorporate rough-faced, coursed, multi-colored stone that terminates at curved dressed-limestone quoins; this bold quarter-round form is repeated as a limestone moulding detail above the voussoirs. Four sculptural reliefs by Leon Hermant, representing modes of transportation, adorn each of the pedestals (which lack sculptures) at the corners of the bridge. Each relief incorporates a Neoclassical nude with a locomotive, plane, ship or automobile. Tree limbs

⁴² From its inception, streetcars were prohibited from using the nearby Connecticut Avenue Bridge.

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extend over and obscure the pedestals; this vegetation has fostered the build up of dirt and, in turn, deterioration of the reliefs. In 1974, after the death of Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington (1899-1974), the bridge was renamed for the famous composer/performer and native Washingtonian. The significant number of suicide jumps from this bridge prompted the city to erect 5' high metal railings along it in the late 1980s. The visually intrusive bars compromise the views to the scenery below and are incompatible with the design of the bridge.

Parkway Ending / Road Trace: (Contributing Site) The original legislative intent of the parkway was to link the Mall and the adjacent Potomac Park (established in 1897) with the National Zoological Park (established in 1889) and Rock Creek Park (established in 1890). Initially the roadway, upon passing through the central arch of the Calvert Street Bridge, curved to the west (left). At present, the road trace remains discernible, even though the asphalt has been (predominantly) removed and saplings have begun to grow along the route; the trace of a parallel bridle path is also recognizable running through the western arch of the bridge and at an higher elevation. The Zoo property was demarcated by two ten-foot-tall, cast-iron square piers decorated with stylized fluting and rosettes. The rusting piers recall the Aquia sandstone gateposts at the Smithsonian's Castle; they stand just beyond a nine-foot-high chain link fence that presently runs along the property line. Within the Zoological Park, approximately 100 feet from the gateposts the road veered north and crossed the creek via a ford, just west of shallow rapids. The Zoo Road meandered through the grounds, incorporating a second ford, and then linked to Beach Drive in Rock Creek Park. Under pressure from transportation planners and commuters, the connection between the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway and the Zoo Road was abandoned in 1966, upon completion of the Zoo Tunnel and its concomitant road bridge. The Zoo Fords, moreover, were removed in the fall of 2004 to establish a "fishway" throughout the creek; new granite rip-rap was added along the creek banks where the fords had crossed.

Zoo Road Bridge: (Noncontributing Structure) Since 1966, upon passing through the central arch of the Calvert Street Bridge, the road curves to the east (right). Consistent with the historic roadway's curvilinear design, the Zoo Road Bridge features a slight curve in plan. Its shallow arcuated concrete structure incorporates small amounts of random-range, rough-faced, multi-color ashlar facing at the abutments. Concrete sidewalks and metal pipe rails extend across its length. Although the Zoo Road Bridge serves the original intent of the legislation, that is, to facilitate a green connection between two significant parks, it was erected outside of the period of significance.⁴³

Zoo Tunnel Portal: (Noncontributing Structure) Establishing a suitable connection between the parkway and Rock Creek Park was a contentious issue for years. In 1960, the Zoo acquiesced to constructing a single 750'-long tunnel with two lanes that ran underneath the Zoo administration building. The agreement occurred only after the National Park Service offered to provide a fence to screen the parkway, a new parking lot, and an entrance at Harvard Street for the Zoo. The tunnel, and connected road bridge directly to the south, opened in

⁴³ It is important to recognize that completion of the Zoo Tunnel and bridge ensured a high volume of traffic. By 1979, 40,000 cars per day traveled on the RCPP. The amount of traffic compromises the park character, because it is impossible to not hear the associated noise.

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August 1966. The southern end of the tunnel vault features dressed granite voussoirs with random-range, rough-faced, multi-colored ashlar along the adjacent retaining wall. The northern end of the tunnel incorporates dressed granite voussoirs, while the adjacent retaining walls are faced with random-range, rough-faced, gray-colored ashlar. In keeping with the curvilinear character of the parkway and Beach Drive, the tunnel follows a curved path. The sides of its vault are faced with glazed, white, square, ceramic tiles; its top is exposed concrete. The tile finish may be representative of ideas about progress and modernity embraced by the Park Service's Mission 66 philosophy; the glazed surface also allows for easy cleaning.

The earthen trails in the northeastern area of the parkway merge with the trail atop the southern entrance to the tunnel that, in turn, connects with the asphalt trail at the southern end of the Zoo property. Split log railings, along the steeper portions of the trails, recall the guardrails erected along the parkway during the 1930s. The northern boundary of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway property is defined by the trail running above the southern entrance to the tunnel.

Landscape

The original landscape in the area comprising the park changed in character over its approximate 3-mile length. There was flat fill along the riverfront, a broad, open terrace around the creek mouth, and then the valley gradually became a steep and wooded ravine at the northern end. Near the midpoint, between M and P Streets, huge amounts of fill and refuse were removed for parkway construction, and the slopes were extensively regraded and revegetated. Moving north, the landscape became increasingly naturalistic. Whenever possible along the course of the parkway, native vegetation was retained and only limited interventions were made in the landscape.⁴⁴ Planting was more ornamental and formal along the Potomac.

In the years following the parkway's completion, landscape architects on the National Capital Parks staff prepared detailed planting plans for a few areas, primarily around the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge and the P Street Bend. Planting plans recommended adding dense naturalistic masses of mostly native trees and shrubs, usually with two or three species dominating. Massings usually included overstory trees, with an understory composed of small trees, shrubs, and groundcovers. Larger trees and shrubs were typically shown planted at the top of slopes, while smaller plants were depicted at the toe of slopes and along the creek banks. The planting was designed, in part, to stabilize the slopes.

It appears that these plans were implemented and that there are still a few remnants of the plantings. If this is, in fact, the case, encroachment of invasives and the lack of maintenance have contributed to the deteriorated condition of the original scheme.

⁴⁴ Information on existing conditions from conversations with Perry Wheelock, May 22, 2001; August 14, 2001; and October 1, 2001. Notes on general design considerations shown on the planting plans were made by Katarzyna Piotrowska-Nosek, June 27, 2001.

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A major intervention in the parkway landscape was the planting of daffodils (*Narcissus* sp.) under First Lady Lady Bird Johnson's Beautification Program for the District of Columbia. From the mid-1960s through 1971, approximately 200,000 daffodils were planted along the parkway, primarily on the western bank south of P Street and on Shoreham Hill.⁴⁵

Dating from 1966 and 1967 are daffodil planting plans for the flat southern lawns of the parkway, from the Lincoln Memorial to the Watergate complex. These plans suggest that daffodils had been planted in these areas in 1965. (NCR Drawing 91/2-455-1-3, 5771, August 2, 1966, and 91.2-466A2, 5770, September 27, 1967.)

A planting plan of March 1935 depicted the stretch of parkway between Constitution and New Hampshire Avenues. Trees were mostly native species and included American hornbeam (*Carpinus caroliniana*), flowering dogwood (*Cornus florida*), hawthorn sp. (*Crataegus cordata**), American beech (*Fagus americana*), sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), tulip poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*), willow oak (*Quercus phellos**), and American elm (*Ulmus americana*), along with white pine (*Pinus strobus**) and Oriental plane tree (*Platanus orientalis**). Also recommended were various shrubs and vines, including red-osier dogwood (*Cornus stolonifera*), and varieties of ligustrum and honeysuckle (*Lonicera morrowii**, *L. tatarica**, *L. xylosteum**). N.B. * - denotes non-native to this region.

Flowering crabapples (*Malus* sp.), a gift of the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce, may have been planted on the east and west sides of the parkway in the late 1960s or early 1970s in the area now occupied by the Kennedy Center. (NCR Drawing 91.2-479, March 1969, Tom DeHaven.)

Across from the Watergate complex at the southern end of the parkway is a discontinuous row of sycamores (*Platanus* sp. – probably Oriental plane). Though they may date from as early as parkway construction in the 1930s, these trees are likely somewhat younger. A planting plan dated from November 1934 depicted a new sea wall for the Potomac River shore, and showed Oriental plane trees staggered on either side of a walk along the sea wall and also along the parkway. Other recommended species of trees and shrubs for the area shown on the plan included sweetgum, flowering dogwood, hawthorn sp., ligustrum, and tatarian honeysuckle. (NCR Drawing 844/80141; also 844/80141, 1 of 3, March 14, 1935, I.W. Payne.)

Today, the plane trees stand between street and sidewalk. Beyond the sidewalk, a lawn spreads to the riverfront.

Planting plans for the area south of K Street were drawn up in 1935. Recommended tree and shrub species included natives, such as red maple (*Acer rubrum*), flowering dogwood, sweetgum, tulip poplar, black gum, white pine (*Pinus strobus**), and viburnum species (*V. dentatum*, *V. dilatatum*, *V. lentago*, *V. molle*), and non-native species, among them Oriental plane tree and Russian olive (*Eleagnus angustifolia*). (NCR Drawing 844/80141, Sec. I – Planting Plan, 3/25/35, I.W. Payne.)

⁴⁵ The introduction of exotic ornamentals was not consistent with the original design intent of the naturalistic parkway.

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Plans dating from 1946 depict plantings for the embankments beneath the Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge. Proposed species included oaks, serviceberry (*Amelanchier stolonifera*), euonymus *sp.*, honeysuckle (*Lonicera halliana*), and viburnums. Buckthorn (*rhamnus frangula*) was proposed for a hedge at the southwest corner of the bridge. The plans recommended that vegetation be irregularly massed, with the massing becoming denser near the wall. (NCR Drawing 844/80193, 2 sheets, revised December 12, 1946, I.W. Payne)

The western valley bank, below Rose Park, curves and is exceptionally steep. Hundreds of daffodils were planted in 1966 and 1967. Currently, Rock Creek Park maintenance staff cuts back the vegetation on the slope—by hand because of the steepness—once a year in the fall allowing bulbs to bloom before the return of seasonal overgrowth. (Fall Daffodil Planting, NCR Drawing 91.2-466A, 5771, 5772, 5773, plans from 1966 and 1967, revised in 1971).

Planting plans prepared in 1940 for the east bank of Rock Creek, south of the prominent bend in P Street, depicted shrub plantings arranged in long, irregular lines along the bank, with flowering trees scattered among them. Recommended species included redbud (*Cercis canadensis*), flowering dogwood, alders (*alnus sp.*), elderberry (*Sambucus sp.*), and river birch (*Betula nigra*) along the bank, with an occasional sweetgum. Existing trees, primarily a single large massing, were noted but not identified. Mountain laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*) and blueberry (*Vaccinium sp.*) “in related masses” were recommended for underplanting. (NCR Drawing 91.3-188B, November 18, 1940; 844/80547, 1 of 15, L-P Streets, South Bank, December 18, 1940; earlier plans include (NCR Drawing 91.3-187-B, 2 of 15, after 1933; 844/80551 [91.3-209A-1] and 9.3-210, October 19, 1936; 91.3-210A, 844/80551, no date listed.)

Intensive planting plans were developed for the area of the P Street bend, particularly for the steep, concave slope leading up to 23rd Street on the east side. Plantings on the bank included low blueberry, azalea, and alder. Around the top of the hillside, trees were arranged in two layers for shade and understory. Beneath them were long, curving masses of shrub plantings, including mountain laurel, blueberry, viburnum, and azaleas (*Rhododendron sp.*). Shrubs were also massed beneath trees to the south. Freestanding trees, primarily flowering dogwood, were scattered at the top and bottom of the slope. Some larger trees, such as American elms (*Ulmus americana*), tulip poplars, and oaks, stood at the top. A few existing trees were noted, among them sycamores, swamp white oak (*Quercus bicolor*), silver maple (*Acer saccharium*), and honey locust (*Gleditsia triacanthos*). The Dutch elm disease is a possible cause of the loss of the ca. 1940 P Street Bend Planting Plan.

Relatively thick stands of riparian vegetation dominate the east bank of the creek in this area. Since 1994, a stream bank engineering project managed by park volunteers has been underway in the section between P Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. This work has brought invasive vines and herbaceous plants under control and eliminated non-native trees, such as tree-of-heaven and Norway maple. The work has provided favorable conditions for the types of native trees planted in 1940 to survive. Among the re-established trees are red mulberry, elm, tulip poplar, river birch and redbud. However, the non-native English ivy remains as the

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prevalent ground cover. Flood plain species prevail at the edge of the stream in this area. While the health of the vegetation is re-established, the selected vistas indicated on the 1940 plans are not managed at this time. (NCR Drawing 844/80547, 15 sheets, L-P Streets, South Bank, no date [c. 1946], Donald Kline.)

In the median south of the Waterside Drive Overpass is the site of the historic Lyons' Mill. Adjacent to the site, stand three large sycamores (*Platanus occidentalis*) which appear to predate parkway construction. Today, numerous mature deciduous trees, probably indigenous specimens dating from before parkway construction, are scattered across the median and along the western side of the parkway in the area of the par course. Trees standing on extensive lawns give this section the appearance of a picturesque landscape.

