



## Mellon Park

### City of Pittsburgh Historic Landmark Nomination

Prepared by Preservation Pittsburgh for Friends of Mellon Park



412.256.8755  
1501 Reedsdale St., Suite 5003  
Pittsburgh, PA 15233  
[www.preservationpgh.org](http://www.preservationpgh.org)

September, 2020.



## INDIVIDUAL PROPERTY HISTORIC NOMINATION FORM

**HRC Staff Use Only**

Date Received:.....  
 Parcel No.: .....  
 Ward: .....  
 Zoning Classification:.....  
 Bldg. Inspector:.....  
 Council District:.....

**Fee Schedule**

Please make check payable to *Treasurer, City of Pittsburgh*  
 Individual Landmark Nomination: \$100.00  
 District Nomination: \$250.00

**1. HISTORIC NAME OF PROPERTY:**

Mellon Park

**2. CURRENT NAME OF PROPERTY:**

Mellon Park

**3. LOCATION**

- a. Street: 1047 Shady Ave.
- b. City, State, Zip Code: Pittsburgh, Pa. 15232
- c. Neighborhood: Shadyside/Point Breeze

**4. OWNERSHIP**

- d. Owner(s): City of Pittsburgh
- e. Street: 414 Grant St.
- f. City, State, Zip Code: Pittsburgh, Pa. 15219 Phone: (412) 255-2626

**5. CLASSIFICATION AND USE – Check all that apply**

<u>Type</u>	<u>Ownership</u>	<u>Current Use:</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Private – home	<u>Park</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> District	<input type="checkbox"/> Private – other	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public – government	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public - other	_____
	<input type="checkbox"/> Place of religious worship	_____

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6. NOMINATED BY:

- a. Name: Elizabeth Seamans for Friends of Mellon Park & Matthew Falcone of Preservation Pittsburgh
- b. Street: 1501 Reedsdale St. #5003
- c. City, State, Zip: Pittsburgh, Pa. 15233
- d. Phone: (412) 417-5910 Email: mfalcone@preservationpgh.org

7. DESCRIPTION

Provide a narrative description of the structure, district, site, or object. If it has been altered over time, indicate the date(s) and nature of the alteration(s). (Attach additional pages as needed)

*If Known:*

- a. Year Built: 1910
- b. Architectural Style: Landscape Design
- c. Architect/Builder: Alden and Harlow; Vitale and Geiffert; Ralph Griswold; Gilmore D. Clarke; Simonds and Simonds

Narrative: See attached.

8. HISTORY

Provide a history of the structure, district, site, or object. Include a bibliography of sources consulted. (Attach additional pages as needed.) Include copies of relevant source materials with the nomination form (see Number 11).

Narrative: See attached.

9. SIGNIFICANCE

The *Pittsburgh Code of Ordinances, Title 11, Historic Preservation, Chapter 1: Historic Structures, Districts, Sites and Objects* lists ten criteria, at least one of which must be met for Historic Designation. Describe how the structure, district, site, or object meets one or more of these criteria and complete a narrative discussing in detail each area of significance. (Attach additional pages as needed)

The structure, building, site, district, object is significant because of (check all that apply):

- 1.  Its location as a site of a significant historic or prehistoric event or activity;
- 2.  Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the cultural, historic, architectural, archaeological, or related aspects of the development of the City of Pittsburgh, State of Pennsylvania, Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States;
- 3.  Its exemplification of an architectural type, style or design distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship;
- 4.  Its identification as the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose individual work is significant in the history or development of the City of Pittsburgh, the State of Pennsylvania, the Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States;
- 5.  Its exemplification of important planning and urban design techniques distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design or detail;

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6.  Its location as a site of an important archaeological resource;
  7.  Its association with important cultural or social aspects or events in the history of the City of Pittsburgh, the State of Pennsylvania, the Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States;
  8.  Its exemplification of a pattern of neighborhood development or settlement significant to the cultural history or traditions of the City, whose components may lack individual distinction;
  9.  Its representation of a cultural, historic, architectural, archaeological, or related theme expressed through distinctive areas, properties, sites, structures, or objects that may or may not be contiguous; or
  10.  Its unique location and distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City of Pittsburgh.

Narrative: See attached.

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#### 10. INTEGRITY

In addition, the ordinance specifies that “Any area, property, site, structure or object that meets any one or more of the criteria listed above shall also have sufficient integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship to make it worthy of preservation or restoration”. (Attach additional pages as needed)

Narrative: \_\_\_\_\_

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#### 11. NOTIFICATION/CONSENT OF PROPERTY OWNER(S)

##### *1.3(a)(2) Community information process.*

*Preceding submission of a nomination form for a District, the Historic Review Commission shall conduct at least one (1) public information meeting within or near the boundaries of the proposed district, which shall include at least one (1) member of the Department of City Planning and one (1) Commission member, to discuss the possible effects of designation. Notice shall be given to the owners of property in the proposed district in accordance with Section 1.3(b) below. The final public information meeting shall be held no more than six months before the nomination form is submitted.*

##### *1.3(a)(1)(a) Subsection F.*

*In the case of a nomination as a Historic District, by community-based organizations or by any individual, but in either event the nomination shall be accompanied by a petition signed by the owners of record of twenty-five (25) percent of the properties within the boundaries of the proposed District.*

- Please attach documentation of your efforts to gain property owner’s consent.-

\*\* The nomination of any religious property shall be accompanied by a signed letter of consent from the property’s owner.



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12. PHOTO LOGS: *Please Attach*

13. BIBLIOGRAPHY: *Please Attach*

14. NOMINATION FORM PREPARED BY:

a. Name: Preservation Pittsburgh

b. Street: 1501 Reedsdale St. #5003

c. City, State, Zip: Pittsburgh, Pa. 15233

d. Phone: (412) 256-8755 Email: info@preservationpgh.org

e. Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



## **HISTORIC NOMINATION – INSTRUCTIONS**

### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR FILLING OUT THE NOMINATION FORM**

1. Indicate the original name of the property if it is currently known by a different name; e.g. Union Station.
2. Indicate the current name of the property
3. Indicate the street address for the property. For districts, attach a separate sheet listing the street address of each property included in the nomination and a clear street map of the area showing the boundaries of the proposed district.
4. Indicate the owner of the property and his or her mailing address. For districts, attach a separate sheet listing the owner of each property and his or her mailing address.
5. Check the classification as indicated.
  - a. **“Historic Structure”** means anything constructed or erected, the use of which requires directly or indirectly, a permanent location on the land, including walks, fences, signs, steps and sidewalks at which events that made a significant contribution to national, state or local history occurred or which involved a close association with the lives of people of nations, state or local significance; or an outstanding example of a period, style, architectural movement, or method of construction; or one of the last surviving works of a pioneer architect, builder or designer; or one of the last survivors of a particular style or period of construction.
  - b. **“Historic District”** means a defined territorial division of land which shall include more than one (1) contiguous or related parcels of property, specifically identified by separate resolution, at which events occurred that made a significant contribution to national, state, or local history, or which contains more than one historic structure or historic landmarks, or which contains groups, rows or sets of structures or landmarks, or which contains an aggregate example of a period, style, architectural movements or method of construction, providing distinguishing characteristics of the architectural type or architectural period it represents.
  - c. **“Historic Site”** means the location of a significant event, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure whether standing, ruined or vanished, where the location itself maintains historical or archaeological value regardless of the value of any existing structures.
  - d. **“Historic Object”** means a material thing of historic significance for functional, aesthetic cultural or scientific reasons that may be, by nature or design, moveable yet related to a specific setting or environment.
6. Indicate the person(s) responsible for the nomination. Please note: According to the Historic Preservation Ordinance:

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*“Nomination of an area, property, site, or object for consideration and designation as a Historic Structure, Historic District, Historic Site, or Historic Object may be submitted to the Historic Review Commission by any of the following:*

- a. The Mayor of the City of Pittsburgh
  - b. A Member of the Historic Review Commission
  - c. A Member of the City Planning Commission
  - d. A Member of the Pittsburgh City Council
  - e. The Owner of Record or any person residing in the City of Pittsburgh for at least one year (for the nomination of a Historic Structure, Site or Object)
  - f. A signed petition of 25% of the owners of record (for the nomination of a Historic District)
7. Write a physical description of the nominated property or district. Include the following information as applicable:
- architectural style(s)
  - arrangement of architectural elements
  - building materials
  - method(s) of construction
  - visual character
  - street pattern
  - density
  - type and arrangement of buildings
  - topography
  - history of the development of the area
8. Provide a narrative history of the structure, district, site, or object. Include the following information when available:
- History of the development of the area;
  - Circumstances which brought the structure, district, site, or object into being;
  - Biographical information on architects, builders, developers, artisans, planners, or others who created or contributed to the structure, district, site, or object;
  - Contextual background on building type(s) and/or style(s);
  - Importance of the structure, district, site, or object in the larger community over the course of its existence.
  - Include a bibliography of all sources consulted at the end. Where historical information is uncertain or disputed, reference sources in the text.
9. Listed below are the categories and criteria for historic designation as set forth in the Pittsburgh Historic Preservation Ordinance. Describe in detail how the structure, district, site, or object meets one or more of the criteria. According to that legislation in Section 1.4 of the Pittsburgh Historic Preservation Ordinance, *Criteria for Designation*, a building must meet at least one of the following criteria in order to be designated:
1. Its location as a site of a significant historic or prehistoric event or activity;
  2. Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the cultural, historic, architectural, archaeological, or related aspects of the development of the City of Pittsburgh, State of Pennsylvania, Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States;
  3. Its exemplification of an architectural type, style or design distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials, or craftsmanship;
  4. Its identification as the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose individual work is significant in the history or development of the City of Pittsburgh, the State of Pennsylvania, the Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States;

