

Historic Resource Survey Form

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL AND MUSEUM COMMISSION
Bureau for Historic Preservation

Key # _____
ER# _____
Date Prepared _____

Name, Location and Ownership *(Items 1-6; see Instructions, page 4)*

HISTORIC NAME Frick Park

CURRENT/Common NAME Frick Park

OWNER NAME/ADDRESS City of Pittsburgh

TOTAL NUMBER OF RESOURCES 12, including park

COUNTY Allegheny MUNICIPALITY Pittsburgh

USGS QUAD Pittsburgh East

LOCATION Roughly bounded by Reynolds St, Forbes Ave, Beechwood Blvd, S. Braddock Ave, Forward Ave, English Lane, & US I-376

STREET ADDRESS 1981 Beechwood Blvd., Pittsburgh, PA ZIP 15217

CATEGORY OF PROPERTY Building District Object Site Structure

OWNERSHIP Private Corporate
 Public/Local Public/County Public/State Public/Federal

TAX PARCEL #/YEAR various

Function *(Items 7-8; see Instructions, pages 4-6)*

Historic Function	Subcategory	Particular Type
<u>Landscape</u>	<u>Park</u>	<u>City Park</u>
<u>Recreation and Culture</u>	<u>Outdoor Recreation</u>	<u>City Park</u>
<u>Education</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Nature Education Center</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

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_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Property Features *(Items 15-17; see Instructions, pages 7-8)*

Setting City neighborhood

Ancillary Features

<u>Trails</u>	<u>Education Building</u>	<u>Playgrounds</u>
<u>Gatehouses</u>	<u>Picnic shelters</u>	<u>Ball fields</u>
<u>Field houses</u>	<u>Footbridges</u>	<u>Tennis courts</u>

Acreage (round to nearest tenth) 538

Key # _____

ER# _____

Architectural/Property Information *(Items 9-14; see Instructions, pages 6-7)*

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION

_____ Rustic _____

EXTERIOR MATERIALS and STRUCTURAL SYSTEM

Foundation _____

Walls _____

Roof _____

Other _____

Structural System _____

WIDTH _____ (feet) or _____ (# bays) **DEPTH** _____ (feet) or _____ (# rooms) **STORIES/HEIGHT** _____

Historical Information *(Items 18-21; see Instructions, page 8)*

Year Construction Began 1927 Circa Year Completed 2016 Circa

Date of Major Additions, Alterations 1935-40 Circa 1940 Circa 1996 Circa

Basis for Dating Documentary Physical

Explain News articles, Bureau of Parks reports

Cultural/Ethnic Affiliation(s) N/A

Associated Individual(s) Henry Clay Frick, Helen Clay Frick

Associated Event(s) City park and recreation planning in Pittsburgh

Architect(s) Lowell & Vinal; John Russell Pope; Innocenti & Webel; Ralph Griswold; Simonds & Simonds

Builder(s) _____

Submission Information *(Items 22-23; see Instructions, page 8)*

Previous Survey/Determinations _____

Threats None Neglect Public Development Private Development Other

Explain _____

This submission is related to a non-profit grant application business tax incentive

NHPA/PA History Code Project Review other

Preparer Information *(Items 24-30; see Instructions, page 9)*

Name & Title Angelique Bamberg, Principal

Date Surveyed November 2017 Project Name Frick Park

Organization/Company Clio Consulting

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PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION and INTEGRITY

Frick Park is the largest park in the City of Pittsburgh at approximately 644 acres, 538 of which are included in the proposed National Register eligible boundary. The park is located about 5 miles from downtown Pittsburgh in the city's east end. Its largest area lies south of Forbes Avenue and north of the Penn-Lincoln Parkway (U.S. I-376) between the neighborhoods of Point Breeze and Regent Square (to the park's east) and Squirrel Hill (to its west). Narrower segments extend the park north of Forbes Avenue alongside Homewood Cemetery to Reynolds Street opposite Clayton, the historic Henry Clay Frick estate; east, following the course of the Nine Mile Run stream valley on the northern edge of the Parkway; and south, following the Nine Mile Run stream below the Parkway almost to the Monongahela River. This area of Frick Park south of the Parkway is excluded from the proposed National Register eligible boundary because it was added in 1996, after the park's period of significance (1919-1963).

On its interior, Frick Park's dominant feature is its natural landform of wooded slopes and valley floors, ridges, ravines, and creeks, which serve as a rich habitat for native plant and animal species. Fern Hollow (photo 1), Falls Ravine (photo 2), and Nine Mile Run (photo 3) form a system of lowland stream beds and watersheds. Steep, wooded hillsides lead from these up to plateaus, such as Clayton Hill and Riverview, with views of surrounding areas.

Trails ranging from 1/2 to 2 miles in length, from flat to steep, extend and loop through this landscape of wetlands and woodlands. The trails cross Nine Mile Run and other, smaller streams that meander through the park on simple footbridges (photo 4-5). Trails are paved in asphalt, gravel, crushed stone, or earth, depending on location and use. Some sections close to the Nine Mile Run stream bed are boardwalks, and wooden steps ascend some of the steeper hills (photo 6). Vehicular access, active use areas, recreational facilities, and architectural gateways are focused along the park's perimeter, where it abuts adjacent residential neighborhoods. The character of these neighborhoods is of predominantly single-family homes constructed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. A few businesses face Frick Park across S. Braddock Avenue, and across Forbes Avenue lies Homewood Cemetery, a Lawn Park Style cemetery established in 1878 which contains the burials of the Frick family.

Park signage is rustic except for that incorporated into the five stone entrance structures designed for four park gateways by John Russell Pope (described below). Four of these ca. 1935 structures are shelters or gatehouses; one is a cairn. The park contains six additional buildings: the Biddle Building (ca. 1930), the Frick Park Lawn Bowling Club (1940), three buildings in the English Lane complex (1959), and the Frick Environmental Center (2016). The Biddle and Lawn Bowling buildings contribute to the park's historic landscape, but the English Lane complex and Environmental Center do not. The English Lane complex is architecturally inconsistent and not integrated with the rest of the park, and the Environmental Center post-dates the park's period of significance. A steel arch bridge carrying Forbes Avenue over Fern Hollow is located within the boundaries of the park and contributes. The park also contains miscellaneous uncounted small

structures and furnishings, such as simple picnic shelters, picnic tables, utilitarian restroom buildings, benches, bulletin boards, fencing, stairs, footbridges, interpretive signage, and trash receptacles (photos 5, 7).

Frick Park generally lacks firm boundaries among its various zones, but is large enough to be described in terms of them. Some of the park's areas retain characteristics associated with their previous uses along with design elements from the development of the park landscape during the 1920s, 30s, and 40s. These areas are described from north to south:

Homewood Gateway, Reynolds Street and Upper Frick Park

Frick Park above Forbes Avenue is the area closest to Henry Clay Frick's estate, Clayton. It is part of the 151-acre original Frick bequest and located directly east of Homewood Cemetery.