Planting plans for the four "planters" supporting the Massachusetts Avenue Bridge were developed in 1941 and 1942 by National Capital Parks landscape architect I.W. Payne. These four areas of planting, two at either end of the bridge, were more or less symmetrical. In notes made on the 1942 plans, Payne recommended seeking informal, naturalistic groupings of plants, creating gradual transitions between species, and adjusting the composition to the site. He wrote: "occasional single shrubs should be detached from the main group to simulate casual seedling distribution normally associated with volunteer growth." Listed species included most of the varieties specified for other areas of the parkway, such as white pine, sweetgum, tulip poplar, oaks, maples, birch, and flowering dogwood. Other native species recommended for this particular area included butternut (*Juglans cinerea*), sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*), and American elm. Non-natives included Oriental plane tree, honey locust, and Chinese redbud (*Cercis chinensis*). A large number of shrubs were listed, among them highbush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*), winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*), buckthorn (*Rhamnus* sp.*), buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*), and many varieties of rhododendron (*Rhododendron* sp.) (See NCR Drawing 91.5-131, Preliminary Planting Plan, Massachusetts Ave. Bridge, I.W. Payne, April 15, 1941; NCR Drawing 91.5-131, 844/80782, Revised Planting Plan, Mass. Ave. Bridge, April 1942; and 91.4-223, Detail Planting Plan, P St. to north end of stone retaining wall, I.W. Payne, December 1942.)

Remnants of these plantings can be found today. Four curved retaining walls act as planters, flanking the bridge abutments near the springline of the arch. The now mature white pines act as sentinel trees.

At the northernmost end of the parkway, the broad, steep slopes of Shoreham Hill spread down to the roadway. Preliminary planting plans were drawn up for the area in October 1934. On a slope along the northwestern end of the Connecticut Avenue Bridge is a grouping of mature crape myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*). Daffodil plantings dating from c. 1966-1971 appear on the western slope in the spring.

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CONTRIBUTING INVENTORY

Contributing Buildings (2):

Sewer Pumping Station. Washington City Tunnel Storage Shed.

Contributing Structures (15):

K Street Bridge. Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge (Montgomery Meigs Memorial Bridge). M Street Bridge. P Street Bridge. P Street Road Bridge. South Waterside Drive Overpass. Massachusetts Avenue Bridge (Charles C. Glover Memorial Bridge). Shoreham Hill Road Bridge. Connecticut Avenue Bridge (William H. Taft Memorial Bridge). Calvert Street Bridge (Duke Ellington Memorial Bridge). Lyons' Mill Footbridge. Shoreham Hill Footbridge. Roadway (This includes all access roads to/from the roadway and all stone and stone-faced retaining walls built in conjunction with the roadway.). Network of Trails (This includes all stone and stone-faced retaining walls built in conjunction with a trail. Trails include: Multi-Use; Rose Park; M Street to P Street Beach; Saddle Club Footbridge to Lovers' Lane; Quarry to Zoo Tunnel; Zoo Tunnel to Calvert Street; Under Calvert Street Bridge to Zoo Ford.). Culverts (This includes all culverts with masonry headwalls.).

Previously listed: Stone Seawall (contributing structure to East-West Potomac Parks). Chesapeake & Ohio Canal (National Historical Park). Dumbarton (Q Street) Bridge (individual nomination).

Contributing Objects (3):

The Arts of Peace (*Music and Harvest, Aspiration and Literature*). Millet Lampposts—located along the Stone Seawall.

Contributing Sites (8):

Sycamore Allée. Rock Creek (This includes all retaining walls and rip rap along the banks). P Street Beach. Median (Between Q Street and Massachusetts Avenue). Shoreham Hill. Quarry. Woodley Lane Bridge Abutments. Parkway Ending / Road Trace.

Previously listed: Godey Lime Kilns.

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NONCONTRIBUTING INVENTORY

Noncontributing Buildings (3):

Harry T. Thompson Boat Center. Electrical Relay Station. Edgewater Stables.

Noncontributing Structures (9):

Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bridge. Whitehurst Freeway Overpasses. L Street Road Bridge. Guard Rails. Dumbarton Oaks Park Stream Footbridge. Normanstone Stream Footbridge. Edgewater Stables Road Bridge. Zoo Road Bridge. Zoo Tunnel Portal.

Noncontributing Objects (3):

Roadway Lampposts located north of the Belvedere. Par Course. Stone Fireplace.

Noncontributing Sites (3):

Durax block Median. Harry T. Thompson Boat Center Parking Lot. Edgewater Stables Parking Lot.

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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 pattern of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property 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 as yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

- ☐ **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 of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

Area of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Community Planning and Development
Engineering
Landscape Architecture
Recreation

Period of Significance

1828-1951

Significant Dates

1889
1901-1902
1913
1929-1936

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.
James G. Langdon
Irving W. Payne

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

Previous documentation on files (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

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☒ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository:

NPS, National Capital Region Headquarters

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Summary

In the early nineteenth century, the lower Rock Creek Valley functioned as a natural barrier between Georgetown, Washington City, and Washington County, as well as a place of recreation. The creek facilitated transportation and, over time, served as a source of power for local industry. By the end of the century, the creek had also become an open sewer and the valley was a public dumping ground. Bridges were erected across the valley at various points throughout the century. Both the water-related industries and the bridges were critical to the physical and economic development of Georgetown and Washington. The first mention of the lower Rock Creek Valley as a connection between the Mall and a park in the upper Rock Creek Valley occurred in 1867. Years later, the concept of the link was appreciated in general, but the actual form of the connection, i.e., construction fill that allowed the alignment of an avenue with city streets or a meandering roadway along the valley floor, was debated intensely. After studying the locally-prepared schematic designs, the professionally acclaimed 1901-1902 Senate Park Commission specified the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway as the entrance to the proposed comprehensive park system for the nation's capital. In 1913, Congress authorized legislation for the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway (RCPP), the first parkway in the metropolitan region and one of the earliest in the country. It was initially intended for carriage drives, equestrians, and pedestrians, although the occasional automobile was also recognized. Protracted financing led to design changes that addressed the rise in popularity of the automobile and reflected the evolution of American parkway design. The funding delays also made for a parkway designed by various landscape architects, while the guiding vision of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. (a member of the Senate Park Commission) was upheld in general. The Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway meets National Register Criteria A and C in the areas of community planning and development, engineering, recreation, and landscape architecture. The property's period of significance, 1828-1951, is defined by the beginning of construction of the C&O Canal and the erection of *The Arts of Peace* sculpture groups.

*Settlement in the Lower Rock Creek Valley*⁴⁶

The Rock Creek Valley was critical to the trading network of the aboriginal inhabitants that lived throughout the Mid-Atlantic coastal region. Rock Creek, as well as the Potomac River, teemed with fish and numerous animal species roamed the land freely. European settlers began to acquire portions of the valley in 1664, when the former indentured servant John Langworth obtained 600 acres that included the eastern valley bank in the area between present-day P Street and Connecticut Avenue. Langworth named his parcel "Widow's Mite." In 1688, Henry Darnall obtained 6,000 acres, including most of the rest of the Rock Creek Valley. Darnall sold 795 of the acres northwest of the confluence of the creek and the river to Ninian Beall in 1703. Beall, an exiled Scot, was one of the earliest patentees to settle his claim. From his land, sixty acres along the riverfront, just west of the creek were platted to establish

⁴⁶ The lower Rock Creek Valley is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history; however, archeological study was outside the scope of this work.

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George-Town in 1751.⁴⁷ The Town of Hamburg, located just east of the mouth of the creek, was founded in 1768. At the time of the creation of the L'Enfant Plan, Robert Peter owned all the land on the eastern side of Rock Creek between the Tiber Creek and Boundary Street (Florida Avenue) and Anthony Holmead owned the valley bank from Boundary Street to what would become Calvert Street.⁴⁸

Water- and Industrial-Related Resources

The oldest water-related resource within the property is the creek. The creek played a role in the historic transportation network of the Mid-Atlantic region and the industrial economy that aided the development of the District of Columbia.

By the end of the eighteenth century, Georgetown had become an important shipping center. Originally, boats navigated Rock Creek up to the area that eventually aligned with P Street. Historically, the mouth of the creek was much larger; flowing southerly, it opened up just above Water Street (K Street) and expanded as far west as Washington Street (30th Street) in George-Town and as far east as 27th Street in the Town of Hamburg—the area now known as Foggy Bottom.

Though the mouth of the creek has changed considerably over time, it still incorporates the first components of the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal. The canal was constructed between 1828 and 1850. The first section, between Georgetown and Seneca, Maryland, was completed in 1831. Canal operation at the eastern end, however, began in the fall of 1830. The construction of the Potomac riverfront quay at this time, for all intents and purposes, ended the navigability of Rock Creek. Barges traveled approximately one-third of a mile up the creek before entering the canal proper. A Tide Lock controlled the fluctuating river water within the basin. 1875 marked the canal's heyday. It ceased to operate in 1924.⁴⁹

As the nineteenth century progressed, the lower Rock Creek Valley acquired a variety of industrial-related resources. The creek provided the waterpower for many of these enterprises. Between 1780 and 1813, a grist (flour), paper, and textile mill were erected along the creek between P and Mill Streets. The first and largest of these was near the foot of Mill Street; it eventually became known as Lyons Mill. Pigman and Crow probably erected the structure in 1780. Joseph Rowles, Jr. acquired the property in

⁴⁷ In 1751, this land was owned by George Beall, Ninian's youngest son. The spelling of the town's name had changed to "Georgetown" by 1807.

⁴⁸ Robert Peter, a Scot, arrived in George-Town in 1754. He worked as an agent for British tobacco merchants. Appointed as a commissioner for the town in 1757, he served continuously until he was appointed the first mayor of George-Town in 1790.

⁴⁹ The federal government purchased the canal from the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in 1938. The Civilian Conservation Corps had restored the first twenty miles by the beginning of WWII. In 1948, a congressional order mandated a feasibility study for the transformation of the canal into a vehicular parkway. After years of legislative failures to create a park, the C&O National Historical Park Act established the canal as a park on January 8, 1971.

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1795 and named it Federal Mills; a group of investors, including John Lyons and John Kurtz, administered its operations. Lyons and Kurtz purchased the mill in 1811.⁵⁰ In the early-nineteenth century, milling flourished because wheat had replaced tobacco as the local cash crop and the Napoleonic Wars were driving up the price of wheat. Due to a flood and the invention of steam-powered milling machinery, Lyons Mill stopped grinding wheat in 1875. Gustavus Scott and Nicholas Lingan built a Paper Mill where the creek met the intersection of P and Boundary Streets. The Paper Mill was 120' long and three stories high (the lower level was comprised of stone); it housed two vats. A textile mill constructed prior to 1800, and later operated by Richard Parrott, was located near the intersection of Q and Mill (27th) Streets. In it, wool and cotton were carded and spun.⁵¹ The lower valley also acquired other industrial enterprises, including a saw pit, lime kilns, foundries, and forges. From 1833-1908, lime was made in the nearby kilns from the limestone transported via the canal from quarries above Seneca. The products of the various industries, in turn, enabled people to settle and establish a prosperous local economy in Georgetown and Washington.

In 1810, Washington began to construct a rudimentary storm sewer system. Disjointed collections of conduits were constructed to drain into the nearest natural waterway. Thus, a variety of culverts and sewers were designed to empty into Rock Creek. With the invention of indoor plumbing in the early-nineteenth century, a sewer system was developed in the city that combined sanitary sewage and storm water. During the post-Civil War population explosion, the new territorial government began to construct the first true sewer system for Georgetown and northwest Washington. This combined system emptied into Rock Creek at several points. By 1889, health-conscious Washingtonians considered the pollution of Rock Creek to be a serious threat to the public's wellbeing. In the 1890s, policy was established that required all new lines to incorporate separate sewage and storm systems. In the 1930s, a program of gradual sewer separation was begun. Escalating costs forced the work to be terminated in 1970.

The Washington Aqueduct was begun in 1853 in order to supply the cities of Georgetown and Washington with abundant and potable water. The aqueduct continued to expand throughout the following century. The first portion of the system was constructed between 1853 and 1863 under the supervision of Capt. Montgomery C. Meigs, Army Corps of Engineers. The system carried water from the Potomac River at Great Falls, Maryland to downtown Washington, requiring a crossing at Rock Creek south of M Street. Initially, Meigs planned to tunnel under Rock Creek. By early 1855, he had a new proposal for an arcuated structure that could support a roadbed, because the nearby M Street Bridge was overburdened with traffic between the two cities. The Aqueduct Bridge was erected between 1858 and 1860 (better known today as the Pennsylvania Avenue Bridge).

⁵⁰ Later, John Lyons was the sole proprietor.

⁵¹ Allen Clark, "The Old Mills," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society* (Vols. 31-32, 1930) 96-100.