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5. Its exemplification of important planning and urban design techniques distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design or detail;
  6. Its location as a site of an important archaeological resource;
  7. Its association with important cultural or social aspects or events in the history of the City of Pittsburgh, the State of Pennsylvania, the Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States;
  8. Its exemplification of a pattern of neighborhood development or settlement significant to the cultural history or traditions of the City, whose components may lack individual distinction;
  9. Its representation of a cultural, historic, architectural, archaeological, or related theme expressed through distinctive areas, properties, sites, structures, or objects that may or may not be contiguous; or
  10. Its unique location and distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City of Pittsburgh.
- 10.** In addition, the ordinance specifies that “Any area, property, site, structure or object that meets any one or more of the criteria listed above shall also have sufficient integrity of location, design, materials, and workmanship to make it worthy of preservation or restoration.”
- 11.** The nomination must be accompanied by evidence that the nominator has made a good-faith effort to communicate his or her interest in the historic designation of this landmark or district to the owner(s) of these properties. Describe how this was done, and attach evidence that the owner(s) of the nominated landmark or of the properties within the nominated district have been informed of the nomination. This may include a copy of a notification letter with a mailing list, a letter confirming phone calls, or a petition signed by affected property owners.
- 12.** Clear photographs of the nominated buildings or districts should accompany the nomination form. The applicant shall include photographs of all elevations of an individual building and its setting, or the front elevation of each building in a district. In the case of closely spaced buildings or rowhouses, several buildings may be included in one photograph. Each photograph must be labeled with the street address of the building(s) and the month and year the photograph was taken.
- 13.** Copies of major supporting documents should accompany the nomination form. Such documents may include, but are not limited to:
- historic photographs;
  - historic and contemporary maps;
  - historic or contemporary texts describing the subject property or district;
  - historic or contemporary texts describing people, places, or events that comprise the historic context of the subject property or district.
  - Oversized materials (such as architectural drawings) and materials too fragile to copy may be accepted.

**PLEASE NOTE:** It is the responsibility of the nominator to provide the Historic Review Commission and its Staff with information sufficient to fairly evaluate the nomination. **Incomplete nomination forms will not be accepted. Fee must be included. Nominations must be submitted in both electronic and hard-copy format.**

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**CHECKLIST: Mellon Park**

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- #1-6 Nomination Form:** Address, Ownership, Classification, Nominator Info.
  - #7: Description
  - #8: History
  - #9: Significance
- #10 Integrity**
- #11 Consent of Property Owners**
- #12 Photographs of Property:** numbered and labeled
- #13 List of Supporting Documents**
  
- Fee**
- Hard-Copy nomination**
- Electronic nomination (Word Format for text).**

**Mellon Park**  
**Historic Nomination Form**  
**Addendum**



## Individual Property Historic Nomination Form

Historic Name(s): Mellon Park

Current Name: Mellon Park

Location: Point Breeze

Neighborhood: Point Breeze

Ownership: City of Pittsburgh

Type: Site

Historic Use: Park

Current Use: Park

### Descriptive Narrative

Year Built: 1910

Architectural Style: Landscape Design

Builder: Alden and Harlow; Vitale and Geiffert; Ralph Griswold; Gilmore D. Clarke; Simonds and Simonds

### 7. Description

Mellon Park is a 33 acre city park located at the intersection of the Shadyside, Point Breeze, and Squirrel Hill neighborhoods in the East End of Pittsburgh, approximately five miles from downtown. It is comprised of land that was formerly the estates of the Mellon, Marshall, Scaife, Frew, and Darsie families. These private estates were acquired by the City of Pittsburgh and unified into a city park in the 1940s and 50s while retaining aspects of their original architecture and landscapes.

Mellon Park is situated on both sides (north and south) of Fifth Avenue, a major east-west corridor known in the 19th and early 20th centuries as "Millionaires' Row." South of Fifth Avenue, the park consists of pastoral parkland, formal gardens, buildings, and other features (such as fencing) associated with the historic estates. Its buildings are occupied by nonprofit organizations dedicated to the arts and horticulture which lease them from the City. The southern section of the park is bounded by Fifth Avenue to the north, Shady Avenue to the west, Beechwood Boulevard to the east, and Mellon Park Road to the south. Mellon Park Road is the former private drive of the Mellon estate and leads to the building that was historically the Mellons' carriage house or garage, now (with additions) the Phipps Garden Center. The Mellon house, once the largest and grandest of the mansions that lined Fifth Avenue, was demolished prior to the creation of the park, but its associated gardens and landscapes remain, with varying degrees of integrity. The Frew and Darsie houses are also demolished. The 1911 Colonial Revival Marshall mansion still stands near the intersection of Fifth and Shady avenues. To its south, facing Shady Avenue, is the Tudor Revival house formerly of Alan Magee Scaife and his wife, Sarah Mellon Scaife. Sarah Mellon Scaife was the original donor of Mellon Park, along with her brother, Richard King Mellon. The siblings had grown up in the Mellon mansion and donated the family estate to the city in memory of their parents, Richard Beatty Mellon and Jennie King Mellon, in 1943. The Marshall property was added in 1944 and the Frew and Darsie properties—located east of the Mellon estate—in 1948.

The Mellons donated the section of Mellon Park north of Fifth Avenue in 1946. This part of the park is known as the Mellon Park Recreation Area and is bounded by Penn Avenue to the northeast, the

historic alignment of Putnam Street (recently renamed Bakery Square Boulevard) to the northwest, and Fifth Avenue to the south. A stub of Beechwood Boulevard penetrates the site as an access road and parking lot for park users. The Mellon Park Recreation Area contains facilities for active and passive recreation including ball fields, playgrounds, tennis courts, walking paths, a picnic area, and sculptural installations.

A 2000 master plan for the former Mellon estate portion of Mellon Park described it in terms of landscape units derived, in turn, from a 1950 Landscape Unit Plan. The following detailed description of the landscape zones and other features of Mellon Park expands upon this organizational scheme.

#### Mellon House Site

The 65-room, stone, Tudor Revival Mellon mansion was constructed between 1908 and 1911 on the crest of a hill overlooking Fifth Avenue from the south and razed in 1940. The house site today is a roughly teardrop-shaped lawn surrounded by asphalt walking paths (Photos 1-2).

These are lined with light fixtures on 14-foot poles, spaced approximately every 40 feet on alternating sides of the path. Occasional modern park furnishings such as benches and trash receptacles are also found along the path.

No trace of the house itself remains, but its siting and plan are important to understand because the house was central to the arrangement of the significant landscape elements around it.

Architects Alden and Harlow designed it to have an angled plan in order to face both Fifth Avenue to its north and Beechwood Boulevard to its southeast. Sloped hillsides extend from the flat house site at the top of the hill down to both streets, providing views over all of the rest of the park landscapes and the neighborhoods beyond. The Mellons' living room overlooked Fifth Avenue, and its main formal entrance drive ascended the hill from there. Richard Beatty Mellon's study faced the Walled Garden, which is oriented parallel to Fifth Avenue, while the Mellons' library overlooked the Terraced Garden, which descends toward Beechwood Boulevard to the southeast. The estate's service court, described below, was located west of the house site and south of the Walled Garden.

#### Terraced Garden

The Terraced Garden was designed along with the house by Alden and Harlow ca. 1910. Its planting scheme has been revised several times, but its essential architecture remains. This consists of an upper and lower terrace containing a symmetrical parterre arrangement of formal planting beds. The garden is enclosed by walls of dark red brick laid in English bond with contrasting white mortar and accentuated by red terra cotta coping and ornament with limestone balustrades.

Four broad brick stairs lead from the house site down to the upper terrace. This staircase is flanked by a pair of large arborvitae. Walkways in the upper terrace are of concrete edged in brick, a modern replacement for the original brick paths. (Photo 3) Plantings in the upper terrace are modern. Two primary planting beds, one on each side of the central walkway, feature stone urn planters surrounded by tall yew hedges in a circular design. Outside of the hedges, to the edges of the beds, is turf. Flanking them to the north and south are two secondary beds, each containing a pair of small weeping crabapples (Photo 4). On the south side is also a small plaza paved with bricks in alternating basketweave and modified basketweave patterns (Photo 5). At the eastern terminus of the upper terrace where it overlooks the lower terrace is a line of boxwood hedge.

The stone edging of a small pool—one of the garden’s three original water features—is present at the base of the south wall of the upper terrace. Above this, a modern bronze plaque mounted in the wall proclaims this the “Jennie King Mellon Garden / Restored by the Garden Club of Allegheny County and the Richard King Mellon Foundation.” This plaque was installed ca. 1980 after the foundation underwrote repairs to and replanting of the garden according to plans commissioned by the Garden Club. Historic photos show that a small stone fountain or bird bath was once mounted to the wall in the location of the plaque.

Two narrower staircases—one on each side—link the upper terrace to the lower. Originally brick, these staircases have been replaced with treated wood. Between the staircases, a stepped wall of dark red brick is both retaining wall to the upper terrace and backdrop to the lower terrace plantings. A keystone-shaped glazed terra cotta plaque is its focal point. It contains a relief of a heraldic shape wreathed in ribbon which is chipped and in need of repair. Below this is a wrought iron bench which replaced an ornamental stone bench at an unknown date. Plain wing walls of the same brick extend from the outer edges of the staircases and connect to the side walls of the lower terrace. (Photo 6)

The side walls are also of dark red brick laid in English bond and are topped with limestone balustrades. Curved sections of the walls sweep down to lower segments of wall and short piers at the terrace’s corners. The upper sections of the wall incorporate terra cotta scrolls, including one in the form of a stylized dolphin. The walls are capped with red terra cotta coping, as are the piers. A red terra cotta sundial is mounted on the north side wall of the lower terrace. Some of the brick and limestone is brown or missing, and all of the ornamental terra cotta is in poor condition. (Photos 7-8)

The lower terrace’s rectangular central planting bed, formerly a pool, is sunken and currently panted as an herb garden surrounded by boxwood hedge (Photo 9). At intervals, granite steps lead down to a narrow brick walk around the hedge. Between the stairs are granite box planters also containing herb plants (Photo 10). The beds to the north and south of the former pool are planted with roses and recently-added mixed perennials. (Photos 11-12)

The lower terrace terminates in a curved prow overlooking Beechwood Boulevard, defined by a limestone balustrade atop a brick retaining wall (visible in Photo 13). A yew hedge lines the curved eastern wall. The planting bed contains herbs within an outline of boxwood hedges. An ornamental carved stone wellhead, originally located near the northeastern corner of the Walled Garden, is this bed’s central feature (Photo 6). Brick walkways on the eastern, curved side of this planting bed appear to be remnants of the garden’s original paving.