The Homewood Gateway is at the northernmost tip of Frick Park, opposite Reynolds Street from the Frick Art and Historical Center, a cultural complex which contains Clayton (now a house museum), various other buildings original to the Frick estate, an art museum commissioned by Helen Clay Frick and opened in 1970, and a modern visitors' center. The gateway is marked by a stone gatehouse built to the design of John Russell Pope in 1935 (photo 8). The gatehouse has an arched center pavilion with limestone trim, a tall slate chateausque roof which echoes that of Clayton, and a single chimney on one side. It is flanked by windowed storage rooms, accessed via doors inside the main arch, and angled stone walls. Limestone tablets in the walls, one on each side of the gatehouse, are inscribed "FRICK PARK." The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy restored the gatehouse as a pilot project of the Pittsburgh Parks Master Plan in 2000 and added new plantings of sugar maples, juneberries, flowering dogwoods, and forsythia to its setting.

A paved path leads through the arch into a pastoral landscape of lawn dotted with shade and specimen trees along Reynolds Street (photo 9). At the southeastern end of this are two 120-foot-square lawn bowling greens and the building of the Frick Park Lawn Bowling Club, a small stone structure constructed by the National Youth Association in 1940 (photos 10-11). Trails lead from the lawn area along Reynolds Street into the wooded interior of the park (photo 12). These trails descend to meet the Tranquil Trail, which follows the floor of Fern Hollow 1.2 miles north-south through the park (photo 13).

Forbes Avenue

Forbes Avenue runs east-west between Squirrel Hill and Point Breeze/Regent Square. It is one of only two local streets to cross Frick Park, but it does so far above the grade of the park itself.¹ A three-hinged steel arch bridge constructed in 1901 (reconstructed 1972) carries Forbes Avenue over the Fern Hollow Ravine below (photo 14). On the southwestern end of the bridge, where a short spur trail enters the park from Forbes Avenue to connect to the Clayton Loop Trail, stands

¹ The other is Commercial Street through the Nine Mile Run park addition below the Parkway, an area not originally planned as park land.

another of John Russell Pope's 1930s gatehouse structures. This is a small shelter house with arched openings, a hipped slate roof, and a limestone tablet inscribed "FRICK PARK" (photo 15).

West of the bridge, Forbes Avenue serves as the northern boundary of Frick Park; on its opposite side lies Homewood Cemetery. A cylindrical stone cairn by John Russell Pope stands at the intersection of Forbes Avenue and Beechwood Boulevard. It has a copper pointed dome roof and flanking stone walls and bears a limestone tablet inscribed "FRICK PARK" (photo 16).

S. Braddock Avenue

At the eastern end of the Forbes Avenue Bridge lies the intersection of Forbes and S. Braddock Avenues, a busy gateway into Frick Park. From here to Biddle Avenue along S. Braddock is the park's most active edge. There is a large, nature-themed playground southwest of the intersection at Forbes and Braddock which features an imaginary stream, natural rocks, and native plantings (photo 17). South of the playground are a baseball field and Pittsburgh's only red clay tennis courts, constructed with clay moved from the Pittsburgh Country Club purchased by the Frick Park trustees in 1936 (photos 18-19). South of the tennis courts is the Biddle entrance to the park. This features a surface parking lot with access to the head of the Braddock Trail and the Biddle Building, a one-and-a-half-story, red-brick, nominally Colonial Revival Style building designed by the Pittsburgh Department of Public Works in 1929 to house park offices and maintenance facilities (photo 20).

Clayton Hill

Clayton Hill, off of Beechwood Boulevard just south of its intersection with Forbes Avenue, contains much of the original Frick Park bequest ("Frick's Woods") and the park's most formal landscape composition, designed by Innocenti and Webel in the 1930s and restored with the construction of the new Frick Environmental Center in 2016.

A governor's drive off of Beechwood Boulevard defines a crescent-shaped lawn planted with mature shade trees (photo 21). On the park side of the drive are a pair of stone gatehouses designed, like the park's other stone entrance structures, by John Russell Pope and constructed in 1935 (photo 22). The gatehouses have chateausque slate roofs and limestone trim. The larger of the two is fully enclosed and displays an arched entrance doorway, arched wall dormer, and a tall chimney. The smaller is an open shelter with ornamental wrought iron window and door grates.

The gatehouses flank a broad paved path leading through a double allee of trees to the site of the Clayton Fountain. The original fountain was removed in the mid-20th century; the current fountain is a modern interpretation on the original site (photo 23). Open meadows and demonstration gardens lie to either side of the path. South of the axial pathway is the 2016 Frick Environmental Center building (photo 24) and north of it is a sheltered parking lot. The Environmental Center's design steps down the south side of Clayton Hill alongside a new amphitheater.

Beyond these features, meadowland transitions to woodland. The Clayton Loop trail encircles a part of the original 151 acres of Frick Park now called “Frick Woods Nature Reserve,” dedicated to ecological conservation and outdoor environmental educational (photo 25).

Riverview Hill

This is a major active use area accessed from Beechwood Boulevard approximately 3/4 mile south of the gatehouses at Clayton Hill. Riverview Hill includes 84 acres that served as a golf course and equestrian facility for the exclusive Pittsburgh Country Club prior to its purchase by the Frick Park trustees in 1936. Landscape plans designed by Innocenti and Webel and carried out by the City in the late 1930s and 1940s strove to integrate the country club’s groomed landscape into the more naturalistic one of Frick’s Woods to the north.

Major work on this area of the park continued past the Innocenti and Webel era into the early 1960s. At Beechwood Boulevard between the Riverview entrance to the park and English Lane are ball fields and the Blue Slide Playground designed by Simonds and Simonds in 1963. Its terraced design steps down Riverview Hill to street level so that the playground intrudes minimally on the views from the ridge of the hill (photos 26-27). The Riverview Trail leads past the playground to a rolling meadow landscape, edged by woods and offering a view of the Mon River Valley (photo 28). On the northern side of the trail’s entrance from Beechwood Boulevard is a long, sloping bowl used as a sledding hill, ending in grove of trees (photo 29). Farther along the Riverview Trail, an off leash exercise area for dogs was established ca. 2000.

English Lane, a small, dead-end street off of Beechwood Boulevard, is the site of a complex of brick staff residences, offices, and park maintenance facilities constructed in 1959 to the designs of Wolfe and Wolfe, a Pittsburgh firm (photo 30). These buildings’ International Style architecture contrasts with the eclectic designs of the park structures of the 1930s. However, their impact is minimal as they are hidden from view down the secluded lane and away from public use areas of the park.

Nine Mile Run

Nine Mile Run is an ecologically-restored stream whose landscape consists of stream banks and wetlands edged by wooded hills with trails following, and occasionally crossing, the stream bed (photo 31). The Penn-Lincoln Parkway (I-376 East) is carried over the valley on concrete arches (photo 3). A soccer field at the intersection of the Tranquil, Firelane, and Nine Mile Run trails is the only instance of an active recreational feature on the park’s interior. The northeastern section of the Nine Mile Run stream valley above the parkway lies within Frick Park’s historic boundary. Nine Mile Run south of the Parkway was incorporated into the park in 1996 and is outside of its historic boundary.