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In 1882, the aqueduct began to expand with construction of the Washington City Tunnel to link the Georgetown Reservoir with McMillan Reservoir. The project took nearly two decades to complete and was fraught with problems. The erection of a pumping station, on the eastern side of the parkway at a point north of Waterside Drive, was necessary to move the water from the low point below Rock Creek toward the eastern reservoir. Like the parkway itself, the Washington Aqueduct system is associated with the history of the development of the Federal city (as well as the neighboring jurisdictions). Its completion enabled development to be free of the limitations associated with private wells and helped to quell common fears related to urban fires.

Bridges Crossing the Valley

The first bridge (a draw-bridge) to span the valley was constructed in 1788 at the eastern end of what became known as Bridge Street (present day M Street). Since then, five bridges have been erected in this same location. The second bridge across the valley was built in 1792 to align with Water Street (present day K Street). Four bridges have spanned the creek at this point since the eighteenth century.

A variety of engineering milestones were achieved during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries as additional bridges were erected across the lower valley. Montgomery Meigs' Aqueduct Bridge (1858-1860) spanned the creek at Pennsylvania Avenue. Upon completion, it was one of the largest single-span, iron pipe, arcuated structures in the world. The first bridge of significant size to span the valley was the Woodley Lane Bridge, 1888-1889. When the Connecticut Avenue Bridge was completed in 1907, it became the largest concrete bridge in the world. It also gained notoriety as the "Million Dollar Bridge," because of its cost over-runs. The most aesthetically distinctive bridge is the Dumbarton (Q Street) Bridge. Completed in 1915, prior to the appropriation of funds for the RCPP, it set the standard of design excellence for future bridges.

In addition to the various industrial structures and bridges, a few houses were erected along the valley banks south of Q Street. The most architecturally significant was Cedar Hill (now called Dumbarton House), begun in 1798 by land developer Samuel Jackson and completed around 1804 by Joseph Nourse, the first Registrar of the United States Treasury.⁵² In 1915, the Government of the District of Columbia moved the building approximately 500 feet to the west to allow for the erection of Dumbarton Bridge and the continuation of Q Street.⁵³ The other houses along the valley banks were demolished during the 1920s as part of the parkway construction plans.

⁵² Charles Carroll bought the house in 1813 and renamed it Belle Vue. Its name changed to Dumbarton House in 1928 when the house was purchased by The National Society of the Colonial Dames of America.

⁵³ The main block was moved intact, but its wings, because they lacked basements, were disassembled and reassembled at the new site. In addition, the 1928 renovation, by Fiske Kimball and Horace Peaselee, removed a variety of the original Colonial details from the house. The residence is not located within this nomination's boundaries.

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Emergence of the Park Movement

In the mid-nineteenth century, social theorists began to characterize people as products of their environment, as opposed to earlier theories that were based on individual determinism (predestination). One manifestation of this shift in social thought resulted in the urban Park Movement. Beginning in 1853 with the authorization of Central Park in New York City, many American cities began to plan and develop large parks that often included landscaped boulevards as approaches.⁵⁴ The parks were created in the name of health and beauty and as a general panacea for a variety of urban ills. Proponents heralded the parks as good economics, touting them as fire barriers, planning tools, and the solution to slums and dumping grounds. The advocates, moreover, claimed that the parks would spur increases in adjacent property values that, in turn, would benefit municipal tax coffers.

In 1868, Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux, inspired by grand Parisian avenues, designed approaches to Prospect Park in Brooklyn and established the term “park-way.” This type of formal, landscaped link also appeared in Horace Cleveland’s 1869 plan for Chicago. During the 1870s, Olmsted and Vaux designed a park system for Buffalo that distinguished itself from the urban grid by its incorporation of broad curvilinear avenues. The form of the urban park continued to evolve in the 1880s when Olmsted and Charles Eliot conceived of a metropolitan park system for Boston comprised of a collection of parks integrated via a series of parkways. The parkways used landscape to frame views, highlight features, and, when necessary, screen the surrounding urban architecture. In addition to the cherished values gained from nature, the parkways afforded urban dwellers uninterrupted passage between specific destination points. Thus, the Common, in the heart of Boston, was connected via a series of landscapes to Franklin Park, a large suburban park in West Roxbury. The Boston park system became known as the “Emerald Necklace.”

The Washington Corollary: Rock Creek Park

In the late nineteenth century, Washington trailed behind many American cities in a variety of areas, including park development. Despite early interest, a city park system was a long time in the making. In 1866, the U.S. Senate Commission on Public Buildings and Grounds directed Major Nathaniel Michler, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to study sites (of at least 100 acres) for a new home for the president—with convenient access to the city, a potential park, and a source for clean water.⁵⁵ Michler’s 1867 report argued that the upper Rock Creek Valley was the preeminent place to establish a park for the nation’s capital and concluded that an 1,800- or 2,540-acre park should be established in the valley north of Piney Branch.⁵⁶ He also urged Congress to act quickly and warned that land prices would

⁵⁴ The first portion of Central Park opened to the public in 1859.

⁵⁵ The desire to relocate the Executive Mansion derived from the fact that throughout most of the nineteenth century the Washington City Canal and the Potomac Flats created a noxious environment.

⁵⁶ Senate Mis. Doc. No 21, 39th Cong. (1867), 2nd Ses.

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continue to rise. The Senate responded by passing legislation for a park, but the House tabled it, in part, because the original Washington City, as defined by L'Enfant, had yet to be filled with development. Many representatives, however, also lacked the desire to fund civic improvement projects in the District of Columbia. Nearly two decades would pass without addressing the issue.

In response to growing public health concerns about the open sewer condition of Rock Creek, a coalition of influential Washingtonians and supportive congressmen was able to cajole Congress into action. The Senate picked up the issue of the park in 1884 and in the following years repeatedly passed some form of legislation to establish Rock Creek Park. The House, however, continued its opposition to the park. By the end of the decade, pressure from the private sector finally forced the issue.

Beginning in the 1880s, Washington finally started to shed its small town image. The Washington Board of Trade, the city's most politically powerful civic organization, was instrumental in this change. Established in 1889, it was comprised of well-connected men. The first executive committee included Charles C. Glover, Crosby Noyes, Alexander T. Britton, George E. Lemon, Frank Richardson, and Brainard H. Warner. Glover was a partner at Riggs and Company and president of the Washington Stock Exchange. Britton, a nationally respected lawyer who specialized in land and railway law, was also president of the American Security and Trust Company, and vice president of Columbia National Bank. Lemon, a lawyer who specialized in pension and claims cases, had also founded the popular *National Tribune* and owned an extensive real estate portfolio in Washington. Richardson was the well-respected Washington political correspondent for *The Baltimore Sun*. Warner owned the largest real estate company in Washington and also served as president of the Columbia National Bank and the Washington Loan and Trust Company, both financial powers at the time. As editor of *The Evening Star*, Noyes wrote compelling articles about the organization's efforts.

From its inception, the Board of Trade sought to improve the civic stature of Washington and considered parks to be a necessary means to this end. In terms of the Rock Creek Valley, the board had a two-pronged agenda. It wanted the upper valley established as a naturalistic park and it wanted this park to be linked to the Mall and the Washington Monument Grounds via the lower valley.⁵⁷ The designation of Rock Creek Park was largely the result of these businessmen (with altruistic and financial interests), especially Charles C. Glover.⁵⁸ In 1890, Senator Sherman (R-OH) and Representative Hemphill (D-SC) finally succeeded in pushing the bill through their respective houses. The legislation established a "public park or pleasuring-ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people."⁵⁹ It was located just to

⁵⁷ It is important to remember that at this time East and West Potomac Parks did not exist. The Potomac Flats land reclamation project began in 1882 and lasted until 1913. Congress did not designate the flats as a park until 1897; the tenacious Charles C. Glover was critical to the success of this legislation. By the spring of 1907, people could use the park and it became fully developed for park purposes in 1925.

⁵⁸ "Won for the People: How Rock Creek Park was Gained for the People," *Evening Star*, Oct. 4, 1890.

⁵⁹ Mackintosh, 13.

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the north of the National Zoological Park, established by a popular congressional act the previous year. Neither law made any provisions for the future of the lower Rock Creek Valley.

After the Rock Creek Park legislation passed, Representative Hemphill, as Chairman of the House Committee on the District of Columbia, wrote Glover to thank him for his vital contributions toward the bill's success.⁶⁰

As one of Washington's preeminent local businessmen, Glover's work with Riggs bank enabled him to become intimately aware of the development pressures that confronted the city. He devoted much energy to preserving open space and establishing parks. His predilection for nature may have come from spending his early childhood on a farm in Georgia before moving to the city in 1855 at the age of nine. His dedication to Washington's parks was so great that when contemporary political cartoonist Clifford K. Berryman illustrated him in a book of caricatures, he drew Glover wearing a dark suit and a white Stetson hat. The U.S. Capitol and the Washington Monument were shown in the distance with the mid-ground comprised of an inset panel depicting a landscape that included two meandering roads marked by signs labeled "Rock Creek Park." Glover stood in front with parted legs, hands in pockets, and a roll of drawings tucked under an arm inscribed with, "Plans for Beautifying Washington."⁶¹

Like the other large late nineteenth century great American urban parks, Rock Creek Park was developed in the natural style. The establishment of the park allowed Washington to remain abreast with the principal commercial cities of the day. Nevertheless, it is important to understand that the Rock Creek Park and National Zoological Park lobbyists supported these pieces of legislation for more than altruistic and conservation reasons. Some of these proponents, for example Nevada Senator William M. Stewart and the San Franciscan lawyer Francis G. Newlands—who was a trustee of the William Sharon Estate, owned large tracts of land in upper northwest.⁶² The presence of the Zoo and Rock Creek Park provided a natural boundary for the residential developments they envisioned. As Stewart candidly noted, the parks took "2000 acres out of the market."⁶³

⁶⁰ A copy of the letter is located in the Washington Board of Trade Papers (Special Collections, Gelman Library, George Washington University), Record Group I, Box 1.

⁶¹ Clifford K. Berryman, *Cartoons and Caricatures* (Washington, D.C.: H.B. Thompson, n.d.). A copy of this book can be found in the Washingtoniana Division, District of Columbia Public Library. Berryman worked for the *Washington Post* from 1891 to 1907 and was employed by the *Evening Star* between 1907 and 1949.

⁶² Newlands (1848-1917) became a Congressman from Nevada in 1893 and a Senator in 1903. In 1885, he inherited much of William Sharon's (his father-in-law) estate and purchased rights to erect a streetcar line along Connecticut Avenue Extended to Chevy Chase, where he developed the farm land north of Washington into a residential neighborhood. Although upper northwest was also undeveloped at the end of the 19th century, the community was established in Maryland so its residents would have voting rights.

⁶³ Quoted in: Elizabeth Lampl and Kimberly Williams, *Chevy Chase: A Home Suburb for the Nation's Capital* (Crownsville, MD: Maryland Historical Trust Press, 1998) 26.

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City Beautiful Movement

As middle- and upper-middle-class citizens sought more comprehensive solutions to the problems associated with the ever-growing urban, industrial society, the park movement became an impetus for city planning. Confronted with labor unrest and squalor, reformers attempted to establish social discipline and visual order in overcrowded chaotic cities. The ideas behind the mid-nineteenth century park movement combined with those of the various reform movements, expositions, and the rampant nationalism of the late nineteenth century and crystallized in the form of the City Beautiful movement. This national movement, led by prominent planners and lay organizers, was a political movement that manifested itself in ambitious urban design schemes. Its philosophy held that city dwellers would become imbued with civic pride through the good design of public and semi-public buildings, parks, boulevards, and street improvements. Consequently, urban dwellers would be more productive workers and disposed to addressing community needs, both of which would enhance urban economics. The heyday of the City Beautiful movement occurred between 1900 and 1910.

The City Beautiful Movement in Washington

Despite the difficulties encountered by its problematic form of government, residents of the nation's capital at the end of the century pursued City Beautiful improvements. Since the late 1880s, design schemes to embellish the lower Rock Creek Valley had been put forth. The debate, filled-in valley with formal boulevard versus open-valley with naturalistic parkway, went on for years. It pitted Georgetowners against Washingtonians. A second protracted argument began in the 1890s, when individuals and organizations started discussing commemorating the centennial of the establishment of Washington as the seat of government. A variety of plans that focused on the area between the Capitol and the White House were unveiled. The powerful Senator from Michigan, James McMillan, head of the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia, endorsed a 1900 plan by architect Henry Ives Cobb which featured the Mall intersected by an oblique "Centennial Avenue" and elevated railroad tracks. Glenn Brown, the uncontested expert on the U.S. Capitol and an authority on the L'Enfant Plan, led the movement to kill the McMillan-Cobb plan in favor of a scheme that reestablished George Washington's and Pierre Charles L'Enfant's vision for the nation's capital.⁶⁴

As a grandson of an U.S. Senator, a lobbyist for the Public Art League (an organization seeking to establish a National Fine Arts Commission), and the Secretary of the American Institute of Architects, Glenn Brown was well connected for the campaign. His counter offense included having the subject of the development of the District of Columbia as the topic for the 1900 annual meeting of the American Institute of Architects. Several papers were presented by leading professionals of the day. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.'s talk, entitled "Landscape in Connection with Public Buildings in Washington," may

⁶⁴ In 1900, Brown had written the first of the two-volume *History of the United States Capitol* published by the Government Printing Office.