There is no trace of the Mellon children’s playhouse once located directly north of the upper terrace.

### Walled Garden

The Walled Garden was designed in 1929 by the New York firm of Vitale and Geiffert. It occupies a raised plateau west of the Mellon house site and parallel to Fifth Avenue and is

divided by brick walls into three linear terraces, each oriented east-west. The south, west, and north walls of the garden screen out the garden center to the south, the former Marshall and Scaife properties (now Pittsburgh Center for the Arts) to the west, and the view to Fifth Avenue to the north, respectively. At its eastern end, the garden is open to the former house site. Here three sets of broad, shallow stone steps descend to a paved octagon with an octagonal planting bed at its center. The octagonal form reflects the octagonal bay of the house from which the garden's axis originated. (Photos 14-15).

At its western end, a limestone wall with Gothic detailing provides a backdrop to a small stone plaza featuring a fountain by sculptor Edmond R. Amateis. The fountain's stone pedestal is ringed with sculpted children playing musical instruments and fish and turtles' heads. Its octagonal footprint echoes the larger octagon at the garden's opposite end. (Photos 16-17) Three niches in the wall behind the fountain—two facing the central terrace and one facing the north terrace—originally contained bronze sculptures of young women, also by Amateis. The sculptures were moved to Phipps Conservatory soon after the Mellon house's demolition, and the niches now frame bronze plaques commemorating the donation of Mellon Park to the City and the dedication of the Frank Curto Educational Gardens in the 1970s. Wing walls of dark red brick set in English bond with contrasting white mortar connect to the side walls of the garden.

The Walled Garden's central landscape feature is a broad, grassy terrace extending from the steps at its eastern end to the fountain plaza at the west. Along the north and south sides are walking paths paved in irregular flagstones. Linear, rectangular planting beds line both sides of these walks. Plantings are modern and consist of shrubs and perennials along the north and south garden side walls. Simple wooden benches are set within these areas for viewing the garden. On the lawn side of the paths are a series of parterres, each planted with a single tree, perennial flowers, and a low hedge between the bed and the terrace lawn. (Photos 18-19)

An ornamental wrought iron gate—designed by Philadelphia master artisan Samuel Yellin—in the south wall of the central terrace leads to another, slightly raised terrace and walk that connects to the former Mellon garage which, with its later additions, serves as the Phipps Garden Center. (Photos 20-21) A larger, double-leaved wrought iron gate in the north wall of the garden, also designed by Yellin, leads to a lower terrace overlooking Fifth Avenue. (Photos 22-23) This terrace is also paved in flagstone with linear planting beds on either side. (Photos 24-25) Three staircases lead down into the sloping Fifth Avenue lawn: one at the east end, one at the west end, and one at the center. The central staircase, known as the "scroll stair" because of its scrolled side walls, is a landscape feature from Alden and Harlow's original estate design of 1910. It now connects the Walled Garden via its lower (north) terrace with the pedestrian walk up the hill from Fifth Avenue. (Photos 27-28)

Adjacent to the east stair to the north terrace, at the northeast corner of the Walled Garden, is a mounded berm with an array of boulders on its eastern shoulder (Photo 29). Installed here is a granite frog sculpture which was relocated from a former lily pond landscape (designed by the

Olmsted Brothers firm in 1931 and no longer extant) located in the Beechwood Boulevard parkland (Photo 30). Atop the mound is a small stone paved terrace with an inscription, round garden bed, stone bench, and inset plaque (Photo 31). The plaque is related to a public art memorial to Ann Katherine Seamans by artist Janet Zweig. The installation consists of fiberoptic lights installed at grade in the central lawn in the formation of the stars on the date of Ms. Seamans' birth. It is prominently visible only at night and was designed to be minimally intrusive to the historic garden landscape.

The Walled Garden was rehabilitated by the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy in 2009. Work included restoration of infrastructure and hardscape of the garden; replanting of the beds with regard to the intent of historic plantings but suitable to modern park maintenance capacity; and installation of large decorative urns on inscribed stone bases alongside the stairs at the eastern entrance to the garden.

#### Fifth Avenue Parkland

North from the Mellon house site and the Walled Garden, the hillside slopes down to Fifth Avenue. This is maintained as a mown lawn with mostly mature trees of various species scattered across it (Photo 32). The character of this landscape is relatively unchanged from its historic appearance, although the number of trees is fewer.

A flat, grassy plateau atop the hill northeast of the Mellon house site is the former location of the Frew house (Photo 33). East of this, at the bottom of the hill and across the former Frew estate drive (now a walkway into the park from Fifth Avenue), is a flat triangle of grass where the Darsie house once stood (Photo 34). The same pastoral parkland landscape of lawns and trees continues across the former Frew and Darsie properties. Fences and other landscape features which historically separated the Mellon, Frew, and Darsie estates were removed when the City unified them as parkland in the early 1950s.

Changes in fencing along Fifth Avenue illustrate the historic frontage of the various estates (photo 35). In front of the Marshall property, there is no fence, but a low concrete retaining wall.<sup>1</sup> The Mellon estate is fronted by an elaborate wrought iron fence by Samuel Yellin set upon a base of cut and polished pink granite. At the estate's main entrance, four large, paneled, polished pink granite piers anchor a central gate and two curved wing panels. These are surmounted by rosettes, cast iron faces, and ornamental scrollwork incorporating the stylized letter M. (Photos 36-40)

At the eastern property line of the Mellon estate, a short red brick pier marks the beginning of the Frew fence. This is a low brick wall with limestone base and coping topped by wrought-iron pickets. The wall steps down toward the Darsie property as the grade of Fifth Avenue gradually descends to the east. (Photo 41) The Darsie lot frontage has a simple fence of wrought-iron pickets set directly into the ground.

Entry into Mellon Park from Fifth Avenue occurs at four points. The easternmost is the original gate to the Frew estate, which leads to the former drive to the Frew house. Now an asphalt-paved footpath, this follows roughly its original alignment to the crest of the hill, past the Frew house site, where it joins a modern path to the Mellon house site. (Photo 41)

The next point of entry is the main Mellon estate gate. From here, one can follow the original

Mellon drive—also now an asphalt-paved walkway—on its S-shaped path to the house site (Photo 42), or branch westward on a narrow asphalt walk below the Walled Garden which is lined on one side by four crabapple trees (visible in Photos 28, 43).

The third entry point is a pedestrian gate in the Mellons' Fifth Avenue fence which occurs close to the Mellon-Marshall property line (Photo 43). From here, an asphalt-paved footpath leads up the hillside to intersect with the walk around the Mellon house site at a point close to the Walled Garden.

Finally, since the Marshall property frontage is not enclosed, there is free access to the Fifth Avenue lawn from the end of the Mellons' fence to Shady Avenue.

#### Agricultural Area

At the western end of the Fifth Avenue Parkland, from Fifth Avenue to the western wall of the Walled Garden, a wrought-iron fence of simple picket design separated the pleasure grounds of the Mellon estate from its vegetable gardens (Photo 44). Still extant, this fence is visible in a 1917 photograph and likely dates to the Mellon estate's construction ca. 1910. The site of the vegetable gardens themselves on the lower slope of the hillside is now lawn. A one-story, U-shaped, stuccoed building uphill from the garden site is associated with the estate's agricultural functions (Photo 45). It has six-over-six wood-framed double-hung windows, most of which are boarded, and a hipped roof. The informal name "chicken coop" is attached to this structure, but whether it ever housed animals is not known. It is shown, but not labeled, on historic property maps and park plans beginning in the 1920s and may date to the construction of the estate in the early 1910s. This building was adapted for use as the Activity Headquarters of the Pittsburgh Council of American Youth Hostels after the estate's conversion to a park in the 1940s and vacated in 2003. It is currently not in use.

#### Beechwood Boulevard Parkland

The ridge of the hill between Fifth Avenue and Beechwood Boulevard visually separates the Fifth Avenue and Beechwood Boulevard parklands, but their character is much the same. Like the hillside above Fifth Avenue, the hillside between the house site and Beechwood Boulevard is a pastoral parkland of large trees set in a broad, sloping lawn (Photo 46). The northern half of this parkland slopes evenly toward the street before flattening just before the fence, while the southern half is considerably flatter along the boulevard before it climbs to the Terraced Garden and Garden Center building.

The fence along Beechwood Boulevard is Yellin-designed wrought iron and detailed much like the Mellon fence on Fifth Avenue, but without the granite elements (Photo 47). Four large old sycamore trees stand in a row inside the fence. A simpler wrought iron picket fence demarcates the northern and southern boundaries of the property. Gates near the northern and southern property lines lead to asphalt-paved paths that climb the hill. The northern path leads to the Mellon house site, intersecting with the former Frew drive along the way. Just below the ridgeline of the hill, a path connects from the Terraced Garden to the former Frew drive.

Along the south of the site, a vehicular drive—now called Mellon Park Road—connects to the estate's former service court, current visitor parking, and access to/from Shady Avenue. Now paved in asphalt, the drive's original granite curbs are still evident in some areas. The site of the former Olmsted-designed lily pond is marked by overgrowth at the first bend. Hidden in the overgrowth are boulders which were part of the landscape around the pool (Photos 48-49).



### Garden Center/Former Garage and Service Entrance

The service court of the Mellon estate was located south of the Walled Garden at the convergence of the estate's three drives: the main, formal drive from Fifth Avenue; the drive up the southern edge of the property from Beechwood Boulevard; and the service drive, a narrow but straight right-of-way off of Shady Avenue. The service drive retains its Belgian blockpaving. (Photos 50-52) It passes the Scaife house and garage before passing through a large, Yellin- designed wrought iron gate between two tall brick piers with limestone bases, caps, and ball finials. A wing wall connects to the Mellon garage building and contains an arched pedestrian entrance, also with a Yellin-designed wrought iron gate (Photo 52). Together with the drive from Beechwood Boulevard, the service drive was renamed Mellon Park Road when the estate became city property and the drive became a city street providing access to the park.