Integrity

Frick Park retains integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association. Its location includes the original 151 acres bequeathed by Henry Clay Frick in 1919 and subsequent lands added by the Frick trustees during the 1920s, 30s, and 40s; the only changes to the park's boundaries have been its incremental enlargement during and after its period of significance.

The park's integrity of setting is also strong. Now, as when it was developed, it exhibits a naturalistic interior of woodlands and wetlands designed for passive recreation, with active uses concentrated at its edges, bounded by residential neighborhoods built in the late 19th through early 20th centuries.

The park's integrity of design, workmanship, and materials are evident in this historic treatment of the landscape and in the park's well-preserved historic gatehouses and other structures from ca. 1930-1940. Later additions to this landscape, such as the 1959 English Lane staff and maintenance complex, the 1963 Blue Slide playground, and 2016 Frick Environmental Center, are either discreetly sited away from main use areas of the park (English Lane) or carefully designed for compatibility with the park's historic design intent (the playground and environmental center).

Frick Park's intact setting, contributing resources, and continued use as a facility for nature education and immersion since before 1930 establish its integrity of feeling and association as a large city park designed to serve as a natural oasis in the city.

HISTORY and SIGNIFICANCE

Frick Park was established by the bequest of 151 acres to the City of Pittsburgh by Henry Clay Frick upon his death in 1919. It was the fourth of Pittsburgh's large regional parks to be created, after Highland and Schenley Parks (both est. 1889) and Riverview Park (est. in 1894 for the independent City of Allegheny, annexed to Pittsburgh in 1906). A fifth regional park, Emerald View Park, was formed from a conglomeration of smaller parks and greenways in 2012.

The Frick Family

Henry Clay Frick (1849-1919) was a Pennsylvania native industrialist and financier who became a millionaire through the activities of his H.C. Frick and Company, which supplied coke to Andrew Carnegie's steel mills. Eventually, Frick became chairman of the Carnegie Steel (later United States Steel) Company. In 1881, the year he met and partnered with Carnegie, Frick married Adelaide Howard Childs of Pittsburgh and purchased an estate on Penn Avenue in a wealthy enclave of the city's East End. The Fricks hired Frederick Osterling, a respected local architect, to enlarge and improve their house, which they named Clayton. The couple moved into the home in 1883 and had four children there: Childs (b. 1883), Martha (b. 1885), Helen Clay (b. 1888), and Henry, Jr. (b. 1892). Only Childs and Helen lived to adulthood; both would be instrumental in the development of Frick Park. The Fricks are buried in Homewood Cemetery adjacent to Frick Park.

By 1905, the Fricks had relocated to New York City, but the family maintained Clayton, and Helen Clay Frick remained attached to the Pittsburgh of her youth. Folklore holds that when her father offered to grant her any wish on the occasion of her society debut in 1908, she asked that he give a park to the children of Pittsburgh. A number of Helen's personal experiences had acquainted her with the idea of transforming private land into public asset through philanthropy. When she was thirteen, Theodore Roosevelt visited Clayton and dined with the Frick family. In his two terms as president, Roosevelt established the United States Forest Service and set aside millions of acres of land as protected park, forest, and nature preserve, becoming known as the "conservation president." Helen also would have been familiar with heiress Mary Schenley's gift of Schenley Park to the City of Pittsburgh when Helen was a baby, and her own father's donation of a city block with lawns, play areas, and a water fountain to the nearby town of Homestead, where the Homestead Works of Carnegie Steel was located. Her upbringing in a wealthy family and her education, which included courses at the New York School of Philanthropy, also prepared her for charitable giving.¹

In 1915, Henry Clay Frick wrote his will, bequeathing 151 acres of land south of his home on Penn Avenue to the City of Pittsburgh for use as a public park. Known as the Gunn's Hill tract, the land consisted of former farms and undeveloped woodlands. Frick's bequest also provided a

¹ Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, "Frick Park's Enduring Legacy: A Treasure by Design" (Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, 2013), 10, 15-16.

\$2 million endowment for additional park land acquisition and maintenance, to be managed by the Union Trust Company of Pittsburgh. The City was charged with the maintenance, improvement, and embellishment of the park, and the trustees with the oversight of these duties.

Park Planning of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.

The location of the new park coincided with an area that had caught the eye of landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., in 1910. Son of the landscape architect of New York's Central Park, Olmsted, Jr. was renowned in his own right for his work on the the U.S. Capital McMillan Commission, his role in the creation of the National Park Service, and his design of parks, campuses, and master plans nationwide. Olmsted was retained by the Pittsburgh Civic Commission, created by reform Mayor George Guthrie, in 1909 to study the built and natural environment of the city and make recommendations for its planning and development. The Civic Commission adopted Olmsted's report in December, 1910. Among other improvements, the report emphasized the "urgent civic need" for parks for "healthful recreation."

In a section of his report titled "Special Park Opportunities," Olmsted called the Nine Mile Run stream valley "perhaps the most striking opportunity noted for a large park." A tributary of the Monongahela River, Nine Mile Run ran along a valley from Duck Hollow, on the banks of the river, up under what is now the I-376 Parkway East, into land south of Frick's original bequest. (This area would later be incorporated by addition into the park.) Olmsted wrote:

[The valley's] long meadows of varying width would make ideal playfields; the stream, when it is freed from sewage, will be an attractive and interesting element in the landscape; the wooded slopes on either side give ample opportunity for enjoyment of the forest, for shaded walks and cool resting places, and above all it is not far from a large working population... and yet it is so excluded by its high wooded banks that the close proximity of urban development can hardly be imagined.²

However, Olmsted's ideas about parks were shelved when Mayor William Magee succeeded Guthrie shortly after the Civic Commission was appointed. Magee adopted only the transportation recommendations of Olmsted's report.³ Ten years later, Frick's bequest renewed the possibility of the park Olmsted had envisioned.

1919-1935: Early Development

The first decade and a half after Frick's bequest were marked by legal proceedings to transfer the land to the City and preliminary forays into park planning and construction. Park trustees soon

² Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., "Pittsburgh: Improvements Necessary to Meet the City's Present and Future Needs" (Report to Pittsburgh Civic Commission, 1911), 113, 119.

³ Matthew A. Beche, Daphne Quinn, Rita Walsh, "Phase I Cultural Resource Inventory for the Proposed Nine Mile Run Ecosystem Restoration Project, Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania" (July 2000, on file at State Historic Preservation Office, Harrisburg, PA), 31.

began adding to the original park area. In 1924, Pittsburgh City Council voted to accept a deed for 189 acres, increasing the park to 340 acres, and authorized the engagement of a landscape architect, the Boston firm of Lowell and Vinal, to undertake master planning for the organization and linkage of park land.

These activities were consistent with the recommendations of a 1923 report (“Parks—A Part of the Pittsburgh Plan”) of the volunteer Citizens Committee on a City Plan of Pittsburgh. Noting that 11,500 persons lived within a 15-minute walk of the as-yet undeveloped tract, the Committee advised enlargement of Frick Park and the preparation of plans for its development “after the most careful study and with the advice and assistance of the best landscape architect obtainable.” The report also echoed Olmsted’s earlier recommendation that the Nine Mile Run valley be acquired and developed for public recreation.⁴ Instead, however, the Duquesne Slag Products Company purchased the sections of the stream valley closest to the river for the dumping of slag, a byproduct of steel production at the nearby Jones & Laughlin and Homestead Works steel plants.