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have surprised some, because it contradicted the design tenets of naturalism advocated by his renowned father.⁶⁵ Olmsted, Jr. stated, "Great public edifices must be strongly formal, whether they are perfectly symmetrical or not, and this formal quality ought to be recognized in the plan of their surroundings if the total effect is to be consistent."⁶⁶ In addition, he highlighted the responsibility of citizens to respect history and the national importance of Washington, as the seat of government and symbol of a powerful nation. Subsequently, an American Institute of Architects resolution, introduced by William A. Boring,⁶⁷ called for Congress to establish a commission for "the location and grouping of public buildings, the ordering of landscape and statuary, and the extension of the park system in the District of Columbia."⁶⁸

Within days of the American Institute of Architect's convention, a committee led by Boring met with Senator McMillan. Following the meeting, on December 17, 1900, McMillan introduced a resolution to create such a commission. The House opposed the measure. McMillan re-introduced the resolution in a Senate Executive Session, where it was approved with specific directions for creating "plans for the development and improvements of the entire park system of the District of Columbia" and authorization for the hiring of experts to be paid with Senate discretionary funds.⁶⁹

Despite the procedural irregularity, the Senate Park Commission was created in the spring of 1901. McMillan asked Daniel H. Burnham to chair the commission and then asked Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. to serve on it. Burnham and Olmsted approached Charles F. McKim to join them. Charles Moore, McMillan's political secretary, who clerked for the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia and possessed extensive knowledge of Washington, was assigned to assist the commission.⁷⁰ Thereafter, the

⁶⁵ Frederick Law Olmsted espoused the natural style. Olmsted's last major project, however, combined the natural style surroundings with formal gardens near the house: Biltmore Estate, Asheville, NC (1890-95). This balanced combination had been noted and praised by renowned architectural critic Montgomery Schuyler in "The Works of the Late Richard M. Hunt," *Architectural Record* 5 (Oct.-Dec. 1895): 97-180. Olmsted, Jr. spent thirteen months working at Biltmore immediately before joining his father's firm in Brookline.

⁶⁶ Quoted in: John Reys, *Washington on View: The Nation's Capital Since 1790*. (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press) 239.

⁶⁷ William Alciphron Boring (1858-1937) entered the School of Architecture at Columbia University in 1886, but left the following year for the Ecole des Beaux-Arts where he studied in Leon Ginain's atelier until 1890. After a brief stint with McKim, Mead & White, Boring began a partnership with Edward L. Tilton. The firm is best known for their Immigration Station, Ellis Island, New York, 1895-1902. Boring was active in architectural education and, after teaching at Columbia, beginning in 1915, he became the School of Architecture's first dean in 1931.

⁶⁸ Reys, 239.

⁶⁹ Reys, 240.

⁷⁰ A native of Michigan, Moore had developed an appreciation for art, while attending Harvard, through Charles Eliot Norton, who had recently established the nation's first curriculum in the history of art. Upon graduation in 1878, he worked for the *Detroit Evening Journal* and was sent to Washington as a correspondent in 1889. Senator McMillan hired him the following year as his political secretary.

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designers asked Augustus Saint-Gaudens to become a member.⁷¹ John Reps has argued that McMillan deftly employed the park focus because he was well aware that other congressional committees had primary jurisdiction over Washington's public buildings and public works.⁷² Had McMillan's true interest been the entire park system, then it seems logical that a landscape architect would have been chosen as chair the commission and perhaps a second landscape professional to join as a member.

The Senate Park Commission was comprised of four of the preeminent design professionals of the day. Burnham was exceptionally qualified for the task, with his mastery of the art of persuasion, managerial skills, and commitment to long-range planning. His professional philosophy is captured in his often-quoted aphorism, "Make no little plans, they have no magic to stir men's blood." Olmsted was the son and professional heir to the nineteenth century's most highly regarded landscape architect. McKim, who had trained at the *École des Beaux-Arts* where he gained a penchant for classicism and learned the value of comprehensive planning, practiced with the renowned firm of McKim, Mead and White. Saint-Gaudens had also trained at the *École* and was recognized as the country's most talented sculptor. The 1902 Senate Park Commission Plan (better known as the McMillan Plan) focused on the National Mall.⁷³ However, its accompanying report, entitled *The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia*, made recommendations for parks, parkways, and bridges located well beyond the central core. The principal authors of the written report were Olmsted and Moore.

The McMillan Plan was the first explicit manifestation of the architectural and planning ideals established by the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition and arguably represented the pinnacle of City Beautiful planning. The plan presented an elaborate redesign of the Mall. Specifically, the plan allowed Washington's monumental core to function as an expression of the legitimacy of democracy and continuity with the founding fathers and L'Enfant's ideals. Its design sought to recapture the principles of L'Enfant's 1791 plan through a collection of classical buildings fronting an extensive greensward. It proposed parklands along the river dedicated to recreational use and parks throughout the city linked by parkways, typically running through wooded valleys.

One of the principal components of the McMillan Plan was the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, which functioned as the link between the Mall and the city's largest naturalistic preserve, Rock Creek Park. The connection represented critical ideas about urban planning and nature as defined by Olmsted, Sr. as well as the City Beautiful movement. Like the earlier urban valley Riverway in Boston, the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway rehabilitated a polluted stream, linked existing parks and urban neighborhoods, and raised the value of surrounding real estate.

⁷¹ It was not until after the initial site visits in Washington, Williamsburg, and various Virginia plantations, that McKim recommended that Saint-Gaudens join the commission. Because of the late invitation and his recent illness, the sculptor did not participate in the seven-week trip through Europe.

⁷² Reps, 240.

⁷³ Its design, rooted in European imperialism, was adopted for American democracy.

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After studying the various earlier schemes for the lower Rock Creek Valley, the Senate Park (McMillan) Commission recommended, with embellishments, the open-valley plan that incorporated the scenic parkway, which had been put forth originally by the Washington Board of Trade in the late 1880s. In addition, the commission proposed a landscaped drive to connect the Civil War forts that circled the city. The parks served as a means of protecting and enhancing existing scenery and historic sites and tended to be located in areas where natural conditions made development difficult.

The Senate Park Commission's plan was accepted and approved on January 15, 1902 by the Senate Committee on the District of Columbia, chaired by McMillan, and endorsed by President Theodore Roosevelt. With the death of Senator McMillan in 1902, Senator Francis G. Newlands of Nevada became the leading political voice for implementation of the plan. Despite initial congressional interest and significant popular support, it was not until 1910, through the efforts of Newlands, the American Institute of Architect's Secretary Brown, and others that a congressional act established the Commission of Fine Arts to ensure the implementation of the plan.⁷⁴

A Brief History of the Evolution of the American Parkway

One of the fundamental design principles of the City Beautiful movement relied on bringing nature into the city. Initially, formal landscaped boulevards were introduced as approaches to the urban parks; for example, those associated with the Buffalo Park System designed by Olmsted and Vaux. Over time, Olmsted sought connections between urban parks that worked with the existing natural topography. In 1881, he devised a plan that he advocated to the Boston park commissioners that included the Muddy River Valley. The valley represented the natural link between the recently completed Back Bay Fens and the planned Jamaica Park. Although the design was not finalized until in the early 1890s, the 3.5 mile Riverway followed the path of the Muddy River and incorporated a ninety-foot-wide public way on the Boston side of the valley that continued the walking, driving, and riding paths of the Fens. On the Brookline side of the valley, additional space allowed for more planting and scenic paths.⁷⁵

The parkways separated the visitor from the urban milieu and provided a natural place for rest, relaxation, and inspiration for the passengers of horse-drawn carriages and pedestrians. They represent the transition from the late-nineteenth-century formal boulevards to the suburban recreational motorways of early-twentieth century. The advent of the mass-produced automobile in 1908, its

⁷⁴ The May 1910 legislation gave the commission the authority to review statues, fountains, and monuments. The following October, President Taft, who had consistently supported programs for the development of Washington, signed an executive order that expanded the authority to federal buildings erected in Washington. In 1913, President Wilson added structures to the list and in 1921, Harding added the design of medals, insignia and coins produced by the executive departments.

⁷⁵ See Charles E. Beveridge and Paul Rocheleau, *Frederick Law Olmsted: Designing the American Landscape* (New York: Rizzoli, 1995) 98-99.

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growing affordability, increasing popularity, and technological advances in speed, ultimately led to changes in parkway design in the 1910s and 1920s.⁷⁶

The first parkway conceived solely for automobiles was the Bronx River Parkway, 1915-1923, in Westchester County, New York. The fifteen-mile scenic drive was the design of Herman Merkel, a landscape architect-forester trained in Germany, and was modified in the field by Gilmore Clarke, the landscape architect in charge of construction. Local officials recognized the success of the Bronx River Parkway before its completion. Consequently, in 1922, the Westchester County Park Commission was established with Clarke as the head of its staff. By 1934, the county had an unparalleled system of parks and parkways comprising 10,000 acres. Various projects allowed for the working out of practical and aesthetic concerns. Parkway design was refined to incorporate: a curvilinear roadway with limited access; the elimination of at-grade crossings; concrete bridges clad with native stone; landscape plantings; and landscape features.

As the design of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway evolved throughout the 1920s, it made similar changes. For example, its access became more limited over time and designers concentrated on retaining the existing natural landscape. The woodlands shielded travelers from views of the surrounding city in order to foster a sense of seclusion. Significantly, the design employed separate northbound and southbound drives, uncommon at the time. This enabled greater preservation of the natural landscape and a greater ability to blend the roadway into the scenery.⁷⁷ Compared with later parkways, Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway offered many amenities, with its picturesque bridges, pedestrian and bridle paths, glens, groves, woods, and varied and dramatic views.

In a relatively short time, Gilmore Clarke's skills were nationally recognized so that he became the logical choice to design the Mount Vernon Memorial Highway, authorized in 1928 and completed in 1932. Its construction was managed by the Bureau of Public Roads, a division of the Department of Agriculture charged with conducting research on and promoting modern road building. The BPR hailed this project as a model modern motorway, with features adapted from earlier parkways to meet the highway standards of the day.⁷⁸ The Mount Vernon Memorial Highway also reflected the then-popular belief that parkways should incorporate a variety of pleasurable or educational experiences.

⁷⁶ The automobile was initially developed in the late 1880s in Germany. It was first produced in quantity in the United States in 1901 by Ransom E. Olds. Henry Ford had created a car in 1896. His Model T began to be mass-produced in 1908 and by 1927, the year it was discontinued, 18 million had been built. For a local history see: A. Leftwich Sinclair, Jr., "History of the Automobile in the District of Columbia," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society*. Vol. 48-49 (1946-1947) 143-154.

⁷⁷ The Bronx River Parkway only contained one short section of divided roadway. It was not until after WWII that broad, landscaped medians became a standard design element.

⁷⁸ Accordingly, the term highway as opposed to parkway was used in the name.

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By the late 1930s, the Federal government began to lose some of its interest in developing motorways that balanced beauty, recreation, and utility. This decline in design features was also perceptible along the Merritt Parkway (1935 ff.), developed by the State of Connecticut, which was fundamentally a limited-access highway designed for speed, with simplified landscaping and no recreational amenities. The Merritt Parkway foreshadowed the direction of future American highways. Despite anomalies like the later sections of the George Washington Memorial Parkway and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway, the highway designs of 1950s increasingly were removed from the hands of landscape architects and placed under the control of highway engineers and urban planners, who were guided by economic concerns rather than aesthetic and recreational values or specific knowledge of a site.⁷⁹ The Interstate Highway System, inaugurated in 1956, pushed for standardized highway designs and specifications. Modern highway plans for cities typically included freeway spokes radiating out from a central loop around the central business district, usually running through poor neighborhoods. The master plan for metropolitan Washington issued in 1950, and updated in 1956 to include three circumferential highways in or around the city, was typical of the new approach to roadway design.⁸⁰

Late-Nineteenth Century Ideas about the Lower Rock Creek Valley

The first mention of the lower Rock Creek Valley serving as a means of access to a park in the upper Rock Creek Valley occurred shortly after the Civil War. Major Michler's 1867 report to the Senate Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds that focused on potential locations for a new Executive Mansion and establishing a public park in the upper Rock Creek Valley also noted the lower valley. Michler wrote, "Avenues leading along Rock creek to the southern limits of the park should be opened."⁸¹

In the late 1880s, extensive discussions about the lower Rock Creek Valley began in conjunction with lobbying efforts to designate Rock Creek Park. At this time, it was generally recognized that a connection between the central Mall and the proposed park in upper northwest could best be realized through the lower valley. The actual form of the link, however, generated significant differences in opinion.