This part of the property served several historic functions. The Mellons' carriage house (which became its garage) is located here. This has been leased to the Pittsburgh Garden Center (now called the Phipps Garden Center) since 1945. The original carriage house is a red-brick building with a pyramidal roof over its two-story central section, flanked by one-story wings with shallow hipped roofs to the north and south. The original carriage house is currently found at the rear (west) of the garden center complex. Several one-story additions and raised concrete terrace expanded the garden center to the east in the 1950s and again in the 1980s. These were built on the site of a circular service court that originally existed in front of the garage. Two stone statues currently found on the garden center terrace were originally located in the Terraced Garden and were relocated at an unknown date. (Photos 53-54)

Other historic uses of the service court were an L-shaped conservatory near the top of the drive from Beechwood Boulevard and a sunken, walled laundry-drying yard outside the kitchen at the southwest end of the house site. These features no longer exist.

A cast iron drinking fountain stands on a concrete base directly east and in front of the garden center (Photo 55). It was manufactured by the Murdock Company of Cincinnati, OH, which began supplying water hydrants and fountains for public infrastructure in 1853, and was probably installed by the City upon the Mellon estate's conversion to a park. The vertical post of this fountain is of a design, M-1776, made by Murdock beginning in the 1920s and found in parks, school campuses, and other settings throughout the country. It was originally operated by foot pedal. Because the fountain did not meet modern height requirements, it was recently extended with an arm to raise the drinking pan.

A rock garden established in 1976 by Allegheny Chapter of American Rock Garden Society is located in a grassy verge across Mellon Park Road from the garden center. This is screened from adjacent properties by a wall of dark red brick laid, like the rest of of the garden walls, in English bond with contrasting white mortar. (Photo 56)

### Marshall Property/Pittsburgh Center for the Arts

The Charles D. and Dora M. Marshall house was constructed in 1911 on property adjoining the Mellons' at the corner of Fifth and Shady avenues and donated to the city to expand MellonPark after Charles Marshall's death in 1944 (Photo 57). It has been occupied by the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts (originally the Arts and Crafts Center of Pittsburgh) since 1945. The house is of stuccoed brick in an

American Colonial Revival interpretation of a 17th century British country house. It is two-and-a-half stories and seven bays with a formal, symmetrical composition. A large terrace extends in front of the house, screened from Fifth Avenue by a row of cypresstrees. A two-story porte cochere (now enclosed) on the west side marks where the original drive from Shady Avenue entered the property, but that drive is now lawn. A stone retaining wall holds the lawn above the sidewalk along Shady. (Photo 58) The rest of the Marshall site's trees are in a row along its Fifth Avenue frontage. A sculptural art installation—a stone face, upturned with a tree growing out of its open mouth—is located in the lawn northeast of the house (Photo 59).

The house received substantial additions, designed by Pittsburgh firm The Design Alliance, in 1990. The rear addition incorporates a former sun porch to provide a lobby (Photo 60). It reoriented the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts' main entrance to the rear of the building. Entrance to the center had previously been through the porte cochere; this was enclosed in 1990 to accommodate an expanded sales gallery. A two-story wing added to the building's east side is set back from the house's primary facade and contains exhibition space. The house's original front terrace was enlarged and its basement was expanded and renovated into a subterranean gallery and event space below the terrace. The mansion's original front door now provides access to the terrace.

On the interior, some of the Marshall mansion's original features were altered by its tenants soon after it was added to Mellon Park. For example, the Abstract Artists club painted the third-floor ballroom white in 1945; "in former years the ceiling was decorated with golden stars on a cloth of midnight blue."<sup>2</sup> Some of the house's windows were also obscured with black paint and/or covered with drywall. The 1990 renovation reversed these window treatments, but did not restore the decorative painting. It did retain and refinish the mansion's original double staircase and design the new reception hall with this as a focal point.

Rear of the mansion, the Marshalls' service drive has been enlarged to provide a small parking lot for the Center for the Arts. The Marshalls' garage still stands at the southeast corner of the parking lot (Photo 61). Because of the garage's siting on the hillside, it is two stories on the front facade and one story in the rear, where a door opens out onto a small terrace. The original first floor material is stone and the second story is clad in stucco. The garage is three bays wide with a shallow hipped roof. It has been adaptively reused as a woodworking shop for the arts center, and the front of the first floor has been altered with concrete.

### Scaife House and Garage

Southeast of the Marshall house and west of the Mellon estate are the Scaife house and garage. Designed by Alden and Harlow in the Shingle Style and built in 1904 for Lawrence Dilworth, the house was remodeled and received its current Tudor Revival treatment in the 1920s. (Photo 62) Sarah Mellon Scaife, one of the donors of the Mellon estate for a park, lived here with her husband, Alan Magee Scaife, after their marriage in 1927. Sarah Mellon Scaife donated the Scaife property to expand Mellon Park in 1946. The Scaife house is two-and-a-half stories and clad in stucco with faux half-timbering and tall red brick chimneys. It is set back from Shady Avenue behind a broad lawn. A low rubble stone wall holds the lawn above sidewalk level. Four large trees stand at the front property line. The Scaife property is currently used by the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts as classrooms and studios. There is also an apartment for visiting artists on the house's third floor.

The Scaife house received renovations and additions as part of the 1990 campaign to upgrade the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts. Like those at the Marshall house, they were designed by The Design Alliance. In the process, a few historic interior features were restored: the foyer's original black-and-white marble checkerboard floor, a white marble mantel in what had been Sarah Mellon Scaife's bedroom (now part of the jewelry and metalsmithing studio), leaded glass windows on the stair landing, and an ornamental brass balustrade. However, asbestos abatement caused the loss of most historic interior finishes. Two additions were made at the rear of the Scaife house: a two-story, stuccoed classroom wing and a freestanding, one-story kiln. An elevator was also added to the house at this time. The elevator tower, also at the rear of the house, was built in brick to resemble one of the mansion's towering chimneys. (Photo 63)

A one-and-a-half story, cross-gabled carriage house stands at the rear of the property, directly west of the Mellon garage along Mellon Park Road. Its Shingle Style design suggests that it was designed by Alden and Harlow and built contemporaneously with the original house in 1904. (Photo 64) This is currently used to store park maintenance equipment.

#### Fifth and Penn Recreation Area

The triangular area north of Fifth Avenue from its intersection with Penn Avenue west to Putnam Street was also part of Richard Beatty Mellon's holdings. In 1946, his children donated this property, too, to expand Mellon Park. The gift was presented with plans for the configuration of the site as a recreation center, which were generally followed.

The site was roughly bisected by Beechwood Boulevard, which had been laid out in the early 1900s and constructed ca. 1920. This section of the boulevard was vacated except for a segment off of Fifth Avenue, which provides a vehicular entrance and parking spaces for park users. A rustic wooden sign at the entrance identifies this as the Mellon Park Recreation Area. There is no fencing or other barrier along Fifth or Penn avenues. (Photos 65-66)

West of the Beechwood Boulevard entrance, along the recreation area's Fifth Avenue frontage, are a modern playground equipped with water features, known as Mellon Spray Park; two basketball courts; and a complex of tennis courts known as the Mellon Park Tennis Center. The tennis courts have been enclosed in a weatherproof fabric dome to permit year-round play since 2002. (Photo 67)

A tree-lined, asphalt-paved walkway separates the Fifth Avenue zone of the recreation area from the ball fields to the north (Photo 68). Also along this walkway are a modern CMU rest room and utility building across from the playground and a demountable structure serving as a park office across from the tennis center. The rest room/utility building replaced a previous building of approximately the same footprint ca. 2010.

Three ball fields occupy the northwest sector of the recreation area. The largest is framed by the angle of Penn Avenue and the historic alignment of Putnam Street (now renamed Bakery Square Boulevard) (Photo 69). Two smaller fields, known as Middle and Little Field, are nestled south of the large one and north of the tennis and basketball courts. The smaller fields are enclosed with chain link fencing; utilitarian bleachers are situated on concrete pads outside of the fencing. (Photo 70) An asphalt-paved path follows the outfield curve of the large field, delineating it from the smaller field and picnic area to

its south. The ball fields are also at a lower grade than the picnic area.

The picnic area comprises the southeast section of the recreation area bounded by Fifth and Penn avenues, the vacated segment of Beechwood Boulevard, and the large ball field perimeter. The picnic area occupies a slightly higher grade above the ball fields and parking lot. The landscape here is similar to that of the Fifth Avenue and Beechwood Boulevard parklands across the street:

meandering footpaths through pastoral lawns dotted with mature shade trees (Photo 71). A rustic picnic shelter is located near the parking area (Photo 72).

Also in the picnic area are three works of public art: "Steelcityscape" (1976; Photo 73), a sculpture of 12 intertwined steel rings, by Arunel DeRoy Gruber; "Five Factors" (1973), comprised of five abstract stainless steel forms on a concrete base, by Peter Calaboiyas; and "Untitled (January Sprinter)" (1973; Photo 74), a horizontal, subtly curved stainless steel slab by Thomas Morandi. All three sculptures were restored and installed in Mellon Park in 2011-2012. A bronze tablet commemorating the location of a landmark tree, the Forbes oak, is found in a concrete tree stump along a path near Penn Avenue. Dedicated by the Pennsylvania Society of the Colonial Dames of America in 1914 and originally set into the actual trunk of the tree, this was originally located at 6805 Penn Avenue, across the street and approximately two city blocks east of its current location. The plaque was restored and moved to Mellon Park in 2012.

## 8. History

Mellon Park is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in the area of Landscape Architecture. Its original 11 acres was the estate of Richard Beatty Mellon and his wife, Jennie King Mellon. After the Mellons died in the 1930s, their 65-room mansion was demolished, and their children Richard King Mellon and Sarah Mellon Scaife donated the landscaped grounds to the city for a park in 1943. Additional donations and land acquisitions by the city increased Mellon Park's size to 33 acres by 1950. Landscapes and gardens designed for the Mellons in the 1910s, '20s, and '30s by Alden & Harlow, Vitale and Geiffert, and Olmsted Brothers are examples of the best private landscape design money could buy in those years.