Lowell and Vinal produced a preliminary master plan for Frick Park by February, 1927. Guy Lowell died shortly thereafter, and park planning was transferred to the Pittsburgh firm of Blum, Weldin, and Company, mining and civil engineers. Neither these firms’ plans survives. On June 25, 1927, the park officially opened to the public, though the first trail had not yet been constructed.

The most visible legacy of the park’s earliest era was the construction of four park gateways, announced in 1931 and built between 1931 and 1935 with \$70,000 in Works Progress Administration funds. The structures were designed by the famed New York architect John Russell Pope. They are: an arched gateway at Homewood Avenue and Reynolds St., paired gate houses at Beechwood Blvd., a small stone shelter on Forbes Ave., and a stone cairn at the juncture of Beechwood Blvd. and Forbes Ave. All incorporated flanking stone walls.

1935-1957: Innocenti and Webel Era

In the 1930s, park trustees continued to use income from its endowment to assemble hundreds more acres to be added to its area. Most of this land lay south of the original bequest, extending to the upper reaches of the Nine Mile Run basin. The largest acquisition was the former Pittsburgh Country Club, whose 84 acres carried the park southwest along Beechwood Boulevard. The club had lost members, and hence income, during the Depression and became available for purchase for \$197,500 in 1936.⁵ The trustees also acquired an eight-acre site on Nine Mile Run that had been the site of the old Swisshelm grist mill, which had once ground most of the Pittsburgh area’s grain. However, most of the Nine Mile Run valley south of the park

⁴ Citizens’ Committee on City Plan of Pittsburgh, “Parks: A Part of the Pittsburgh Plan” (Pittsburgh: Municipal Planning Association, 1923), 30, 66.

⁵ Beche, et. al., 32.

to the Monongahela River remained in the hands of the Duquesne Slag Products Company, which continued to degrade the stream and the landscape with the dumping of industrial waste.

1935 marked the beginning of Frick Park's long and productive association with landscape architects Umberto Innocenti and Richard K. Webel of Long Island, New York, to design the further development of the park. They developed plans for more park structures; a trail system through a sequence of designed landscapes, from pastoral to sylvan; and recommendations for integrating the groomed country club property into the more ruggedly scenic landscape of Frick Park. Innocenti and Webel's designs sought to maintain and enhance a passive, immersive woodland experience on the park's interior while acknowledging the desire of park users for recreational opportunities by siting facilities—chiefly ball courts, playgrounds, and two lawn bowling courts—at the park's periphery, where it abutted adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Between the late 1930s and the early 1940s, dozens of Innocenti and Webel's recommendations were implemented, managed by Pittsburgh Bureau of Parks Superintendent Ralph Griswold and funded by the WPA and Frick trustees. These included the construction of the Terminal Fountain in 1936 and the Clayton Hill Fountain in 1937; the development of the Bowling Green along Reynolds Street in the mid-1930s and its elegant shelter in 1940; and demolition of the old clubhouse and re-grading of the golf greens and tees on the old country club property. In 1940, Innocenti and Webel began to plant the park as a natural arboretum, arranging new plantings in large masses as natural ecological groupings. By 1942, the park's trail system appears to have been largely in place. Among Griswold's and Innocenti and Webel's joint goals was the removal of baseball from Frick Park; they also established a policy of confining tennis to the Braddock Avenue courts, eliminating earlier courts on the former country club property and at Kensington Street. This was consistent with the dedication of Frick Park to nature study, which was further underscored by the nature education program which began in the 1930s in a former residence on Beechwood Boulevard donated as a nature study facility by Helen Clay Frick.

In 1942, funding for Pittsburgh's city parks transferred from the WPA to the City's Public Works reserve. Frick Park by then included 457 acres, including ten double tennis courts, nine nature trails, seven shelters, and one baseball field. Progress on Frick Park trickled almost to a halt during World War II, though Innocenti and Webel did make recommendations concerning the construction of the Penn-Lincoln Parkway (now known as US I-376 or the Parkway East) on the Nine Mile Run portion of Frick Park in 1943-1944, proposing plans for grading, planting, and curb installation. During the ensuing years, they pressed for the clean-up of industrial slag dumping in Nine Mile Run; sought to protect the park and stream during the construction of the parkway; developed efficient designs that would minimize the need for expensive maintenance; and emphasized a need for long-term planning to ensure the park would remain sustainable as a natural landscape. In 1948-1949, plans for the parkway were revised to accommodate an entrance to the park on Braddock Avenue.

Also in 1949, the City considered utilizing approximately 20 “convenient and available” acres of Frick Park’s Riverview area as the site of a planned outdoor theater for the Civic Light Opera. Though the City Planning Commission and the Mayor favored the site, Innocenti and Webel opposed it, arguing that it would be vacant most of the year and “contrary to the spirit and intent of the original bequest of Frick Park.”⁶ The facility, known as the Civic Arena, was eventually built in the Hill District.

After the construction of the parkway and the resolution of the Civic Light Opera proposal, activity in Frick Park during the 1950s consisted largely of maintenance. Innocenti and Webel continued to make recommendations on specific issues, such as the continued reforestation of the country club property, the provision of shelter for children attending day camp in the park, and the relationship of the park to Clayton. In this regard, the landscape architects called for the area along Reynolds Avenue, which faced the rear of the Frick estate, “to be treated in a natural park manner similar to the Park itself, rather than an exhibition garden area,” which would require prohibitive maintenance.⁷

Maintenance was becoming an increasingly vexing issue. In the 1950s, Frick Park—like many urban parks—began to suffer from a population shift from city to suburbs, decreasing city tax revenues, a decline in the skilled labor force, and increasing privatization of open space and recreation. The park’s stewards struggled to manage the ill effects of deferred maintenance, erosion, degraded waterways, and the proliferation of exotic and invasive species. In 1955, the Allegheny Conference on Community Development took an interest in these issues. Conference Executive Director Park H. Martin toured Frick Park, met with landscape architect Richard Webel and Bureau of Parks Director Robert Templeton, and prepared a report. Outcomes of this process included plans for funding continued improvement as well as deferred maintenance items in the park; definition of a supervisory role for the Allegheny Conference over the City’s maintenance and administration activities and budget; affirmation of the Frick trustees’ responsibility to see that the natural character of the park was preserved; and an agreement that Innocenti and Webel should prepare a master plan to guide Frick Park’s future development. However, this master plan did not materialize. Innocenti and Webel’s long association with Frick Park ended in 1957.

1958-1963

Despite the departure of Innocenti and Webel and Frick Park’s overall tendency toward decline in the mid-20th century, improvements were made during this period and evidenced increased involvement by the surviving members of the Frick family.

⁶ “Pittsburgh Regional Parks Chronology” (Prepared by Heritage Landscape, LLC for Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, 2000), 32-33.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 34.

In 1959, the Pittsburgh firm of Wolfe and Wolfe designed the complex of staff residences, offices, and maintenance facilities on English Lane off of Beechwood Boulevard. These assumed the function of the earlier Biddle Building on S. Braddock Avenue, which took on a more community-oriented function.