In 1889, the Board of Trade prepared a report expounding the benefits of transforming the lower Rock Creek Valley into an informal scenic parkway for carriages, horseback riders, and pedestrians, as well as the occasional automobile. The plan called for keeping the valley open and enhancing it with a designed landscape in the natural style and a roadway following the creek. Georgetown businessmen stood on the

⁷⁹ Davis, 193 and 198 ff.

⁸⁰ For a history of highway development around Washington see: Bob Levey and Jane Freundel Levey, "Lost Highways: The Plan to Pave Washington, and the People Who Stopped It," *The Washington Post Magazine* (Nov. 26, 2000) pp. 10-26.

⁸¹ Senate Mis. Doc. No 21, 39th Cong. (1867), 2nd Sess., p. 4.

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other side of the issue. Their local economy had been in decline since the mid-1870s.⁸² They considered the open sewer and dumping ground conditions of the lower Rock Creek Valley to be a major impediment to their financial well-being. These businessmen wanted to reap benefits from the city's coming of age and its concomitant building boom. Accordingly, Georgetowners preferred a closed-valley scheme, i.e., put fill in the valley, with a boulevard running along the new continuous grade elevation. They held that a handsome boulevard would establish the complete physical link between Georgetown and developed Washington. The new land, they also argued, would attract fine homes and, in turn, abate their financial woes and, simultaneously, fill the city coffers. Most supporters of the open-valley scheme came from Washington's business community, many of whom had real estate investments in the upper northwest area of the city. Consequently, these individuals were not inclined to support a federally-subsidized project that could have encouraged the development of an elite neighborhood close to downtown.

In 1892, under pressure from Georgetown businessmen, Congress authorized Captain William T. Rossell, the Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia, to write a report examining a closed-valley option. The following year, Rossell recommended erecting a barrel vault over the creek, creating a new outlet for the C&O Canal, constructing a separate sewer system, and then filling the valley. In 1899, the Board of Trade countered with another report and plan promoting the open-valley plan with its scenic parkway and challenged Congress to establish a park system in honor of the city's centennial as the federal seat of government.

Hoping for a responsive Congress and appreciating the importance of parkland—especially in a pre-L'Enfant plan neighborhood that did not include a single park—the Georgetown Citizens Association adopted the following resolution in early 1900:

Resolved, that the association recommend to the Committee of Congress that additional appropriations...shall be made...for the acquisition of a park for Georgetown, extending from Road [R] Street to the Zoo, including the Boyce tract [today's Montrose Park], running along the west side of Rock Creek to the Zoo; And it be further Resolved, That there is an imperative demand for a bridge across Rock Creek, at or between M or Q Streets which shall not be obstructed by a railway of any kind so that the citizens of West

⁸² There was a nationwide economic depression in the mid-1870s. In addition, Georgetown experienced major floods that negatively affected the local waterfront economy in 1877 and again in 1886. The flood of 1889 forced the C&O Canal into receivership with the B&O Railroad emerging as the major shareholder. It is important to recognize, however, that the end of the nineteenth century marked a building boom for residential Georgetown north of M Street; this mirrored the construction trend in Washington City. For Georgetown residential building statistics see: District of Columbia Historic Preservation Division, *The Georgetown Historic District Project: A Cultural Resource Survey, Vol. 2, Architectural Survey of the Georgetown Historic District*, Robinson & Associates, Inc., August 1993, 3.

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Washington may drive into the city without the annoyance of obstructions of this character.⁸³

At its March 23, 1900 meeting, the chairman of the Board of Trade's Committee on Parks and Reservations offered the directors the following resolution to be adopted:

Resolved, That the Board of Trade respectfully and earnestly urge the Senate Appropriation Committee to insert the item of \$30,000 for care and improvement of Rock Creek Park, estimated by the Commissioners of the District of Columbia...Resolved, that the Committee on Parks and Reservations and the executive officers of the Board of Trade...present to the appropriate Congressional Committees the plan for the continuation of the National Park system along Rock Creek, from the Zoological Park south to Massachusetts Avenue on the East side and Road (U) [*sic*] Street on the west...⁸⁴

Later that year, Colonel Bingham of the U.S. Army Chief of Engineers, the division responsible for all major public works or building projects in the Capital, retained noted New York landscape architect Samuel Parsons, Jr. to develop a suitable connection between the recently established Potomac Park and the Zoological Park. Parsons proffered a schematic design that incorporated a landscaped boulevard extending north from Potomac Park along 23rd Street, through Washington Circle, as far as O Street. At this point, he proposed parkland along the lines of the recent resolution adopted by the Georgetown Citizens Association. The new parkland would take in a swathe of Georgetown Heights (including portions of today's Massachusetts Heights and Woodley Park neighborhoods) in order to connect to the southern limits of the zoo. Despite the fact that Parsons ignored the problematic conditions of the lower Rock Creek Valley, his plan received the support of the Corps of Engineers and the Secretary of War.

In January 1902, the Senate Park Commission presented its design proposals for the city including a report entitled *The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia*. The experts on the commission had ignored Parsons' vague plans for the lower Rock Creek Valley and instead studied the open- and closed-schemes previously developed by local activists. The report discussed the relative advantages of the schemes prepared by the Washington Board of Trade and the Georgetown businessmen. The design experts concluded that the open-valley option offered several benefits, including: the screening of unsightly development; the retention of existing topography; and a parkway separated from cross-town traffic, that could be accommodated by economical and picturesque bridges. The commission also noted that the depressed roadway would spare travelers from views of the "shabby,

⁸³ The Georgetown Citizens Association referred their resolution to the Board of Trade, see Board of Trade Papers, Record Group I, Minutes of Meetings Nov. 14, 1899 - Feb. 23, 1910, Oversize Box 5, entry for Jan. 19, 1900.

⁸⁴ Board of Trade Papers, Record Group I, Minutes of Meetings Nov. 14, 1899 - Feb. 23, 1910, Oversize Box 5, entry for Mar. 23, 1900.

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sordid, and disagreeable" tenements and factories located on or near the creek banks between Pennsylvania Avenue and Q Street.⁸⁵ When considering the closed-valley option, the commission expressed doubts about the ability of this scheme to generate redevelopment. Since the fill could require years to settle, it held that, initially, the new land would be more likely to attract additional industrial uses and tenement dwellings, rather than stately homes. In its conclusion, the Senate Park Commission sought to invoke the authority of antiquity by alluding to Vitruvius' tripartite theory of architecture: "We feel compelled to recommend the definite adoption of the [open-valley plan] on grounds of economy, convenience, and beauty."⁸⁶ In addition, the experts held that it was "a very fortunate opportunity that permits the seclusion of the parkway in a valley the immediate sides of which can be controlled and can be made to limit the view to a self-contained landscape, which may be beautiful even though restricted."⁸⁷

The published report also included the Senate committee's report to Congress. In his summary statement, Senator McMillan criticized the city's present condition and pressed for a comprehensive plan that included a park system with parkways and diverse attractions. McMillan's introductory remarks addressed various issues:

The development of Potomac and Rock Creek parks, the creation of a park along the Anacostia, and the increasing use of the Soldiers' Home grounds for park purposes, all call for a study of connections among the parks, so as to bring into one system the diversified attractions which these public spaces will offer when adequately developed. The positive squalor which today mars the entrance to almost every public park is too apparent to need discussion.⁸⁸

Despite his seeming disinterest in discussing park entrances, McMillan specifically commented on the Rock Creek Valley south of the zoo, calling it "unsightly to the verge of ugliness."⁸⁹ He also mentioned the necessity of ending the protracted debate regarding the future form of the lower Rock Creek Valley.

Even though the Senate Park Commission's Plan carried great professional weight and the Board of Trade advocated its adoption to Congress, the plan failed to resolve the fate of the lower Rock Creek Valley.⁹⁰ Many activists continued to pursue efforts to have the valley filled and the creek turned into a sewer. In addition, the earthen causeway, erected in 1901, to carry Massachusetts Avenue Extended

⁸⁵ Charles Moore, ed., *The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia*, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1902) 86.

⁸⁶ Moore, 85. Vitruvius' architectural theory argued for *firmitas*, *utilitas*, and *venustas* (firmness, commodity, and delight.)

⁸⁷ Moore, 86.

⁸⁸ Moore, 11.

⁸⁹ Moore, 11.

⁹⁰ The plan lost its biggest and most powerful supporter when Senator McMillan died in August 1902. Francis Newlands, elected to the Senate in 1903, carried the torch for the plan thereafter.

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over the valley garnered support for the technical feasibility of the closed-valley plan. In the years following the issuance of the 1902 plan, several bills for the closed-valley alternative were presented to Congress, though none were acted upon. Land prices, meanwhile, continued to rise and development kept apace and all along the Board of Trade failed to cajole Congress into adopting legislation to support a greater park system for the city. In May 1906, supporters of the open-valley plan petitioned the Engineer Commissioner for the District of Columbia to proceed with this approach. They extolled the public health benefits of the open plan, including greater air circulation, cleaner water, and the retention of a fire-break between Georgetown and Washington. The Engineer Commissioner and the D.C. Board of Commissioners, however, supported a closed-valley bill. Accordingly, the battle between the two sides intensified.⁹¹

In an effort to end the protracted debate, Congress, in 1906, authorized Major Jay J. Morrow, the new Engineer Commissioner, to prepare a comprehensive study of the valley's existing conditions and offer different alternatives. The Major selected Captain E.M. Markham as an assistant. The Morrow and Markham report of 1908 examined the costs and benefits of four different schemes: three presented variations on the closed-valley alternative and one addressed the open-valley option. Morrow and Markham, like the design experts on the Senate Park Commission, held that the fill required for the closed-valley plan would prove unstable for years. Accordingly, they recommended the open-valley scheme. Their design became the basis for the parkway design eventually built.

True to their engineering backgrounds, Morrow and Markham's open-valley recommendation was based on the bottom line. They estimated a cost of \$4.75 million, including the requisite excavation, for the open-valley plan and prices from \$5.1 to \$7.35 million for the various closed schemes. They also held that the open plan would be more sound technologically and proffered that adjacent property values would rise. Their recommended design called for removing all constricting debris, building access roads, establishing footpaths at different levels, and developing a naturalistic landscape throughout the parkway. South of Massachusetts Avenue, the main drive incorporated separated north- and south-bound lanes. Pedestrian paths and bridle trails traversed the hillsides parallel to the main road, with each route visually separated by vegetation. Border roads along the ridges ensured that the backs of buildings would not be visible from the park. In addition, Morrow and Markham recommended replacing the utilitarian, iron-truss bridges that spanned the valley at P and M Streets and Pennsylvania Avenue, with elegant, stone-faced structures; simple bridges were to carry the parkway's roadbed over the creek. The report also noted that a wider culvert would be necessary to allow for passage through the recently completed Massachusetts Avenue embankment. Between N and P Streets, where the creek made an abrupt U-shaped turn, they proposed an elaborately landscaped park. In addition, the engineers reflected an appreciation of the valley's industrial character. That is to say, they proposed a roadway alignment such that the preservation of Lyons Mill above Q Street would be possible. Anticipating that the

⁹¹ Davis, 158-160.

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industrial character of the waterfront was not likely to change, they adopted the Senate Park Commission's recommendation to build a broad granite quay along the riverfront and a monumental viaduct, set 150' from the shore, to carry the parkway over the area.⁹²

Legislation

The anticipated lower cost established for the open-valley option by the 1908 Morrow and Markham report seemingly settled the matter of design. Its advocates presented a united front to Congress, supported by the Board of Trade and, after 1910, the Commission of Fine Arts (CFA). Despite their valiant efforts, a bill supporting the open-valley alternative was not introduced to the Senate until 1911. Although this passed the Senate by the end of the summer, the House, which traditionally did not support City Beautiful ideas, took no action on it. At long last, a Congressional Act on March 4, 1913 authorized the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway for the "purpose of preventing pollution and obstruction of Rock Creek and of connecting Potomac Park with the Zoological Park and Rock Creek Park."⁹³ It is important to note that the role of the parkway as a major traffic artery was not discussed in an official document until twelve years later.⁹⁴ The act established the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission (RC&PPC), comprised of the Secretaries of War, Treasury, and Agriculture, to oversee the project. The construction of the parkway would be the responsibility of the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, a department of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which oversaw all District parks.⁹⁵ In addition, the act authorized—but did not appropriate—\$1.3 million to acquire lands through "purchase, condemnation, or otherwise."⁹⁶ Funds were to be raised through annual incremental appropriations, which ranged from \$50,000 to \$250,000 between 1916 and 1925. The cost of acquiring the land was to be borne equally by the federal and District of Columbia governments.⁹⁷ About 162

⁹² Davis, 171-172.

⁹³ Public, No. 432; H. Rept. 28766, p.22.

⁹⁴ Sen. Report No. 353, p. 2.

⁹⁵ See: Mackintosh, 70 and Davis, 163-164. In 1925, the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds (OPBG) began to report directly to the President, thus eliminating the role of the Army Corps of Engineers. In August 1933, the (renamed) Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks and the Rock Creek and Potomac Park Commission were abolished by an executive order. Their authority was transferred to the Office of National Parks, Buildings, and Reservations within the Department of the Interior. This name was changed to the National Park Service in March 1934.