Subsequent landscape work commissioned to adapt the Mellon estate and adjacent properties for use as a public park displays the work of notable landscape architects of the mid-20th century, including Ralph Griswold, Gilmore D. Clarke, and Simonds and Simonds, and shows sensitivity to the original landscape's historic character.

### Millionaire's Row

The Mellon estate occupied a prominent site atop the ridge of a hill near the intersection of Fifth and Penn avenues. Both of these streets originate in downtown Pittsburgh and form major thoroughfares to and through the city's east end. In the 19th century, wealthy families traveled these roads to their estates in what was then the countryside to get away from the commerce, industry, crowding, and pollution at Pittsburgh's point. Fifth Avenue from Oakland through Shadyside and Penn Avenue from Shadyside through Point Breeze became known as "Millionaires' Row," lined with the opulent mansions and elaborate estates of Pittsburgh's Gilded Age elite: the Mellons, Heinzes, Westinghouses, Carnegies, Fricks, and others.

The Mellons' estate also overlooked another important thoroughfare, Beechwood Boulevard. Beechwood Boulevard was conceived in the early 1900s by Edward Manning Bigelow, Pittsburgh's first Director of Public Works, as part of his vision for an integrated city parks system linked by green boulevards. Beechwood Boulevard was created in the 1910s and 20s from a series of pre-existing streets and widened into a fashionable automobile drive leading from Fifth Avenue near its intersection with Penn in Shadyside on a winding path along the ridge of Squirrel Hill to Greenfield. The section near the Mellon estate was originally named William Pitt Boulevard; the entire road was later renamed Beechwood after the estate of oil magnate William Frew, located adjacent to the Mellon estate. The Mellons appear not to have named their estate.

Streetcar lines were established along Fifth and Penn (among other major routes) in the 1860s and electrified in the 1890s, making the areas nearby accessible to commuters and desirable for suburban development. For a time, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Millionaires' Row along Fifth and Penn coexisted with the middle-class neighborhoods burgeoning around them. But as the 20th century progressed, Victorian mansions fell from fashion, and maintenance costs rose as the houses aged. Many of the affluent property owners along Fifth and Penn avenues decamped for newer suburban homes in upscale suburbs such as Fox Chapel and

Sewickley Heights. Unable to sell their enormous city homes and unwilling to continue to pay property taxes on them, many families demolished them. The loss of Millionaires' Row was hastened by legislation in the 1940s that rezoned Fifth Avenue to permit apartment buildings.

#### The Mellon Estate, 1910-1940

Richard Beatty Mellon (1858-1933, also known as R.B. Mellon) was the son of Judge Thomas Mellon, founder of the Mellon banking empire, and brother of Andrew Mellon, who served as Secretary of the Treasury under presidents Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover. In addition to family wealth, R.B. prospered from his investments in aluminum and coal. R.B. succeeded Andrew Mellon as president of Mellon Bank in 1921. His wife, Jennie King Mellon (1870-1938), was the daughter of another prominent Pittsburgh family whose own mansion, "Baywood," still stands on Elgin Street in the Highland Park neighborhood, about three miles away. R.B. and Jennie King Mellon had two children, Richard King (1899-1970) and Sarah Cordelia (1903-1965).

In the first decade of the 20th century, the Mellons resided at 6544 Fifth Avenue, a substantial Queen Anne Style house on a small triangle of land (Figure 1; known in later years, when it was incorporated into Mellon Park, as the Darsie property after its subsequent owner). Their immediate neighbors to the west were William and Emily Frew, whose much larger, Georgian Revival style mansion, "Beechwood," was set farther back from Fifth Avenue and overlooked it from a hilltop (Figure 2). Aspiring to a grander estate commensurate with their titan status in Pittsburgh, the Mellons purchased land from the Frews. By the publication of the 1904 Hopkins plat map, R.B. Mellon already owned eleven acres south and west of the Frews' estate. The property had been platted with a grid of streets ca. 1880, but it had not been developed. The Mellons' irregularly-configured parcel rose from Fifth Avenue at the north to a ridge adjacent to the hillock occupied by the Frew house, then sloped back down to Beechwood Boulevard at the south. It also included access from Shady Avenue to the west via a narrow strip of land south of the Lawrence Dilworth property at 1047 Shady Avenue. (Figure 3)

In 1908, the Mellons commissioned architects Alden and Harlow to design a \$3 million, 65- room, brownstone Jacobean Revival Style mansion, completed in 1911 (Figures 4-6). Alden and Harlow also designed the property, a landscape of romantic parkland, formal gardens, and architectural elements (Figure 7). Most elaborate among these was the Terraced Garden with its brick and stone balustrades and garden walls of dark tapestry brick with red terra cotta coping. The garden featured a two-tiered parterre design with decorative hedges in arabesque patterns, sculpture, and three rectangular pools. In the location of the current Walled Garden, Alden and Harlow designed a horseshoe-shaped flower garden with orthogonal paths crossing in the center, this central cross encircled by a round walk. The scroll stair, still extant, carried the north-south axis of this garden down through a mass of hillside plantings to the pedestrian path to Fifth Avenue. The Mellons also commissioned Samuel Yellin, a Philadelphia master wrought-iron artisan, to design the fencing enclosing the estate. (Figure 8)



The New York firm of Vitale and Geiffert designed the Walled Garden to replace the horseshoe-shaped garden in 1929.<sup>1</sup> (Figures 9-10) Mellon had been introduced to Vitale and Geiffert, a prominent New York-based designer of country estates and private gardens, by Arthur Vining Davis, president of ALCOA, whose Long Island estate Vitale and Geiffert had designed (with then-partner Arthur Brinckerhoff) in 1922. In his monograph on Ferruccio Vitale, R. Terry Schnadebach states that Mellon commissioned the garden as a setting for the upcoming wedding of his daughter Sarah Cordelia to Alan Scaife. Perhaps this was the intention, but it is not how the commission worked out. The Mellon-Scaife wedding took place in East Liberty Presbyterian Church in November, 1927, while Vitale and Geiffert's plans for the garden are dated 1929. Sculpture for the garden—a stone fountain and three bronze figures of young women—was provided by Edmond Amateis, a sculptor of national renown.

In 1919, the Mellons initiated a relationship with Olmsted Brothers, successor firm to that founded by America's father of landscape architecture, Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.<sup>2</sup> Olmsted, Sr. ceased active practice in 1895. The next year, his son Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and stepson John Charles Olmsted reorganized the firm under the name Olmsted Brothers, which existed until 1961. The Mellons' association with Olmsted Brothers continued intermittently through 1931 after which, with the Great Depression underway, R.B. Mellon did not request any more work from Olmsted Brothers. Most of the Olmsted firm's work consisted of updating and revising the plantings of the grounds and gardens as designed by Alden and Harlow. They also added a new feature unlike any other on the property, a Japanese-themed lily pond at a bend in the drive at the south end of the Beechwood Boulevard parkland. (Figure 11) Excellent documentation of this and the Olmsted brothers' other designs for the Mellon estate exists, though none of the actual plantings survives.

Richard Beatty Mellon died in 1933 and Jennie King Mellon in 1938. Afterward, their son Richard King Mellon lived at the estate briefly before moving to the family's country property in Ligonier. R.K. Mellon and his sister, Sarah Mellon Scaife, tried to save the house by offering its use to the Red Cross in the hope that the city would forgive the property taxes on the building if it were used for a charitable purpose. When the city refused, the Mellons stripped the house of its interior treasures and demolished it in 1940.<sup>3</sup>

#### Park Creation and Development, 1943-1951

In 1942, R.K. Mellon and Sarah Mellon Scaife donated the 11-acre Mellon estate south of Fifth Avenue to the City of Pittsburgh for use as a park. Conditions of the gift included a prohibition against through

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<sup>1</sup> The Walled Garden was featured in the December 1934 issue of *Country Life* magazine, which credited its design to Vitale and Geiffert working in collaboration with another landscape architect, Gilmore D. Clarke. Clarke was a colleague of Vitale and Geiffert's on other projects, mainly in Washington, D.C., and Geiffert brought him into the firm as a partner to complete those projects after the death of Vitale in 1933. As the firm continued to operate under the name Vitale and Geiffert, and there is no other documentation of Clarke's participation in the Mellon project in the previous decade, it seems safe to assume that *Country Life's* account was an error and reflected the composition of the firm at the time of publication in 1934.

<sup>2</sup> At the same time, R.B. Mellon also contracted the Olmsteds to work on two other properties he owned: his estate in Watch Hill, Rhode Island, and his Rolling Rock Club in Laughlinville, PA.

<sup>3</sup> The congregation of Mt. St. Peter Catholic Church in New Kensington, PA, purchased much of the granite, marble, bronze and oak doors, railings, chandeliers, and other materials and fixtures from the Mellon estate and used them in the construction of the church building, which opened in 1944. The church still stands at 100 Freeport Road in New Kensington.

roads in the park and the City's commitment to maintain the Mellons' landscaping "in so far and as long as reasonably possible and consistent with the proper said use of the property."<sup>4</sup> The *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* reported that "[t]he tract, already beautifully landscaped, will be further improved to fit it for public use."<sup>5</sup> Title was officially transferred to the City in July, 1943, and City Council's parks committee voted unanimously to name it Mellon Park in September of that year. Mellon Park opened to the public on April 30, 1944, with a ceremony which included R.K. Mellon and Sarah Mellon Scaife unveiling a plaque commemorating their gift in honor of their parents.<sup>6</sup>

Days later, Charles D. Marshall, a steel executive, and his wife, Dora Marshall, offered their adjoining estate to the city to be "used in any manner the authorities see fit."<sup>7</sup> Located at Fifth and Shady avenues, the two-acre Marshall property included a large, "swank" house (Figure 12) and carriage house, which had been vacant for a year since the Marshalls had retired to their farm near Pottstown, PA. The estate was valued at \$85,000.<sup>8</sup>

City officials differed on how to receive this gift. Councilman A. L. Wolk proposed dedicating the house to serve as a "cultural haven" for artists, musicians, performers, and students; however, his colleague, Councilman Edward Leonard, was opposed to accepting the property unless a baseball diamond could be built upon it, an impractical suggestion due to the slope of the land.<sup>9</sup> On May 24, 1944, Council's Finance Committee voted 6-3 to add the Marshall property to Mellon Park.<sup>10</sup> Wolk's faction prevailed, and the following March, the Marshall mansion opened to the public as the Arts and Crafts Center of Pittsburgh with exhibit and performance spaces on the ground floor and offices for ten member organizations on the upper floors.