In 1963, the City hired the landscape architecture firm of Simonds and Simonds to design a large new playground (widely, if informally, known as the Blue Slide Playground after its most conspicuous feature, a large concrete slide built into the hillside) at the Beechwood Boulevard edge of the Riverview section of the park. True to their assigned role, the Frick family and trustees ensured that Simonds and Simonds' design maintained Innocenti and Webel's principle of keeping active recreational facilities to the park perimeter, supporting a multi-level plan integrated with park topography so as to be minimally visible from the park's interior.

1964-Present

Also in the early 1960s, Childs Frick donated money for the construction of a new nature center to replace the one funded by his sister Helen in the 1930s. After Childs Frick died in 1965, Helen Frick shepherded the project to completion, assuring that the building fit the contours of the surrounding landscape. With the opening of the Frick Environmental Center in 1979, the City's nature education programming was officially consolidated in the Frick Park facility.

A reorganization of the Department of Parks and Recreation in 1992 left maintenance of Frick Park to the Department of Public Works, while the former Department of Parks and Recreation—now renamed CitiParks—administered programming. This bifurcation resulted in lack of consistent oversight over park planning, design, and construction, further degrading the park's aesthetic character. The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy was formed in 1998, in part, to address this issue in Frick and other major city parks. Modeled on the Central Park Conservancy in New York, the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy undertook fundraising for park master planning and maintenance in partnership with the City. A demonstration project, the restoration of the Reynolds Street gatehouse, was completed in 1998.

Perhaps the most important development of the past 50 years has been the addition of 106 acres of the Nine Mile Run stream valley to the park in 1996, realizing the vision of Olmsted in 1910 and increasing the park's acreage to 644. Though the valley had repeatedly been recommended as ideal for parkland in the early 20th century, its proximity to both the riverfront and Pittsburgh steel mills made it as or more attractive to industry. Slag dumped by the Duquesne Slag Products Company from 1923 to 1970 accumulated to 17 million cubic yards in a steeply-sided heap 120 feet high. In 1996, the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh acquired 238 acres and began environmental remediation and redevelopment of 132 of them into a master-planned residential development. It deeded the remaining 106 acres to the City of Pittsburgh for an extension of Frick Park. New trails now follow the restored stream almost to its outlet at the Monongahela River.

In 2002, the Frick Environmental Center was destroyed by fire. A new LEED Platinum environmental center was built in 2016. Site work during its construction restored the historic entrance composition of an axial walkway leading from the park's Beechwood Boulevard gatehouses to the Clayton Hill fountain.

Significance

Frick Park is recommended for eligibility for the National Register under Criterion A in the areas of Community Planning and Development and Recreation and Culture and under Criterion C in the areas of Architecture and Landscape Architecture. Its period of significance is 1919-1963. 1919 is the year Henry Clay Frick bequeathed the park's initial 151 acres to the city, and the last major historic improvement, the Simonds and Simonds-designed Blue Slide Playground at the park's Riverview entrance, occurred in 1963.

Community Planning and Development: Frick Park joined Pittsburgh's park system thirty years after the creation of the city's first public park and following a nationwide trend of urban open space planning which emerged at around the middle of the 19th century. Pittsburgh established its first major public parks under the leadership of Public Works Director Edward Manning Bigelow in 1889. Bigelow, an engineer by training, had responsibility for a large program of public improvements, but he focused on the acquisition and establishment of parks with particular passion.⁸ In May 1889, at Bigelow's behest, City Council appointed a committee on parks and passed ordinances setting aside the land around the Herron Hill and Highland reservoirs—already popular sites for passive recreation—and authorizing the Department of Public Works to improve them. Bigelow obliged, spending \$900,000 of city funds to purchase additional land for Highland Park, which opened in 1893. In November 1889, he sent an envoy to England to successfully persuade heiress Mary Schenley to donate 300 acres of her family's farmlands in the Oakland section of the city instead of selling the tract to a developer, with an option for the City to purchase additional acreage; this was the origin of Schenley Park. Bigelow also initiated work on a system of boulevards, including Grant (later renamed Bigelow in his honor), Beechwood, and Washington Boulevards, to connect the Pittsburgh parks in a system. Riverview Park, established in 1894 in the City of Allegheny, became part of the Pittsburgh park system when that city was annexed to Pittsburgh in 1906. Though Bigelow's tenure at the City ended in that year—he went on to become Commissioner of the PA State Highway department—his work set the framework for the development of a Pittsburgh park system through both philanthropy and civic stewardship.

By the turn of the 20th century, parks were an established part of the urban environment of Pittsburgh and most American cities. Their purpose and appearance evolved as new social movements influenced park planners to shape them in new ways. In particular, the Progressive Movement brought an emphasis on the physical and moral benefits of healthful outdoor activity,

⁸ Marianne Maxwell, "A History of Pittsburgh's Frick Park and the Urban Parks Movement in the United States" (Unpublished Master's thesis, Pittsburgh: Carnegie Mellon University, 1984), 4.

advocating for playgrounds for children and sports facilities for adults. Pittsburgh's vast industrial wealth also bestowed cultural facilities which needed suitable homes. As public lands dedicated to recreation and enjoyment, parks naturally became the focus of many of these ambitions. Small, neighborhood parks and playgrounds were added to the system, while Highland, Schenley, and Riverview Parks were pressed to accommodate not only natural areas but numerous recreational facilities and attractions. These included lakes and pools for swimming, diving, fishing, boating, and skating; paths for walking, bicycling, and horseback riding; tennis courts; ball fields; outdoor music and performance venues; a horse racing track; picnic pavilions; carousels; a golf course; a conservatory; a zoo; and an observatory.

Frick Park was intended, from the beginning, to offer something different, closer to Frederick Law Olmsted's ideal of a park as a refined, naturalistic "pleasure ground."⁹ Its primary attraction was its rustic woodland landscape, designed for passive respite from the urban environment. Evidence of this intent is found in the earliest plans for the park. Though the written materials of Lowell and Vinal and of Blum, Weldin, and Company, do not survive, some clues are found in news accounts proximate to the park's opening in 1927. On July 9 of that year, the Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce published an article noting that the first planned trail—spanning two and a half miles through Fern Hollow from the Bowling Green to Beechwood Boulevard—was soon to be constructed, along with two children's playgrounds, shelter houses, picnic tables, and locker rooms. The article further notes that while park entrances would be conveniently accessible by streetcar, many park visitors were anticipated to arrive by automobile, so that convenient access for motorists would be provided.¹⁰

In 1929, Frick Park Supervisor Harvey Crass elaborated on the accommodation of motor vehicles and recreational uses in Frick Park, characterizing playgrounds as a "side issue" to the park plan. He told the *Pittsburgh Press*,

We want to keep the park just as natural and as wild as we possibly can.... It is planned for nature lovers, for people who love to ramble around in picturesque outdoors. So it is not our plan to make many automobile roads through the park. We will build only the necessary ones to bring people into the park interior. Aside from that, all other paths will be five-foot trails.¹¹

Frick Park's planners and designers did not reject active recreational facilities, which were still in high demand in the 1920s, 30s, and 40s. Rather, they committed to focus these as well as access

⁹ Barry Hannegan, "Historical Summary: Schenley Park" in "Pittsburgh's Regional Parks Master Plan" (Prepared by LaQuatra Bonci, et. al., for City of Pittsburgh & Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, 2002), 99.