⁹⁶ A copy of the act was reproduced as Appendix A in U.S. House of Representatives, *Report of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission: 1916* (H. Doc. 1114, 64th Congress, 1st sess., 1916) p. 20.

⁹⁷ The following Congressional record references in this nomination have been taken from the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway draft National Register nomination written by Jere Krakow. This draft is located at the Technical Information Center of the NPS, National Capital Region Headquarters. See: U.S., Statues at Large, XXXVII, 885; U.S. Congress, Senate, The Acquisition of Land for the Parkway between Rock Creek Park, the Zoological Park, and Potomac Park. S. Report No. 353, 69th Cong., 1st sess., 1926, pp. 1-2; U.S., Statues at large, XLIII, 574, 1323. Funds for surveying the parkway were authorized in an appropriation of March 3, 1915, for sundry government expenses. U.S., Statues at Large, XXXVIII, 829. For other fiscal discourse relating to land acquisition, see U.S. Congress, Senate, Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Appropriations... on H.R. 11, A Bill Making Appropriations for Sundry Civil Expenses of the Government for the Fiscal

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acres of land were included within the original taking lines; approximately 68 acres, or nearly 42%, of this land was already owned by the government.⁹⁸

Land Acquisition

The RC&PPC and their first executive director, Colonel William W. Harts of the OPBG, faced numerous problems concerning acquisition, boundaries, and funding, which delayed completion of the parkway for more than twenty years. Throughout its tenure, the commission had to plead with Congress for each appropriations dollar. Because the 1913 Congressional Act had used a 1911 map of the lower Rock Creek Valley as the boundary document, the RC&PPC initially forwarded this map to the D.C. Board of Commissioners and the Commission of Fine Arts for comments. The D.C. Commissioners recommended minor alterations to ensure that parkway boundaries conformed to recent changes in the city's street plan, and the CFA asked for more detailed plans and offered its guidance for future development. After receiving these suggestions, Treasury Secretary W.G. McAdoo asked Congress to grant the commission authority to make minor boundary changes, and requested an appropriation of \$75,000 to begin acquiring land. Congress refused both requests, and asked Harts and his staff to prepare a "more detailed" study.⁹⁹

Accordingly, Harts completed more precise plans and the written *Report of the Rock Creek and Potomac Park Commission: 1916*, that contained a section-by-section discussion of features and issues. The report recommended changes from Morrow and Markham's 1908 study: reducing the land to be acquired by forty-three acres; eliminating the waterfront quay and viaduct; and separating the beginning of the C&O Canal from the creek. It urged release of \$1.3 million because land values were increasing. After a review by the Commission of Fine Arts, Harts' report was submitted to Congress in February 1916; it was approved in July. Thereafter, the RC&PPC was given \$50,000 of the original appropriation to begin purchasing land within the original boundaries.¹⁰⁰

Land acquisition proceeded slowly through the early 1920s. By February 1923, the commission had only acquired sixty-four acres; thirty acres remained to be purchased (for a total of 162 acres). The riverfront industries presented the greatest difficulties for acquisition, particularly the lands owned by the C&O Canal and the Washington Gas Light Company. Eventually, the Gas Light Company agreed to a land exchange, however the canal company pressed the matter in court. Despite the major flood in

Year Ending June 30, 1911, 65th Cong., 1st sess., 1918, pp. 9-10, 84-85; U.S. Congress, House, District of Columbia Appropriations Bill, 1925, 68th Cong., 1st sess., 1924, pp. 494-498.

⁹⁸ *Report of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission: 1916*, 19.

⁹⁹ Davis, 164-165.

¹⁰⁰ Davis, 165, 172-174.

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1924 that damaged the canal and forced it to close permanently, the issue was not resolved until the early 1930s.¹⁰¹

In 1925, the RC&PPC received the final installment of its original \$1.3 million appropriation. At this time, expensive tracts remained to be purchased and little work had been completed besides some clearing, preliminary grading, and the construction of a rough bridle path.¹⁰² When Secretary of the Treasury Andrew Mellon became chairman of the RC&PPC, he requested a second appropriation of \$600,000 from the federal government. This unleashed a storm of protest within Congress over the amount of federal dollars spent on improvements within the District of Columbia. The House ultimately supported the additional appropriation on the condition that the money came entirely from allotted D.C. funds.¹⁰³ At this time, the RC&PPC was also finally given the authority to make minor boundary changes, allowing it to sell less significant parcels of land in order to purchase tracts whose future development could negatively impact the valley.¹⁰⁴ Except for the canal property, all land had been acquired by February 1931.

Design

While Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. helped to provide a consistent vision over time, the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway ultimately had many authors. The 1899 plan commissioned by the Washington Board of Trade, the 1902 McMillan Plan, as well as the Morrow and Markham design of 1908, all affected the final solution. When the parkway was altered in later years to accommodate the rise in popularity of the automobile and higher speeds, it remained true to the original design tenets of naturalism.

Design began with the acquisition of property in the late 1910s. Engineers and landscape architects with the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers produced the drawings. The planning and design phases were also guided by the Commission of Fine Arts. The commission's interest in the parkway was considerable, as three of its members had been on the Senate Park Commission. Charles Moore (CFA member 1910-1940, chairman 1915-1937) had acted as the secretary

¹⁰¹ Mackintosh, 57-58.

¹⁰² Davis, 166.

¹⁰³ U.S. Congress, House, Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission. H. Doc. No. 375, 69th Cong., 1st sess., 1926, passim; U.S. Congress, House, Acquisition of Land to Connect the Parkway between Rock Creek Park, Zoological Park, and Potomac Park. H. Report No. 52, Pt. 2, 69th Cong., 1st sess., 1926, passim; U.S. Congress, Senate, To Enable the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Commission to Complete the Acquisition of Land for the Parkway between Rock Creek Park, the Zoological Park, and Potomac Park. S. Report No. 152, 69th Cong., 1st sess., 1926, passim; U.S., Statutes at Large, XLIV, 396-397, 849. In January 1927, Congress allowed the sale of a small tract of the previously acquired land for construction of a church building and driveway. *Ibid.*, pp. 1007-1008; U.S. Congress, House, Authorizing Sale of Land at Margin of Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway. H. Report No. 1748, 69th Cong., 2nd sess., 1927, passim.

¹⁰⁴ U.S. Congress, Senate, Authorizing Slight Changes in Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway, without Increase of Cost. S. Report. No. 1580, 70th Cong., 2nd sess., 1929, pp. 1-2.

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and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. (CFA member 1910-1918) had been the landscape architect member.¹⁰⁵ In his official capacity as a member of the CFA, Olmsted scrutinized the design for the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway. The executive officers of the RC&PPC, drawn from the Corps of Engineers, also exerted considerable influence over the design. In 1916, the office issued the first set of detailed construction documents. The most prominent landscape architect to develop the initial working drawings was James G. Langdon. Earlier in his career, Langdon had worked for many years in the Olmsted office and had gained significant experience on the Riverway section of Boston's Emerald Necklace; he had also helped Frederick Olmsted with the written report for the Senate Park Commission.

The 1916 design incorporated a variety of changes: additional access from Connecticut Avenue; access to the parkway via Lovers' Lane; deletion of a drive along the west bank of the creek; the reestablishment of the original valley contours between P and M Streets—requiring major excavation of the existing conditions; a single, tree-lined roadway along the Potomac riverfront; and border roads from the riverfront to Q Street and from Massachusetts Avenue to the Zoo. The plan also called for separating the C&O Canal from the creek and raised the issue that the roadway's connection through the Zoo created problems. The most radical revision in the 1916 design was the elimination of the Potomac Quay, resulting from the decline of the economic role of the waterfront.

During the 1920s and 1930s, engineers and landscape architects with the Army Corps of Engineers and Office of Public Buildings and Grounds developed the final construction documents and planting plans. In the early 1920s, Lt. Col. Clarence Sherrill was in charge of the parkway. He authorized a new set of plans, in part due to additional acquired land. The principal designer Irving W. Payne and his assistant Thomas C. Jeffers prepared these drawings.¹⁰⁶ Their plans included further changes to the 1916 design. For example, the new design depicted the main drive relocated to the east side of the creek just north of the Q Street Bridge, instead of further north near Lyons Mill. An access road from Georgetown, located between Mount Zion and Oak Hill Cemeteries, was proposed.¹⁰⁷ Additionally, the elaborate landscaping of the P Street bend had been eliminated.

In September 1924, the new plans were submitted to the Commission of Fine Arts for review. Though he was no longer a member of the commission, Olmsted's comments were sought. After discussions with Chairman Moore and H.P. Caemmerer of the National Capital Parks Commission, as well as a thorough site visit, Olmsted prefaced his detailed written remarks with concern for the "striking changes."¹⁰⁸ Olmsted objected foremost to the change in alignment north of Q Street. He argued that

¹⁰⁵ The ideas put forth by the Senate Park Commission had permeated the Commission of Fine Arts from its inception. In 1910, Burnham became its first chairman; he held the position until his death in 1912.

¹⁰⁶ Davis, 167-168.

¹⁰⁷ This access road ran along the path of Mill Street.

¹⁰⁸ Davis, 174.

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the requisite cut would increase the risk of landslides along the eastern bank and would necessitate the removal of an attractive stand of mature trees.¹⁰⁹ Olmsted emphasized that the guiding principle of the parkway's design should be the preservation of "natural sylvan beauty."¹¹⁰ In terms of the Georgetown access road at Mill (27th) Street, Olmsted held that the steep terrain was more suited to a footpath. He also argued that the sylvan character surrounding the picturesque cemeteries should not be compromised for the sake of convenience. In addition, he deplored the decision to allow industrial uses to remain near the mouth of Rock Creek, where their unsightly structures would obscure one of the most significant points in the parkway. The Commission of Fine Arts forwarded Olmsted's remarks, with a few deletions—based on their design preferences and the fear of political backlash—to the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks.¹¹¹

Olmsted did not oppose the Georgetown access road extending from Lovers' Lane that had been proposed since the parkway's early planning stages. The cobbled Lovers' Lane had extended from Road (R) Street and traversed part of the western valley wall for decades.¹¹² Parkway drawings dating from the 1930s, however, do not document an access road via Lovers' Lane. Because Congressional appropriations were limited throughout the project, the disappearance of this approach road can be understood based on financial reasoning, but the political influence of career diplomat Robert Woods Bliss and his wife Mildred Barnes Bliss should not be underestimated.

The Blisses purchased approximately fifty acres in the heights of Georgetown (around Lovers' Lane) in 1920 and named their property Dumbarton Oaks. The extensive gardens were developed and planted over the next two decades and were recognized for their exceptional design from the beginning. Although the Blisses remained abroad until 1933, they were actively involved in the design of Dumbarton Oaks, administered and developed by landscape gardener Beatrix Farrand.

Mrs. Wallace Radcliffe, a member of the Georgetown Garden Club, initiated correspondence with Mildred Bliss in the mid-1920s to gain access to the gardens for club members. In 1928, Mildred wrote the following letter to Mrs. Radcliffe:

It pleased us very much to have you say you were all glad we had acquired the property on S Street beyond 32nd. I suppose you know of the park-way plans and the desire of the commission to cut through new streets. We want to help them in every way compatible

¹⁰⁹ This advice was ignored and a landslide occurred in 1935; the northbound lanes were closed the following two years.

¹¹⁰ Davis, 174.

¹¹¹ The CFA had also omitted sending Olmsted some information on alternative designs, particularly a proposal to extend the parkway across the Watergate steps and under Arlington Memorial Bridge, because of fears that he would support this idea. Davis, 176.

¹¹² The alignment of Rock Creek Drive in the neighborhood of Massachusetts Heights extends along the historic path of Lovers' Lane.

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with the preservation of the trees and natural charm of old Georgetown, and I am glad to say the commissioners show a very pleasant spirit of co-operation, so we hope that no unfortunate, for us, decisions may be made in the future. I think it would break our hearts to have a street put through our property.¹¹³

As originally proposed, the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway access road that extended from Lovers' Lane would have run through the naturalistic garden of Dumbarton Oaks (today's Dumbarton Oaks Park).¹¹⁴

From 1925 to 1933, Major Ulysses S. Grant, III, Director of the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks, was the executive officer of the RC&PPC. Grant was in charge of the parkway during the crucial design and development stages. When initially proposed, the boundaries and design had been based on the premise that the principal purpose of the parkway was to establish an informal linear park that would function as a link within a larger park system. Thus, speed was not valued. With the development and rise of the automobile, the basic challenge facing the parkway's designers became how to reconcile the automobile's increasing capacity for speed and as a means of efficient transportation with the restoration and preservation of the valley landscape. Most revisions made to the Markham and Morrow carriageway design were meant to accommodate "higher" speed motor traffic and to simplify the picturesque design elements, while retaining the sense of seclusion of a naturalistic park. It is important to recognize that the original design was altered to accommodate 30 m.p.h. traffic. The border roads were eliminated and the number of access roads was reduced. Consequently, the valley walls could remain more wooded and additional trees could be planted along bare stretches to enhance the natural aesthetic. Between the Q Street (Dumbarton) Bridge and Massachusetts Avenue, the parkway split to follow separate paths for northbound and southbound traffic, allowing it to better adapt to the site. The difficulty of establishing a link for both roadways with Massachusetts Avenue was solved by the construction of a viaduct to carry the southbound access road over the northbound parkway lanes to connect with the southbound lanes. On the whole, these changes altered the parkway's character from local park to traffic artery.¹¹⁵

Construction

Construction of the parkway began before the land acquisition and the design had been completed. In addition to affecting the purchasing power, the low congressional appropriations throughout the late 1920s also hampered construction.