Mellon Park was well-used in its first year. City Parks Superintendent Ralph Griswold reported that visitor numbers exceeded expectations and likened Mellon Park to one of the small, urbane neighborhood parks of Paris.<sup>11</sup>

In 1946, the Mellons donated three additional parcels totaling over 15 acres along Fifth, Penn, and Shady Avenues, bringing Mellon Park up to nearly 29 acres in area. The new land was to be used to create a Mellon Recreation Center. Along with the land, the Mellons donated a professionally-designed plan for the property and \$100,000 for site preparation and the purchase of equipment.

The proposed recreation area was located across Fifth Avenue from the former Mellon estate at the intersection of Penn Avenue. It consisted of two parcels bisected by Beechwood Boulevard running north-south between them. R.B. Mellon acquired the site from the estate of William Carr between 1910, when he moved into 6500 Fifth Avenue, and 1923, when city property maps show Mellon as the parcels' owner, but Mellon does not appear to have built on it. (Figure 13) By 1923, the Carr mansion had been

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<sup>4</sup> Deed, Richard King Mellon et. ui., et. al., to City of Pittsburgh (Allegheny County Recorder of Deeds: Deed Book 2895, 241.

<sup>5</sup> "Council Names 'Mellon Park'" (*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*: Sept. 10, 1943), 13.

<sup>6</sup> "City to Open Mellon Park" (*Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph*: April 25, 1944), 17.

<sup>7</sup> "Mellon Park May Expand" (*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*: May 9, 1944), 18.

<sup>8</sup> "Family Willing to Let City Talk Itself Out of Estate" (*Pittsburgh Press*: May 18, 1944), 2.

<sup>9</sup> "Wolk Urges Artist Haven" (*Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph*: May 9, 1944), 22; "Family Willing," *ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> "Marshall Gift OK-d by City" (*Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph*: May 24, 1944), 22.

<sup>11</sup> Ralph Griswold in Douglas Naylor, "City to Open Marshall Mansion," (*Pittsburgh Press*: March 16, 1945), 25.

demolished, but some outbuildings remained near Penn Avenue and were still present in 1939 (Figures 14-15). Beechwood Boulevard was laid out to cross the estate west of the mansion in the early 1900s and this segment was constructed ca. 1920.

Photographs taken by the Pittsburgh City Photographer on Fifth Avenue in 1917 show the Carr estate enclosed by a plain iron picket fence set a few feet back from the sidewalk along Fifth Avenue. Street trees were planted in a row along this verge. Ashlar gate piers marked the carriage entrance to the Carr estate just east of the alignment of Beechwood Boulevard. (Figure 16)

Plans commissioned by R.K. Mellon and Sarah Mellon Scaife in 1945 and provided with their gift called for the vacation of this segment of Beechwood Boulevard and construction of a large athletic field; a smaller turf ball field and hard-surface courts; junior and senior playgrounds; tennis courts which could be flooded in winter for ice skating; a swimming pool, diving pool, and bath house; a picnic meadow with shade trees and a shelter; a community building with offices, shower and locker rooms, public rest rooms, a refreshment concession, and an apartment for the park foreman; and parking for 75 cars. The plans were prepared for the Mellons by a team comprised of the firm of Charles M. Stotz and Edward Stotz, Jr., Architect and Engineer; Ralph Griswold, landscape architect (and, until recently, Superintendent of Pittsburgh's Bureau of Parks); James McClain, planning officer of the Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association; and Gilmore D. Clarke, consulting landscape architect.<sup>12</sup> The pool complex and community building designed by Stotz firm were not realized, but the rest of the plan was built out roughly as designed. (Figure 17) The historic fencing between the property and Fifth Avenue was removed.

The third parcel donated in 1946 was the home of Sarah Mellon Scaife and her husband, Alan Magee Scaife, at 1047 Shady Avenue. It consisted of two acres containing a house, garage, and playhouse located directly behind the Marshall property and west of the R.B. and Jennie Mellon estate. The 1904 Alden and Harlow-designed Scaife house had been designed for Lawrence Dilworth and purchased by the elder Mellons as a wedding present for their daughter Sarah in the 1920s. Although the Shingle Style house was "one of [Alden and Harlow]'s finest designs," the Mellons preferred medieval styles and had the house remodeled as a faux-half-timbered Tudor Revival.<sup>13</sup> (Figure 18) The playhouse was built for the Scaifes' children and later demolished with little record.

Pittsburgh Mayor Lawrence announced that he would accept the Mellons' latest donation and that development of the Recreation Center would begin as soon as possible. In an editorial, the *Pittsburgh Press* praised the gift and the city's prompt acceptance of it, noting the dearth of recreation facilities outside of the major East End parks (Schenley, Highland, and Frick), and that "this will provide an all-around recreation center which can be matched only by the facilities in the big parks."<sup>14</sup>

In 1948, two additional parcels totaling almost 4 acres became available to add to Mellon Park through tax delinquency. These were "Beechwood," the former William and Emily Frew estate, which adjoined Mellon Park to the east, and the adjacent former Darsie property, where the Mellons had lived before constructing their hilltop mansion. In 1948, this parcel was owned by Isla Woods. It had been foreclosed

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<sup>12</sup> "Mellons Donate Land, \$100,000 for Larger Park in East Liberty" (*Pittsburgh Press*: Jan. 27, 1946), 1.

<sup>13</sup> Margaret Henderson Floyd, *Architecture After Richardson: Regionalism Before Modernism— Longfellow, Alden, and Harlow in Boston and Pittsburgh* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 302.

<sup>14</sup> "Another Mellon Park" (*Pittsburgh Press*: Jan. 29, 1946), 10.

upon, and the City had already demolished the house.

Richard K. Mellon and Alan M. Scaife donated \$35,000 to the City develop the Frew and Darsie parcels as part of Mellon Park. The City saw clear advantages this proposal: “City Parks Director Howard B. Stewart explained that development of the additional area will provide much better access from the Fifth Avenue to the Beechwood Boulevard side of the oddly-shaped Mellon Park.”<sup>15</sup> After gaining the agreement of the two other taxing bodies (Allegheny County and the Pittsburgh Public Schools) to relinquish their rights to the levies, the City formally acquired these properties in 1951.

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Also in 1948, the Pittsburgh Garden Center dedicated its new home in the former Mellon carriage house. The Pittsburgh Garden Center formed in 1934 as the parent organization of some 75 local garden clubs from around the region. It soon outgrew its first home in a former refreshment stand outside Phipps Conservatory in Schenley Park. Upon a 1945 agreement to lease the carriage house on the former Mellon estate from the City, the Garden Club undertook renovations to provide facilities including a horticulture library and meeting rooms. Some evidence that Charles Moore Stotz was the architect for these renovations is provided by a line in a newspaper article from 1946 noting that the Garden Center’s annual Garden Market was to be held in Mellon Park in that year. The item stated that “Charles Stotz, architect, will speak on the proposed new [garden] center” to be located in the former Mellon “garage and outlying territory.”<sup>16</sup> The Garden Market the first of several large events to take place annually in Mellon Park.

The first documented alteration to the landscape after the Mellon estate became a park was the redesign of the Terraced Garden. In late 1949, the Garden Club of Allegheny County proposed the replacement of existing plantings—presumably those designed for the Mellons by the Olmsted firm—with a rose garden in the lower terrace. This opened to the public in May, 1951. In the meantime, in 1950, the City engaged the landscape architecture firm of Simonds and Simonds to prepare drawings for the restoration of the pool in the lower terrace and the reconstruction of the balustrade atop the garden wall. The result of all of this work is shown in a photograph of July, 1951 (Figure 19).

The final stage in the conversion of the Mellon and adjacent estates to a city park was completed in 1952. In accordance with a new plan for the grounds, again by Simonds and Simonds, the City removed the fences and screen plantings which had historically divided the estates; filled the foundations of the demolished Frew and Darsie houses; and modified the existing drives and walking paths as part of a circulation system designed to unify the visitor experience of the landscape across all five estates it now comprised. (Figure 20) The resulting landscape was a single expanse of sloping parkland of turf and trees rising up from Fifth Avenue. The Frew and Mellon drives were incorporated as pedestrian pathways from Fifth Avenue into the park, but the Darsie drive from Fifth Avenue and the Marshall drive from Shady were eliminated. The former service access drive to the Mellon estate from Shady Avenue was maintained as a city street called Mellon Park Road.

City workers filled in the Olmsted-designed lily pond “to prevent accidents” as early as 1951; this feature

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<sup>15</sup> Howard B. Stewart in “City Moves to Expand Mellon Park” (*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*: March 5, 1948),

<sup>16</sup> “Caledonian Market Set May 22 in Mellon Park” (*Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph*: May 2, 1946), 10.

is not shown on the 1952 Simonds and Simonds plan for the park.<sup>17</sup> Without the pond as its focal point, the landscaping around it was not maintained, but the granite frog which ornamented it was moved to a location near the entrance to the Walled Garden. What became of the pond's stork sculpture is not known.

Simonds and Simonds' 1952 plan did not address the former agricultural area of the estate between the Mellons' Fifth Avenue lawn and the former Marshall estate except to specify that the fence between it and the Fifth Avenue parkland be removed. However, for reasons not documented, the fence has remained. A 1956 aerial view of the site shows that the vegetable gardens had been converted to lawn by this time. Uphill from this, the structure known as the "chicken coop" was adapted for use as the Activity Headquarters of the Pittsburgh Council of American Youth Hostels by 1949. (Figure 21)

#### Park Development, 1953-Present

Mellon Park's subsequent development consisted of a series of small alterations to its landscape and buildings, some intentional, others resulting from deferred and diminished maintenance.