¹⁰ H.W. Correll, "Frick's Woods—How City's Second Largest Park is Being Prepared to Delight Multitudes" (*Greater Pittsburgh*, July 9, 1927), NP.

¹¹ Harvey S. Crass in Marie McSwigan, "Frick Woods to be Transformed into City Dwellers' Paradise" (*Pittsburgh Press*, Jan. 25, 1929), NP.

for modern motor vehicles at the park's edges, preserving the interior as an intact forest landscape. The last of Pittsburgh's large city parks and the only one entirely developed in the 20th century, Frick Park benefited from an expectation of excellence in professional planning and design established by its predecessors, even as it reflected different goals than Pittsburgh's Victorian and Progressive era parks.

Moreover, the role of philanthropy in the establishment and development of Frick Park made it unique among park planning projects in Pittsburgh. Managed by public servants, shaped by landscape architects, and guided, augmented, and protected by the Frick family and trustees, Frick Park represents an early and important example of public-private collaboration to develop a public landscape in Pittsburgh. By holding the purse strings, the Frick Park trustees upheld the unique woodland character essential to Helen Clay Frick's vision. The four-fold expansion of Henry Clay Frick's original bequest by 1942 was the direct result of the active pursuit of land by the park trustees and the economic power of the park's endowment. Frick Park enjoyed ongoing enlargement, development, and improvement even during the Depression because of the family's close involvement and because of the ever-growing trust fund, which supplemented federal money and labor made available for civic projects through the WPA. The Pittsburgh Bureau of Parks' 1939 report expressed appreciation for this model, stating: "The maintenance, operation, and development of Frick Park under the Frick Park Trust Fund by the Frick Park trustees is a practical demonstration of efficient, far-sighted park administration which might well be followed by the City administration." After the WPA funding stream ended, revenue from Frick Park's endowment helped cushion it from slashed appropriations and a new emphasis on efficiency during the 1940s.

Other Pittsburgh parks were the products and/or recipients of philanthropy. In particular, Schenley Park had been donated by Mary Schenley, Phipps Conservatory in that park given by Henry Phipps, and the memorial to Mary Schenley funded by Andrew Carnegie and others. But only in Frick Park did philanthropy guide the ongoing planning and development of the public landscape from its donation to the City to its maturity.

Recreation and Culture: Passive recreation and nature appreciation have been key experiences provided to users of Frick Park and common goals of the Frick family, trustees, and city parks department since the park's early development in the 1930s. Helen Clay Frick funded the first nature study facility, a Nature Museum in a converted mansion on Beechwood Boulevard, in that decade, and the City hired a naturalist, Dr. William LeRoy Black, to work there. Newsletters of the Naturalist Society of Frick Park between 1937 and 1939 describe nature walks and lectures on plant and animal life.¹² Near the museum, workers from the National Youth Administration, a New Deal program that provided jobs and education for young people, built an outdoor Nature Study Amphitheater in 1939. In that year, the annual report of the City's Bureau of Parks proclaimed that nature education in Frick Park was "one of the outstanding nature education

¹² Maxwell, 19.

programs conducted by any park system in the country and has received national recognition.”¹³ These activities presaged the establishment of Frick Park as the locus of the Parks Department’s environmental education program in the late 1970s, housed in successive environmental center buildings near the original Nature Museum location on Beechwood Boulevard.

Landscape Architecture: The planning and design of Frick Park took place through the cooperative efforts of the Pittsburgh Bureau of Parks, the Frick Park trustees, and the succession of landscape architects who envisioned, refined, and implemented a park landscape so well-designed and cultivated, it did appear to be designed at all. Frick Park’s scenic character may have been established by its original landscape architects, Lowell and Vinal, in the late 1920s, but was principally implemented by Innocenti and Webel, who assumed the park’s planning and design in 1935. Significant contributions were also made by Ralph Griswold and Simonds and Simonds.

Umberto Innocenti (1895-1968) and Richard Webel (1900-2000) met while working for Vitale and Geiffert and founded their own firm in Roslyn, Long Island in 1931. Childs Frick had settled in Roslyn in 1917 and might have been especially familiar with the firm’s work. Their partnership was long and successful, lasting until Innocenti’s death in 1968 (the firm is still active today). A biographical essay on Innocenti characterizes their collaboration as:

...a unique and compelling model of practice for American landscape architecture... based on the contrasting talents and nearly opposite working styles of the two principals. They often worked entirely separately. Webel was the erudite, Harvard-schooled designer with a passion for drawing and a deep devotion to the orthodoxy of landscape theory and practice. Innocenti was a horticultural virtuoso whose love for the work and great skill were manifested principally on site.¹⁴

Their work together began with the design of elegant private estates, including the landscape around the guest cottage of Childs Frick’s estate—named, after his childhood home, Clayton—in the 1930s and 40s. Based on this body of work, the firm gained a prestigious reputation. In the 1950s and 60s, they expanded into the campuses of corporations, colleges, and universities. Their designs were noted for strong formal geometric shapes, axial relationships, and references to the iconographies of historic European gardens, including ornamental features such as gates, balustrades, and fountains.¹⁵ Frick Park was Innocenti and Webel’s first large-scale municipal project, on which the firm would work until 1957.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Gary R. Hilderbrand, “Umberto Innocenti” in Charles Birnbaum and Robin Karson, *Pioneers of American Landscape Design* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2000), 192.

¹⁵ Cultural Landscape Foundation, “Innocenti and Webel,” <https://tclf.org/pioneer/innocenti-and-webel>. Retrieved August 17, 2017.

Innocenti and Webel's formal tendencies can be seen in the Clayton Hill entrance to the park, with its axial symmetry between the Pope-designed gatehouses at Beechwood Boulevard and a fountain placed by Innocenti and Webel at the far end of a double allee of trees. Yet in most of the park, Innocenti and Webel successfully sustained a decidedly rustic vision. They designed Frick Park's trails to draw visitors to the interior of the park, and there to foster urban dwellers' bond with nature by leading them through a picturesque, apparently unspoiled woodland interspersed with wetlands, meadows, and pastoral lawns shaded by scattered trees. Actually, centuries of human use had already profoundly altered the natural landscape. Frick Park was assembled from a mosaic of tracts that had served as farms, forests, Native American hunting trails, Civil War fortifications, a golf course, and a grist mill. The essence of Innocenti and Webel's design was to combine these various lands into a coherent whole that effectively recreated the experience of an untouched, scenic forest.¹⁶ This approach is perhaps most vividly illustrated by the deliberate reversal of the country club property to woodland.