¹¹³ Letter from Mildred Bliss to Mrs. Wallace Radcliffe, May 30, 1928. See, Papers of Robert Woods Bliss and Mildred Barnes Bliss, Harvard University Archives, Series II, Box 7, Folder: Georgetown Garden Club and Presbyterian Church.

¹¹⁴ The Blisses donated the land that became Dumbarton Oaks Park to the National Park Service in 1940.

¹¹⁵ Davis, 176-180.

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In the early 1920s, tenants of dilapidated dwellings in the valley were given eviction notices. Some demolition began in 1924 when a few factories and approximately twenty houses were torn down around the intersection of P and 27th Streets in Georgetown. Some houses remained standing until the early 1930s. The ash and debris (that had been dumped by the city's street construction crews) were also removed from the valley around Pennsylvania Avenue.

Without fail, the various individuals that managed the project held that if the public could use parts of the park, then they would better appreciate its importance and thus would be inclined to urge Congress to release funds for its completion. Because the northernmost portion of the parkway was widely recognized for the potential of its scenic qualities, an early project goal was to uncover and augment it as necessary. This area, moreover, required the least amount of work. By the summer of 1926, most of the area between Calvert Street and Massachusetts Avenue had been cleared.¹¹⁶ Its slopes were graded and planted with sod and honeysuckle (probably Japanese honeysuckle, *Lonicera japonica*) in an effort to establish natural harmony with the roadway. Then, fifty-seven rustic benches and thirty-six picnic tables were installed.

In 1926, a tactical management decision was made to construct a narrow, two-lane causeway through the existing conduit—erected for the creek—within the Massachusetts Avenue embankment. It was expected flood often. The strategy held that the problematic condition would become glaringly apparent to everyone. In turn, funds would be appropriated to replace the 1901 embankment with a bridge spanning the valley that enabled the passage of four parkway lanes below.¹¹⁷

In 1929, workers began to realign the creek, just north of Massachusetts Avenue, to allow the roadway to pass more easily around rock outcrops. The road was constructed with curbs, gutters, wooden post-and-rail guardrails, and light posts. By June 1930, northbound vehicular travel from Massachusetts Avenue to the Zoo ford was possible.

With construction of the Arlington Memorial Bridge between 1926 and 1932, the desire to complete the riverfront portion of the parkway arose. In 1930, Congress finally released funds to construct the requisite seawall. Large elm trees were taken away to accommodate the bridge abutments and the sea wall; ten of the elms may have been transplanted to the north along the parkway's riverfront.¹¹⁸ Debris and various structures also had to be removed from the riverfront area. Thereafter, over 21,000 cubic feet of clay was used to extend the shoreline out to the new seawall. At this time, the foundation for the Titanic Memorial was also poured at the water's edge, in alignment with end of New Hampshire

¹¹⁶ Part of this area became known as Shoreham Hill after the adjacent apartment building was opened in 1931.

¹¹⁷ Davis, 182.

¹¹⁸ See NPS, NCR *Cultural Landscape Report—West Potomac Park Lincoln Memorial Grounds* (Aug 1999) p. 45.

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Avenue.¹¹⁹ Once the fill settled and the road was completed, trees, turf, and shrubs were planted in accordance with the landscape plans. This section of the parkway, from K Street to the Lincoln Memorial, was opened in April 1932.

In the 1930s, several national work-relief programs instituted under President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal provided a needed boost for the parkway's construction. Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway received Public Works Administration (PWA) funding in 1934 under the Hayden Act (which provided for road and trail construction in national parks) from both the federal and District of Columbia governments, totaling \$265,000. PWA money was also secured for seeding grass, planting honeysuckle, and other landscaping work between K and P Streets, which opened in late October 1935. Men employed under the Works Progress Administration (WPA) performed much of the labor.¹²⁰

At the beginning of the decade, roadwork between K and P Streets had not begun because of the lack of congressional funds. The only existing structures kept as a parkway feature in this section were the Godey Lime Kilns, located on the east side of the parkway just south of L Street. Extensive re-grading of the valley between Pennsylvania Avenue and P Street, carried out in the spring and summer of 1935, required further excavation of enormous amounts of fill. Two new bridges had to be built at P Street—one to carry P Street across the valley (completed October 1935) and another to convey the parkway over the creek.¹²¹ With the completion of the P Street Road Bridge on June 4, 1936, the roadway, more than twenty years after the parkway legislation passed for all intents and purposes, was finally complete.

Despite the ability to drive continuously along the parkway between the Mall and Rock Creek Park, a few substantial projects were completed in the following years. In 1940, Rock Creek was rerouted at the bend near P Street; the channel moved west, closer to the road. Work for the stone-clad Massachusetts Avenue Bridge also began that year. It was designed to replace the 1901 embankment constructed across the valley, that received the notoriously narrow two lanes through its culvert in the 1920s. The bridge was completed in 1941.

In the 1920s, American cities began to build small neighborhood parks for the specific purpose of providing space for team sports and other, more vigorous, recreation. Accordingly, Rose Park at 26th and O Streets, a public swimming pool, at 25th and N Streets, and tennis courts at the southern end of P Street Beach, were added to the RCPP in the 1940s. These parcels of land were transferred from the National Park Service to the Government of the District of Columbia in 1972.

¹¹⁹ Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney's granite sculpture had been sitting in a gallery in New York City since 1916 while Congress wavered on the site. The exedra was designed by Henry Bacon.

¹²⁰ Davis, 184-185.

¹²¹ When the roadbed was brought to this point, traffic was initially forced to travel out of the valley, cross the P Street Bridge at street level, and then descend back into valley.

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Finally, *The Arts of Peace*, by James Earl Fraser, were erected in 1951. The pair of sculptural groups stand on either side of the roadway at its intersection with Lincoln Circle and mark the beginning of the parkway. The neoclassical sculpture established an architectonic connection between the extensive park system for the District of Columbia and the formal components around the Mall as designed by the Senate Park Commission. In its report, the commission described the juncture as follows:

At the head of the canal [reflecting pool] a great *rond point*, placed on the main axis of the Capitol and the Monument, becomes a gate of approach to the park system of the District of Columbia. Centering upon it as a great point of reunion are the drives leading southeast to Potomac Park and northwest by the Riverside drive to the Rock Creek system of parks... Memorial Bridge leads across the Potomac...Crowning the *rond point* should stand a memorial...¹²²

Commissioned in 1925, *The Arts of Peace* received design approval from the Commission of Fine Arts in 1933. The limited funds during the Depression and World War II made their completion dubious. As an act of reconciliation and friendship, the Government of Italy cast and gilded the monumental statuary. Dedicated in 1951, the erection of *The Arts of Peace* marks the end of the period of significance for the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway.

Subsequent Changes

The explosive growth in car ownership and automobile commuting in the early decades of the twentieth century led to a different perception of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway. Many changes made to the parkway after its completion were the result of automobile traffic pressures. What had originated as a park for recreational drives had transformed into a fast-paced thoroughfare providing a direct link between the neighborhoods in upper northwest D.C. and suburban Maryland with downtown Washington. Within a year of the parkway's completion, rush hour traffic had become so heavy that parkway officials established a one-way policy for peak commuting hours. The institution of the rush hour commuter pattern in 1937 established the parkway as a major and unequivocal traffic artery. In an attempt to reinforce the park qualities, however, speed limits were reduced from 30 miles per hour to 22 m.p.h. Today, the legal speed limit on the parkway varies between 25 and 35 m.p.h.¹²³

After the Second World War, regional planners appealed for congressional funds and argued that parkway expansion was vital to the region's economic growth. Tension over the parkway's dual functions as park and highway persisted as Washington's suburban population and the number of

¹²² Moore, 51.

¹²³ The speed limit is 25 m.p.h. at the beginning—from the Lincoln Memorial to Virginia Avenue—and the end—around Shoreham Hill. In between, the limit is 35 m.p.h.

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commuters grew.¹²⁴ Most post-war highway proposals for Washington, supported by the highway departments of the District and Maryland, included drastic changes to the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway.¹²⁵ For example, plans to extend U.S. 240 (now I-270) through the Rock Creek Valley called for replacing Beach Drive (in Rock Creek Park) and the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway with a six-lane expressway.¹²⁶ The plans tended to be criticized primarily for their potential effects on Rock Creek Park as opposed to that of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway; it seems that the inherent nature of the latter was commonly held to be a commuter artery. Intense and widespread public opposition eventually defeated this expressway scheme. Over time, alterations to the roadway produced a straighter road with longer and more gradual curves, and simplified landscaping. For example, in 1957, widening and straightening occurred between K and P Streets.

The tunnel beneath the National Zoological Park was the last significant alteration affecting the parkway. Although the RCPP enabling legislation specifically stipulated that the parkway was to connect to Rock Creek Park, establishing a suitable connection remained a contentious issue for years. The hilly ground of the National Zoological Park, founded in 1889, and the Union Benevolent Association Cemetery, founded in 1865 and purchased as a buffer by the Zoo in 1890, established a natural barrier between the upper and lower portions of the Rock Creek Valley. Initially, in order to travel from the parkway to Beach Drive in Rock Creek Park, motorists had to enter the Zoo grounds and cross two fords within its road system. That created problems because the Zoo was only open during daylight hours and the fords were not passable during high water. By 1933, D.C. transportation engineers, NPS officials, and the NCPC recognized the highly problematic aspects of the situation. Over the years, various tunnel proposals were put forth by traffic planners. WWII brought most road construction to a standstill. In the years immediately following the war, other projects were deemed more important. In the early 1950s, the planners pursued designs for a high-volume connection between the parkway and Rock Creek Park, including a proposal for a pair of two-lane tunnels.¹²⁷ In 1960, the

¹²⁴ When Rock Creek Park was extended into Maryland in the 1930s, it encouraged the notion that its roads, as well as the RCPP, were intended to be commuter routes. See: Davis, 195.

¹²⁵ For example: the De Leuw, Cather, & Company's 1946 "Transportation Plan for the City of Washington," prepared for the D.C. Board of Commissioners, stated that transforming the RCPP into an expressway was vital for Washington's economic health; a 1948 study by the D.C. Highway Department called for rebuilding all of the city's highways; the NCP&PC's 1950 Comprehensive Plan supported the development of mass transportation, while turning Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway into a modern six-lane highway; District Highway Department Plan of 1952; Gilmore Clarke and Michael Rapuano, "Report on certain projects in the Highway Improvement Program of the Commissioners of the District of Columbia as these projects relate to the parks and parkways under the jurisdiction of the National Capital Parks of the National Park Service," 1952; Harland Bartholomew and Associates, "A Report Upon Proposed Highway Improvement Program for the District of Columbia," 1952, prepared for NCPC. Also see Levey and Freundel Levey, 10-26.

¹²⁶ This highway would, in turn, connect to the proposed "Inner Loop" freeway, intended to encircle the downtown area, as well as the "Three Sister's Bridge," to be built across the Potomac River just north of Georgetown. Two access ramps to the Inner Loop were erected over the parkway at K Street, before this idea was abandoned. These aborted structures were not torn down until 1998.

¹²⁷ Zoo officials had not been part of the planning process before 1957.

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Zoo finally acquiesced to an extension of Beach Drive, in the form of a two-lane wide, 750'-long tunnel running underneath the Zoo administration building, after the NPS offered to provide the Zoo a fence to screen Beach Drive, an entrance at Harvard Street, and an additional parking lot.¹²⁸ Interestingly, the local newspapers hailed the tunnel as a benefit for commuters, while the NPS managers discussed it in terms of serving visitors to Rock Creek Park and the Zoo. The tunnel and its access road, incorporating a road bridge across the creek, opened in August 1966.¹²⁹ The entire road surface was also re-paved that year.