While each individual change was relatively minor, over 70 years, they had a cumulatively major effect on the historic landscape. Recent initiatives of the late 20th and early 21st centuries have sought to remedy some of the damage and neglect and to restore the intent, if not the specifics, of the park's historic landscapes.

By 1956, the formal pool in the lower terrace of the Terraced Garden had been filled in as a planting bed edged with low shrubs (Figure 22). The informal pool in the Japanese garden had also been lost, as had the vegetable gardens facing Fifth Avenue.

City officials proposed an ice skating rink for the Mellon Park Recreation Area in 1971, but the site was moved to Schenley Park due to space constraints and the opposition of Mellon Park neighbors. The Allegheny Chapter of the American Rock Garden Society created a rock garden opposite Mellon Park Road from the Garden Center in 1976.

By the 1970s, Pittsburgh's reduced population and, correspondingly, diminished tax revenues had led to drastically reduced maintenance capacity for its city parks. The formal flower beds of Mellon Park's Walled and Terraced gardens suffered accordingly. In 1977, the Western Pennsylvania Unit of the Herb Society of America began to plan to replace the rose garden in the Terraced Garden's lower terrace with a Shakespearean themed herb garden. This opened in 1980 with only a few rose plantings remaining. The Frank S. Curto Educational Gardens were dedicated in the Walled Garden in 1975, consisting of perennials, shrubs, and small trees selected "with minimum care and maintenance in mind."<sup>18</sup>

In 1979, the Garden Club of Allegheny County underwrote a master plan for Mellon Park prepared by Seay and Ridenour, Inc., landscape architects and planners. Although billed as a "restoration," the plan does not appear to have been based on historical documentation, but on the idea of developing Mellon Park as an educational botanical garden and "horticultural showplace" in keeping with the mission of

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<sup>17</sup> However, expansion of the park was again opposed by City Councilman Edward J. Leonard, who expressed a preference for housing in this location and for park planning in lower-income neighborhoods. "New Section of Mellon Park to Get Walks for Strollers" (Pittsburgh Press: May 23, 1951), 4.

<sup>18</sup> Marion Leslie, "Calico' Garden Market: Something for Everyone" (*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*: May 19, 1975), 14.

the Garden Club to promote interest in garden design.<sup>19</sup> However, the plan did call for the rehabilitation of the Terraced Garden's brick walkways and retaining walls and of the balustrades that complemented them, and it was realistic in its recommendation that the upper terrace be replanted with low-maintenance, winter-hardy materials.<sup>20</sup> This work in the Terraced Garden was accomplished with a \$63,500 grant from the Richard King Mellon Foundation later that year, and the Terraced Garden was rechristened the Jennie King Mellon Garden. The plan also recommended several herb gardens, a rose garden, a chrysanthemum cut flower garden, several small demonstration gardens, a formal shrub garden, and strategic screen plantings near parking areas.<sup>21</sup>

The Pittsburgh Center for the Arts (formerly Arts and Crafts Center) announced an expansion in 1981. The architect was The Design Alliance, which proposed a 22,000 square foot gallery built into the hillside between the Marshall and Scaife buildings with windows facing Fifth Avenue. The roof of underground gallery was to be planted as a garden and incorporate a small coffee shop and restaurant. The idea was reiterated in 1985, but adequate funds were never raised. In 1989-1990, renovations to the Marshall and Scaife buildings were completed and opened to the public: a new lobby, gallery space, and sales space for the arts center in the Marshall building, and a classroom addition and kiln shed at the Scaife house. The underground gallery idea was realized in more modest form, as an expansion of the house's original front terrace with its basement expanded into a gallery and event space below.

In 1982, the Pittsburgh Garden Center announced an expansion of its own, a \$252,000 wing by the architectural firm of Wilkins and Heaton, along with renovation of its auditorium, library, and gift shop. Ground was broken May of that year for the addition, which extended the garden center eastward from the Mellon garage and added a terrace.

In the 1990s, the City and its tenants in Mellon Park faced criticism for their neglect and misuse of the park's historic landscape and architectural features. Headlines such as "Signs of Decay: Mellon Park Cracks, Crumbles, and Creeps Toward Ruin"<sup>22</sup> called attention to the extent of the damage left in the wake of years of inadequate budget and deferred maintenance, while the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts attracted public ire over art installations on its grounds that were antithetical to the preservation of their historic character.<sup>23</sup>

In response, the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and the R.K. Mellon Foundation assembled a team of landscape historians, landscape architects, and planners to produce "Mellon Park: A Preservation and Management Plan" in 1999-2000. While this document addressed only the former Mellon estate portion of Mellon Park, minus the agricultural area, it did an excellent job of documenting the estate's historic periods of landscape design and made important initial steps toward planning to reconcile their historic character with the present heavy use demands on them.

Mellon Park's tennis courts were resurfaced and covered with a dome to allow for year-round play in 2002. The dome was initially supposed to be seasonal, but it is no longer taken down.

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<sup>19</sup> "Mellon Park to be Urban 'Showplace'" (Pittsburgh Press: April 20, 1979), 48.

<sup>20</sup> "Mellon Park Restoration Funded," (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette: Nov. 29, 1979), 23.

<sup>21</sup> Jane Shaw, "\$200,000 Plan Unveiled to Beautify Mellon Park," (Pittsburgh Post-Gazette: April 19, 1979), 18.



In 2009, the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy performed a rehabilitation of the Walled Garden. Work included restoration of the garden's walls, paths, terraces, and fountain; replanting of the beds with regard to the intent of historic plantings but suitable to modern park maintenance capacity; and installation of large decorative urns on inscribed stone bases alongside the stairs at the eastern entrance to the garden. The urns mimic those seen in 1930s period photographs of the garden. The project also incorporated a more subtle, but permanent, public art installation, a memorial to Ann Katherine Seamans by artist Janet Zweig. The installation consists of fiberoptic lights installed at grade in the central lawn in the formation of the stars on the date of Ms. Seamans' birth. It is prominently visible only at night and was designed to be minimally intrusive to the historic garden landscape.

## 9. Significance

1. *Its location as a site of a significant historic or prehistoric event or activity*  
*This site does not meet this Criterion.*
2. *Its identification with a person or persons who significantly contributed to the cultural, historic, architectural, archaeological, or related aspects of the development of the City of Pittsburgh, State of Pennsylvania, Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States;*  
*This site does not meet this Criterion.*
3. Its exemplification of an architectural type, style or design distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship;

Mellon Park is an excellent example of Landscape Architecture (National Register under Criterion C). Its period of significance is 1910-1952. The period of significance begins in the year that the Mellon estate was built to the design of Alden and Harlow and ends in the year that the various private estates comprising Mellon Park were unified by the City (working from a plan by Simonds and Simonds) as a single public landscape. Features of Mellon Park from 1910-1931 exemplify the best private landscape design from that period that money could buy. In the 1940s and 50s, a new generation of landscape architects worked with Pittsburgh Parks officials to adapt this and adjacent private estates, once enjoyed by a wealthy few, to a public park accessible to all.

Three phases of design must be examined for their contribution to Mellon Park's landscape significance. The first is the design of the original estate by Alden and Harlow and modified by Olmsted Brothers, 1910-1931. The Walled Garden of 1929 by Vitale and Geiffert is discussed separately as it is a distinctive and singularly important design. The third period consists of the work of a select cohort of landscape architects retained by the Mellons and by the City to transition the Mellon estate and adjacent properties, including that across Fifth Avenue, to its new function as public parkland.

*The Mellon Estate, 1910-1931:* The decades just before and after the turn of the 20th century were the pinnacle of private landscape design in the United States. The profession of landscape architecture had initially flourished in the creation of public parks on the model of New York's Central Park (1858). In the late 19th century, a growing caste of ultra-wealthy titans of business and industry increasingly sought the services of landscape architects to design their private estates. The landscape design for Biltmore, George W. Vanderbilt's estate outside of Asheville, North Carolina, was very influential as a model for the planning and design of a large, multi-faceted estate, not just ornamental gardens. The wealth of these clients also accompanied a lifestyle of lavish entertaining. Their mansions were designed to include large halls and ballrooms, and their owners also wanted places to entertain out-of-doors.

In Pittsburgh, bankers and magnates in oil, steel, coal, and coke bought large, undeveloped properties on the verdant outskirts of the city, where the stretch of Fifth and Penn avenues between Oakland and Point Breeze became established as Millionaire's Row. There, Pittsburgh's elite commissioned opulent mansions from the best-known architects of the day and brought skilled craftspeople from Europe to construct and finish them. For the grounds around them, they sought designers of commensurate skill to sculpt scenic landscapes and elegant gardens. In the words of Pittsburgh architectural historian James D. Van Trump, the area was "a veritable parade of wealth in brick and stone, in rare trees and glamorous

flowers. There never was in Pittsburgh such visual luxury, nor will there ever be again.”<sup>22</sup>

In this contest of displays of wealth through design, Richard Beatty Mellon and Jennie King Mellon moved up, literally. Their first house was a large but not baronial Queen Anne tucked in an awkward wedge of property at the foot of their neighbors William and Emily Frew’s hilltop estate facing Fifth Avenue. A historic photograph (Figure 1) shows the landscape around it to have consisted predominantly of scattered trees in lawn; there is no evidence of its having been professionally designed. In the early 1900s, the Mellons assembled property on the other side of the Frews’ estate until their holdings spanned the adjacent hilltop and touched Fifth Avenue, Beechwood Boulevard, and Shady Avenue. In 1908, they engaged Alden and Harlow, among the leading architects of the time serving Pittsburgh’s industrial elite, to design a 65-room mansion and, around it, a series of landscape features which amounted to a private park.