During the first and most productive ten years of their association with Frick Park, Innocenti and Webel worked in unique partnership with Ralph Griswold (1894-1981), an accomplished landscape architect in his own right. Griswold studied landscape architecture at Cornell and, under Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., for three years in Rome. He moved to Pittsburgh to establish his own private landscape architecture practice in 1927, the year Frick Park opened, and became the first professional landscape architect to work for the City of Pittsburgh in 1934. As superintendent of the Pittsburgh Bureau of Parks from 1934-1945, Griswold was a strong advocate for the city park system. Though his specific contributions to Frick Park are not attributed, he headed the city's parks agency during Frick Park's most active years of development, and his expertise almost certainly helped guide the park from a patchwork of miscellaneous parcels to coherent public landscape. Timing suggests that he was responsible for securing the WPA funding that supported the construction of the park's first structures, the stone gatehouses and cairn designed by John Russell Pope. Griswold's understanding of both landscape design and, from the civil service side, efficient management, would have helped Innocenti and Webel to make sustainable decisions for the park's future. After his return to private practice, Griswold went on to design Pittsburgh's Point State Park in the 1950s.

In the early 1960s, the respected modern firm of Simonds and Simonds left a limited but significant mark on Frick Park with one of its most popular features, the Blue Slide Playground at the park's Riverview entrance. The location of the playground at the neighborhood edge of the park was consistent with the precedent established by Innocenti and Webel and maintained by the Frick family and trustees. Beyond its location, the playground is notable for its sensitive, tiered design, such that it is highly visible from the adjacent neighborhood but lies over a ridge and out of sight of the Riverview Trail on the park's interior. The playground is among Simonds and Simonds' significant contributions to public landscape design in Pittsburgh during the

¹⁶ Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, 33.

Modern era, including Mellon Square downtown and a redesign (only partially implemented) of Allegheny Commons Park on the North Side.

Architecture: Though relatively minor works of John Russell Pope (1874-1937), the Frick Park gatehouses and entrance structures are major focal points of Frick Park. Pope was a classically-trained architect who studied at Columbia University and the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris and traveled for two years through Italy and Greece before returning to his home city of New York to practice. He began his architectural career designing opulent mansions for wealthy clients in a number of fashionable revival styles, but achieved perhaps greatest renown for his major public commissions in Washington, D.C. An appointee of the Committee on Fine Arts, created to oversee the planning and design of the capitol according to the L'Enfant plan, Pope designed the National Archives (1935), the National Gallery of Art (1939), and the Jefferson Memorial (1941; this and the National Gallery were completed posthumously).

Pope's involvement in Frick Park in the early 1930s can probably be explained by the fact that he was simultaneously renovating the Frick residence on Fifth Avenue in New York City into a museum to house the Frick family art collection. Pope's garden court in The Frick Collection prefigured designs for similar courts in the National Gallery.¹⁷ The Frick Park gatehouses he designed ca. 1931 convey an architectural relationship to Clayton, Frick's Chateausque Pittsburgh home. The park entrances' design during the park's earliest period of development helped establish the identity and design vocabulary of Frick Park.

¹⁷ The Frick Collection, "John Russell Pope," <https://www.frick.org/exhibitions/past/2010/75th/pope>. Retrieved December 8, 2017.

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Key # _____

USGS Pittsburgh East, PA

ER# _____



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Pittsburgh
Allegheny County

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Photo 1. Tranquil Trail through Fern Hollow