Changing public ideas about the purpose of urban parks led to modifications in the design and function of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway. Over time, incremental widening of the roadway encroached on the right-of-way and compromised some recreational aspects of the park. In the 1960s, the growing popularity of outdoor recreation and individual exercise programs led to changes in the use and design of the parkway. Bicyclists emerged as a vocal constituency. In the 1970s, after failed attempts to establish a rush-hour bike lane, the bridle trail along the western side of the valley floor was paved. Finally, a "par course," beginning on Shoreham Hill with exercise stations extending to the Waterside Drive Overpass, was constructed.¹³⁰

A survey of park roads conducted in 1987 by the Federal Highway Administration found that much of Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway failed to meet Federal standards for parkways in urban areas. It determined that: the road was too narrow and lacked medians in some areas; the curves were too sharp and not sufficiently banked; entrances and exits had hazardous locations and provided insufficient space for merging. The survey produced recommendations for improvements. Because these changes would undoubtedly prove detrimental to the parkway's historic and aesthetic integrity, they have not been adopted. In 1991, the roadway north of Virginia Avenue was resurfaced. The following summer, extensive improvements were carried out along the waterfront section, from Virginia Avenue to West Potomac Park: the road base was repaired and re-paved, drainage improved, and the concrete curbs were replaced with granite. Repairs were made to the Belgian block median. Today, the parkway's managers try to control traffic use, rather than alter the road.¹³¹

In 2004, as part of the environmental mitigation for the widening of the Woodrow Wilson Memorial Bridge (Interstate 95 in between Alexandria, VA and Prince Georges County, MD), the Zoo Ford, located near the northern end of the parkway, was removed from Rock Creek. Historically, the asphalt ford had linked a northern terminus of the parkway with the Zoo Road, which ran through the Smithsonian Institution property and then connected to Beach Drive in Rock Creek Park. The Zoo Ford

¹²⁸ Remnants of the original northern end of the RCPP roadway can be seen below the western end of the Calvert Street Bridge, in the creek—approximately 100 feet west of the Zoo Road Bridge, and along the creek banks at this point.

¹²⁹ Davis, 208-209.

¹³⁰ Davis, 212-213.

¹³¹ Davis, 215-216.

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had not been used since 1966, the year the Zoo Tunnel and Zoo Road Bridge opened to the public. The National Zoological Park wanted the ford removed to allow for unobstructed fish passage in the creek.¹³²

Effects of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway

The purpose of late-nineteenth-century parks and parkways was to serve as places of recreation, especially for those least able to escape the city. Regrettably, the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway destroyed some of the homes of those citizens who would have benefited the most. The design of the parkway called for the removal of many residences and industrial buildings along the eastern edge of Georgetown. In 1908, in an attempt to end the debate on the closed- versus open-valley plan, the Senate ordered Major Jay J. Morrow to study the existing conditions of the valley; Morrow, with his assistant Captain E.M. Markham, produced the *Report Upon Improvement of Valley of Rock Creek, from Massachusetts Avenue to Mouth of Creek*. They held that the removal of “sordid housing” was consistent with the fundamental premise of City Beautiful planning. The blocks in Georgetown between M and P Streets and 28th Street and the creek were known as “Herring Hill,” and represented one of the areas in the neighborhood where blacks lived. Tim Davis has documented that many houses demolished under the RC&PPC authority near the valley’s edge were not in poor condition, for example, the residences (two-story, vernacular, brick, flat fronts) located on the south side of the 2500 block of P Street.¹³³ The fact that the RC&PPC ignored the reality of Washington’s housing crisis—a shortage experienced since the beginning of the war—that it removed fine housing stock, and that, in general, Georgetown was not considered a desirable neighborhood at the time, reflects an element of discrimination and callousness.¹³⁴ Nevertheless, the demolition of Georgetown houses for the parkway was consistent with the goals of the Progressive Citizens’ Association of Georgetown, founded in 1926, which sought to mitigate urban nuisances. The clean-up of the lower Rock Creek Valley and the creation of the adjacent new park land dovetailed with the local efforts to rid the neighborhood of the various pockets of alley dwellings. Today, the lower Rock Creek Valley is essentially appreciated only as a natural boundary between the West End, Dupont Circle, and Kalorama neighborhoods along the eastern side and Georgetown, Massachusetts Heights, and Woodley Park on the west. Thus, the removal

¹³² The ford was one of eight obstacles removed from Rock Creek to facilitate the “fishway.” The elimination of all obstacles along the entire length of the creek was the goal of this mitigation project.

¹³³ See Davis, 148 ff. P Street, especially the 2700 block, was home to most of Georgetown’s black upper-class; see Kathleen Lesko, Valerie Babb, and Carroll Gibbs, *Black Georgetown Remembered: A History of Its Black Community from the Founding of “The Town of George” in 1751 to the Present Day* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1991).

¹³⁴ In the first decades of the twentieth century, Georgetown was not considered a prestigious place to live. In 1903, Washington’s social registers listed 219 families as living in Georgetown. Soon afterwards an exodus began so that by 1924, only twenty-five socially prominent families remained. The departures reflected the desire to escape the industrializing waterfront and the deteriorating or out-of-style building stock. But by the late 1920s, for various reasons, the socially prominent began to return; most of these people, however, would not have been native Washingtonians or people coming from elsewhere in the city.

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of buildings in "Herring Hill" denied much of the role that the creek historically played in Georgetown's social, industrial, economic, and architectural history.

Lessons learned from the construction phase of the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway increased the authority and power of the Commission of Fine Arts in terms of Washington's development history. For example, when the dilapidated 1871 M Street Bridge was torn down in 1925, the Georgetown Citizens' Association sought its immediate replacement. Congress provided a modest appropriation for the project. Consequently, the District engineers necessarily designed a utilitarian structure to meet the budget. The ensuing debate surrounding the new M Street Bridge became a test of the authority of the Commission of Fine Arts. The commission, chaired by Charles Moore, was highly opposed to the proposed design, especially because the bridge incorporated a trabeated system. During the debate, the local press established that the public favored cost over beauty.¹³⁵ Although the commission lost this battle, it won the war, when it convinced Congress to enact the Shipstead-Luce Act (1930).¹³⁶ The legislation significantly expanded the commission's role. It granted review authority over park structures, as well as any private and public property adjacent to federal park and parkway land.

Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.

One of the lesser goals of the City Beautiful movement was to definitively establish the role of the professional designer as societal leader. Over his long career, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. (1870-1957) did much to further this notion. As the son and namesake of the most renowned landscape architect of the nineteenth century, the young Rick enjoyed prominence within the profession from an early age. While attending Harvard, he spent his final summer in Daniel Burnham's office working on plans for the "White City" of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. Upon graduation, he worked for a year at the Biltmore site in Asheville, NC.¹³⁷ At the age of twenty-five, he officially entered Olmsted, Olmsted & Eliot in November 1895. The following year Charles Eliot died unexpectedly. When Olmsted, Sr. was forced to retire in 1897, because of his mental health, Rick became a full partner along with his step-brother, John Charles Olmsted (1852-1920). The firm's name became Olmsted Brothers; the practice continued under this name for sixty-three years.¹³⁸ In 1898, Harvard President Charles Eliot (father of the deceased partner) asked Rick to organize the country's first university curriculum (undergraduate) in landscape architecture. In 1899, the brothers were among the eleven founders of the

¹³⁵ Davis, 177.

¹³⁶ Public Law 231, 71st Cong., S. 2400. 40 U.S.C. 121, 46 Stat. 366.

¹³⁷ His father's final large project.

¹³⁸ Rick continued the Olmsted Brothers name after John's death, because he considered the numerous names the firm had had to be unfortunate. The partners continued to use the name after Olmsted, Jr. retired in 1949. The name was changed to Olmsted Associates in 1961.

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American Society of Landscape Architects. Rick became the Charles Eliot Professor of Landscape Architecture when the Harvard program opened in 1901 and held the position until 1915.¹³⁹

In 1901, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. received his first important appointment as a partner in the firm when Senator James McMillan asked him to be on the Senate Park Commission for Washington, D.C. Working with his father's peers, Rick helped to reinvigorate L'Enfant's vision for the nation's capital as a work of civic art, directed its future growth, and establish the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway as the entrance to the city's park system. During the following decades, Olmsted, Jr. consistently promoted and guarded the McMillan Plan through his tenure on the Commission of Fine Arts (1910-1918), the National Capital Park Commission (1924-1926), and the National Capital Park and Planning Commission (1926-1932). In addition, he was either an important advisor or the designer for significant Washington landscapes, including Rock Creek Park, the White House grounds, the Lincoln and Jefferson Memorial grounds, Theodore Roosevelt Island, and the Cathedral Church of St. Peter and St. Paul (Washington National Cathedral), as well as the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway.

The McMillan Plan became Olmsted, Jr.'s springboard for comprehensive planning. By 1909, he had completed or was working on planning designs for Detroit, Utica, Boulder, Pittsburgh, New Haven, Rochester, and Newport. He had also begun the suburban masterplans for Forest Hills Gardens in Queens and Roland Park outside of Baltimore. In 1910, Olmsted, Jr. was asked to lead the first organization of the nascent planning profession, the National Conference on City Planning. He was one of only a few planners to achieve success in both the City Beautiful and City Efficient movements. Seven years later, he helped found the American City Planning Institute and was then elected its first president. His ideas about neighborhood-centered development, the importance of common open and recreational spaces, and the need for maintenance plans continue to influence development philosophy today.

With John C. Olmsted's death in 1920, Olmsted, Jr. became the senior partner in the office. At that time, it was the largest landscape architecture firm in the world. In the latter part of his career, Fredrick Law Olmsted, Jr. spent most of his time on public service projects that dealt with the conservation and preservation of state and national parks. For example, the key language in the 1916 Congressional Act that established the National Park Service was his. For the next thirty years, he proceeded to guide the development of national parks across the country, including Acadia, the Everglades, Yosemite, and Rock Creek Park. In 1928, he wrote guidelines for selecting and acquiring land for the park system for the State of California, which became the model when other states began to pursue land conservation measures.

¹³⁹ He continued to lecture periodically and maintained an advisory role for advanced students until 1917.

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In 1949, Olmsted officially retired from the firm. He died eight years later in Malibu, California, leaving a legacy of more than fifty years' worth of work advancing the fields of landscape architecture, comprehensive planning, and environmental conservation.

Fredrick Law Olmsted, Jr.'s influence on the Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway's design and development was furthered through former employees of the Olmsted firm who took federal jobs that gave them oversight over the project. For example, James G. Langdon and Thomas C. Jeffers had both worked for the practice before joining the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks.¹⁴⁰ Langdon served the government office from 1915 to 1921 and Jeffers worked there from 1923 to 1930, when he became the chief landscape architect with the National Capital Park and Planning Commission. In addition, Irving W. Payne had attended Harvard's program in landscape architecture, where he almost certainly studied under Olmsted. Payne began his long service with the Office of Public Buildings and Public Parks in 1918.

¹⁴⁰ In 1925, the department was reorganized as the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds. In 1933, the responsibilities of the OPBG were transferred to the National Park Service.

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 173 acres (approximately)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	1 8	3 2 2 3 5 0	4 3 1 0 1 7 7	3	1 8	3 2 2 4 7 2	4 3 0 9 9 3 8
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	1 8	3 2 2 5 1 3	4 3 1 0 1 2 6	4	1 8	3 2 2 2 4 9	4 3 0 9 5 6 7

☒ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Eve L. Barsoum, Historian
organization National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers date January 11, 2005
street & number 444 North Capitol Street, N.W. telephone 202.354.1822
city or town Washington state D.C. zip code 20001

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

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

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO)

name National Park Service, National Capital Region
street & number 1100 Ohio Drive, S.W. telephone 202.619.7279
city or town Washington state D.C. zip code 20242

Paperwork Reduction 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. 470 *et. seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the 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 Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway

Name of Property

Washington, D.C.

County and State

Section 10 Page 2

UTM References (continuation)

<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
18	321924	4309542	18	321533	4307439
18	321573	4309273	18	321477	4307683
18	321959	4308937	18	321726	4308130
18	322284	4308409	18	321736	4308262
18	321954	4308343	18	321898	4308450
18	321929	4308084	18	322173	4308536
18	321807	4308074	18	321446	4309212
18	321670	4307764	18	321273	4309186
18	321609	4307530	18	321685	4309623
18	321776	4307002	18	322096	4309958
18	322005	4306331	18	322051	4310045
18	321995	4306306	18	322137	4310050
18	321700	4306611	18	322162	4309999

Verbal Boundary Description

The Lower Rock Creek Valley Historic District (Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District) comprises approximately 173 acres within the northwest quadrant of the District of Columbia. The property incorporates Reservation 360 in its entirety. It also includes Rock Creek Drive, and its parallel retaining wall and sidewalks (within Reservation 332, West Potomac Park), extending from *The Arts of Peace* sculpture located at the northwestern edge of the Lincoln [Memorial] Circle to Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Bridge.

Boundary Justification

The boundary of the Lower Rock Creek Valley Historic District (Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway Historic District) was determined by the historically defined function of the parkway, as established by the Senate Park Commission (McMillan Commission). The parkway was designed to link the Mall and Potomac Park¹⁴¹ to the National Zoological Park and Rock Creek Park. Accordingly, the contiguous land associated with Rock Creek Drive, within West Potomac Park, and Reservation 360 has been historically associated with the parkway.

¹⁴¹ Potomac Park was renamed East and West Potomac Parks.