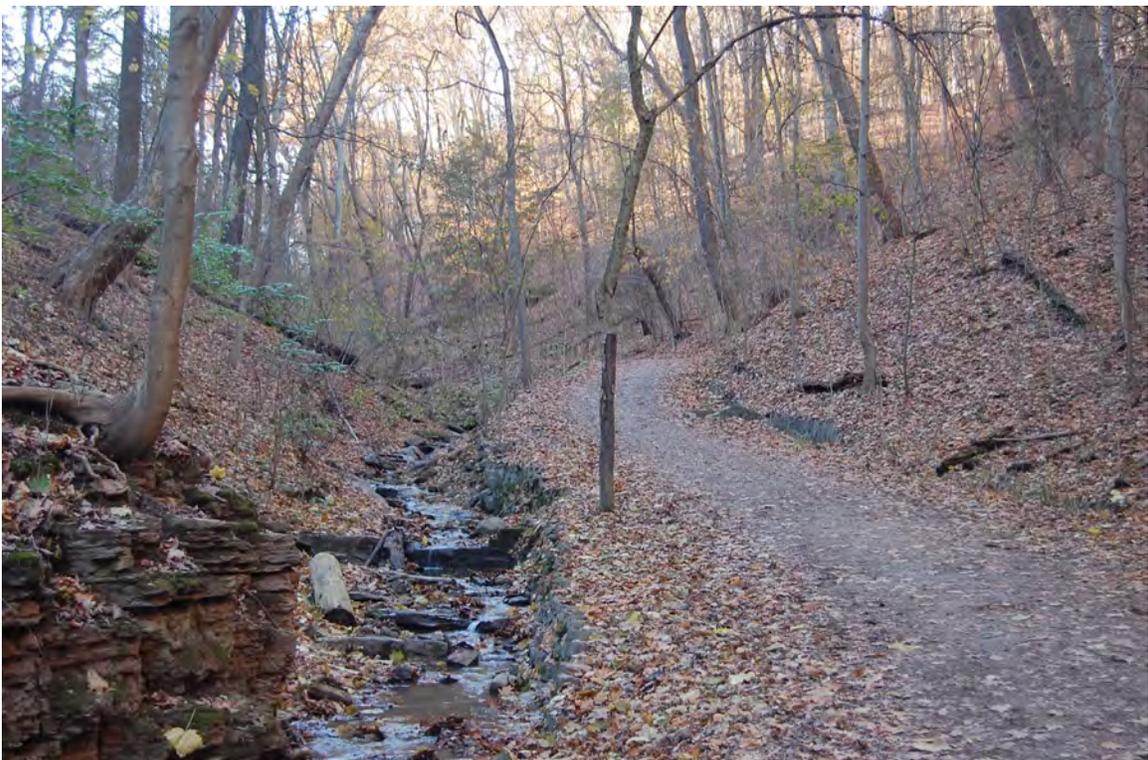


Photo 2. Falls Ravine Trail



Photo 3. Nine Mile Run and Penn-Lincoln Parkway



Photo 4. Wooden footbridge over stream on Iron Grate Trail



Photo 5. Stone footbridge over stream alongside Tranquil Trail

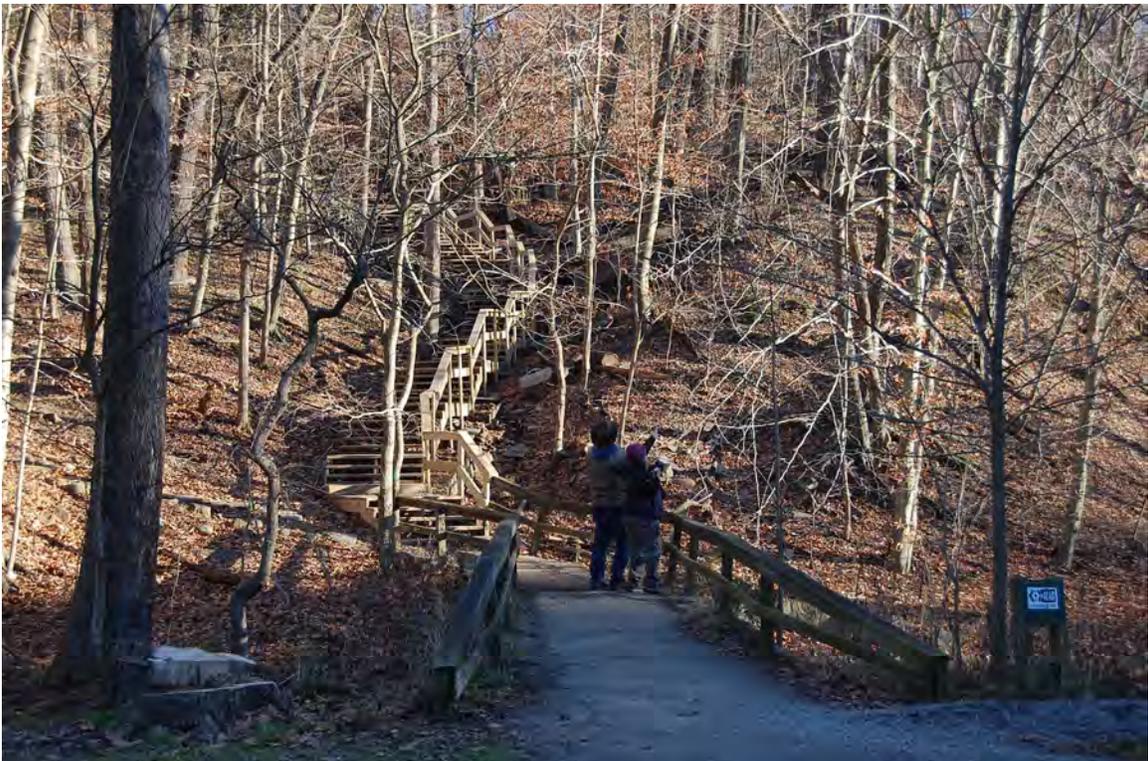


Photo 6. Wooden steps from Fern Hollow to S. Braddock Ave.



Photo 7. Rest room building, picnic shelter, and bulletin board at intersection of Tranquil, Falls Ravine, and Nine Mile Run Trails



Photo 8. Reynolds Street Gatehouse (John Russell Pope, 1931)



Photo 9. Parkland landscape along Reynolds Street



Photo 10. Lawn bowling greens at Reynolds Street



Photo 11. Lawn bowling shelter, 1940



Photo 12. Entrance to Homewood Trail from Reynolds Street gateway area

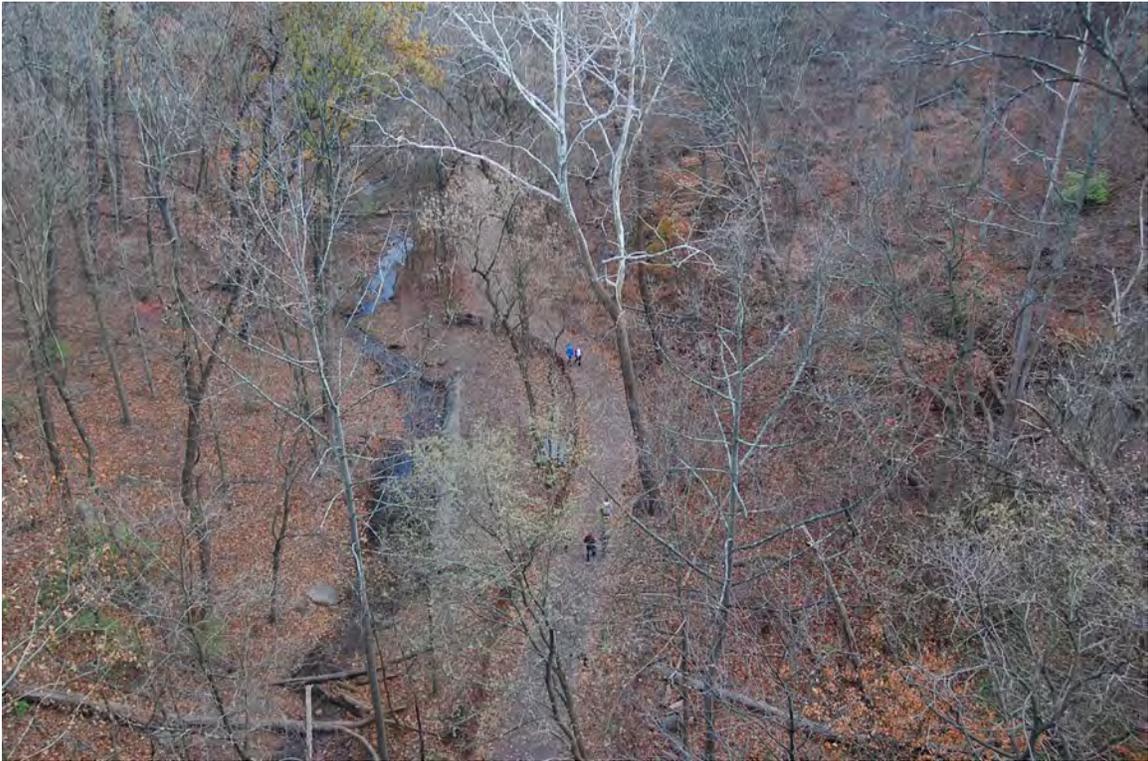


Photo 13. Tranquil Trail from Forbes Avenue Bridge



Photo 14. Forbes Avenue Bridge from Tranquil Trail



Photo 15. Forbes Avenue gatehouse/shelter (John Russell Pope, 1931) at west end of Forbes Avenue Bridge



Photo 16. Entrance cairn (John Russell Pope, 1931) at intersection of Forbes Avenue and Beechwood Boulevard



Photo 17. Playground at Forbes and S. Braddock Avenues



Photo 18. Ball field at S. Braddock Avenue



Photo 19. Red clay tennis courts at S. Braddock Avenue



Photo 20. Biddle Community Building at S. Braddock Avenue



Photo 21. Approach to Clayton Hill/Frick Environmental Center from Beechwood Blvd.



Photo 22. Beechwood Blvd. gatehouses (John Russell Pope, 1931) frame axial view to Clayton Hill Fountain



Photo 23. View from Clayton Hill Fountain (reconstructed) back to Beechwood Blvd. gatehouses; Frick Environmental Center at left



Photo 24. Frick Environmental Center and amphitheater (2016)



Photo 25. Entrance to Clayton Loop Trail encircling Frick Woods Nature Preserve



Photo 26. Riverview entrance and Blue Slide Playground off of Beechwood Boulevard



Photo 27. Riverview Trail facing back toward Beechwood Boulevard; playground hidden from view over rise in distance



Photo 28. Riverview Trail and Mon Valley viewed



Photo 29. Sledding hill/bowl near Riverview entrance to park



Photo 30. Staff residence, office, and maintenance complex on English Lane (Wolfe and Wolfe, 1959)

Frick Park
Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA

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Photo 31. Nine Mile Run Trail



Figure 1. Frick Park Trustees' "Pictorial Map of Frick Park," 1939