Alden and Harlow were not landscape designers, *per se*, but they provided an elegant site plan and architectural features which helped organize the landscape and define areas of different uses and levels of formality. They designed the Mellons’ house with an angled plan to relate to both Fifth Avenue and Beechwood Boulevard and provided vehicular and pedestrian access from each. The hillsides sloping down to each of these streets from the house site were treated as pastoral parkland, with specimen trees set in broad lawns which served as a transition and a buffer between the house and the street. Fifth Avenue was clearly intended as the estate’s primary frontage, as signified by the especially elaborate treatment of the fencing and the central location of the drive. This drive entered through an elaborate wrought-iron gate and curved to the east as it climbed through the Mellons’ parklike front yard to its porte cochere. The scroll stair gave pedestrians entering from Fifth Avenue a more elegant alternative to hiking up and down the steepest slope of the hillside to the house. On the Beechwood side, the drive hugged the edge of the property, suggesting that an uninterrupted view from the Terraced Garden over the tree-studded lawn to Beechwood Boulevard was prized. The absence of any historic planting between the lower margin of the terrace and the street also suggests that the Mellons and their architects wished to emphasize the view from Beechwood Boulevard up to the house on its hilltop: “such a vista must have conveyed the sensations of might, grandeur, and remoteness.”<sup>23</sup>

Alden and Harlow designed the Terraced Garden itself along with the house; it is one of the original features of the site. Its architectural qualities attest that it was designed to serve as a sort of outdoor room, a direct extension of the house into the landscape.<sup>24</sup> The Mellon property barely touched Shady Avenue due to the intervening Marshall and Dilworth (later Scaife) properties, so Alden and Harlow designed this connection to provide service access. Even this was treated to an elegant brick and wrought iron portal whose design integrated it into the rest of the estate. Along with Alden and Harlow’s site plan, the Terraced Garden, tapestry brick walls, and scroll stair, the Mellon estate fencing that survives from its earliest period is a significant character-defining feature. For the boundaries of their estate at its public faces, the Mellons would not be satisfied with simple wrought-iron pickets such as characterized nearby estates along Fifth Avenue.

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<sup>22</sup> Mellon Park, PA Historic Resource Survey Form (Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission: 1980), 2.

<sup>23</sup> “Mellon Park Preservation and Management Plan,” prepared for Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and R.K. Mellon Foundation by LANDSCAPES, Barry Hannegan (Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation), Charles E. Beveridge, Ph.D. (Frederick Law Olmsted Papers), Susan Rademacher (Louisville Olmsted Parks Conservancy, Inc.), and Tupper Thomas (Prospect Park Alliance), 1.

<sup>24</sup> “Mellon Park Preservation and Management Plan,” 31.

Designed by the Philadelphia forge of Samuel Yellin, the Mellon estate fences and gates are the works of a master meant not only for the enjoyment of the family in residence but to signify their wealth and taste to those looking in from outside. The City wisely retained these when adapting the site for use as a park. Their quality far surpasses that of even the finest publicly- provided park infrastructure, serving as a reminder of Mellon Park's Gilded Age origins.

An aspect of the Mellon estate which has received little previous attention is its agricultural area, located between the Walled Garden and the Marshall estate to the west. Like Biltmore, which included a model farm operated on scientific principles, on a smaller scale the Mellon estate set aside property for the cultivation of produce and, possibly, poultry. Exactly how this small urban farm was planned, planted, and used is not well understood through documentation currently available. The fence between the agricultural area and Mellon's Fifth Avenue lawn indicates that the Mellons did not consider their vegetable garden an extension of their private pleasure ground and desired separation between these distinctive landscape functions. Yet, the Mellons chose not to tuck their agricultural appurtenances out of sight near the service area of their estate, but to display them prominently on their property's most public face, Fifth Avenue. And the structure historically known as the chicken coop, while simple, is not completely utilitarian in design. It appears to date from early in the estate's existence, possibly from its construction ca. 1910.

Whether it was designed by Alden and Harlow is not known. But details such as its multi-pane glazed windows and moulded wood cornice, for example, suggest that the Mellons took pride in the structure and in its function. It may have originally housed animals, but after the Mellons vacated the estate, it was considered fit for offices of the staff of the Pittsburgh Council of American Youth Hostels.

The Mellon estate's original site plan and most of its architectural features were incorporated whole into Mellon Park so that, even without a trace of the lost Mellon house itself, the overall design of the Mellon estate and its relationship to the surrounding neighborhood are preserved.

The 1910 landscape features of Mellon Park reflect the influences of various trends in private landscape design which emerged at different times, and from different traditions, to co-exist with one another in the early 20th century. The pioneer of landscape architecture in America, Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., promoted a romantic, picturesque style characterized by winding paths, rugged stonework, and naturalistic massing of plants and stands of trees intended to represent "rus in urb," or nature in the city. Olmsted and his partner, Calvert Vaux, introduced this style on an impressive scale in their design for New York's Central Park in 1858. Most metropolitan areas subsequently embraced Olmsted's style (and many hired Olmsted himself, if they could) in designing their own public parklands based on Central Park's model in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Olmsted became a sought-after designer for private estates as well—he worked on Biltmore—and many local landscape architects nationwide imitated his style. While not landscape architects themselves, Alden and Harlow would certainly have been aware of Olmsted. Their romantic, pastoral compositions of the Fifth Avenue and Beechwood Boulevard hillsides, with their sloping lawns, artfully planted trees, and winding paths and drives, evince a general, Olmsted-influenced, park-like treatment of these expansive areas.

Alden and Harlow confined formal gardens to discrete, smaller areas with direct relationships to the house they designed. These gardens were indebted to a very different landscape tradition, one based on the Renaissance-era gardens of Italy. A cohort of Americans who traveled to Italy and visited, studied, and restored its Renaissance-period gardens in the late 19th century popularized a fashion for similar garden design at home. Books by two of them, *Italian Gardens* (1894) by landscape architect Charles Platt and *Italian Villas and their Gardens* (1904) by novelist Edith Wharton, who was also an avid traveler and home and garden designer, were “found in the country’s best homes.”<sup>25</sup> At around the same time, the 1893 World Columbian Exposition in Chicago revived enthusiasm among design practitioners and clients alike for formal, symmetrical, neoclassical designs in buildings and landscapes.

Alden and Harlow’s formal, balanced, symmetrical Terraced Garden is indicative of this Italian-inspired, neoclassical trend. As architects, Alden and Harlow were accomplished at creating garden spaces which functioned as extensions of the house’s architecture into the landscape, as Italian gardens did. The plantings of the Terraced Garden have varied under different landscape designers, fashions, user demands, and maintenance programs over the years, but the garden’s essential character as designed by Alden and Harlow has continued to define it as almost a vestige of the lost house itself. The garden’s two formal “rooms,” one upper and one lower, were centered on axis with the library of the house and so integrally related to the house’s plan.<sup>26</sup> The terraced design worked with the site’s sloping topography. As one descended toward Beechwood Boulevard, one would have views upward to the house, looming over the garden on its hilltop, and below, across the sweep of the hillside lawn. The walls of dark red brick laid in English bond with contrasting white mortar establish its relationship to other outdoor walls throughout the estate. They give the garden a sense of enclosure without being so high that one cannot see over them to the park-like grounds beyond. At key points, balustrades maintain the sense of enclosure while opening the views. A lush variety of plants punctuated by pools of still water originally provided a rich tapestry of color and texture, but even without the pools and with diminished plantings, the essential geometry of the beds and design of the Terraced Garden’s outdoor rooms remains.

Interestingly, the Mellons chose to engage the Olmsted Brothers, who continued their father’s tradition of naturalistic romanticism, to redesign this formal garden in 1919. Alden and Harlow had delivered the architecture of the Terraced Garden ca. 1910, but the planting had been left to the

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<sup>25</sup> R. Terry Schnadelbach, Ferruccio Vitale: Landscape Architect of the Country Place Era (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2001), 20.

<sup>26</sup> “Mellon Park Preservation and Management Plan,” 1.

Mellons' estate gardener, Ernest Guter. After almost a decade, the family desired a more professional garden plan. The signature Olmsted approach was antithetical to the neoclassical design of the garden, but the Olmsted firm had great cachet, and moreover was able to work with the tastes of their clientele. R.B. and Jennie Mellon would have known them from their earlier work for William Larimer Mellon, older brother to R.B. and Andrew.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, in 1919, Andrew Mellon also hired Olmsted Brothers to design the landscape of a house he purchased and enlarged on Woodland Road.<sup>28</sup>

Percival Gallagher, one of two men other than the Olmsted brothers, Frederick, Jr., and John Charles, to become a partner in the firm prior to 1920, appears to have been the main designer assigned to the R.B. Mellon project. Gallagher suggested several changes to the garden's hardscape which were not made, such as replacing the concrete steps and brick walks with flagstone; altering the configuration of walks and planting beds in the upper terrace; and painting the walls' red terra cotta coping a different color. What, if any, of Gallagher's planting suggestions were followed is not known.

In 1931, Olmsted Brothers drew a plan that depicts the Mellon estate's landscape as it appeared then (Figure 23). This includes the locations of specimen trees they specified for the Fifth Avenue and Beechwood Boulevard lawns and their design for a lily pond and surrounding landscape near the southern end of the Beechwood Boulevard parkland. They also drew detailed planting plans for these areas, which were executed. In the 2000 plan for Mellon Park, landscape historian Barry Hannegan derived the following description of the lily pond site from those plans:

The pool and surrounding plantings provide[d] a garden scale landscape and a destination in this broader parkland of trees in lawn. Paths stepped down from the drive [up to the house site from Beechwood Boulevard], through rocks and naturalistic plantings to circle the pond and cross it on a small, arched bridge. The design incorporated several existing trees providing a landscape of dappled light.<sup>29</sup>

The pond was surrounded by azaleas, ferns, and other species and ornamented with a carved granite frog and bronze stork. On the pond site today, only some of the large rocks from this

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<sup>27</sup> William Larimer Mellon's estate, "Ben Elm," stood at the Murdoch Street entrance to Schenley Park. Olmsted Brothers designed its romantic landscape in 1901-1902. The house was demolished and the estate subdivided into house lots in the 1950s. Stone walls along the property line and stairs down to Forbes Avenue are all that remain from the Olmsted design.

<sup>28</sup> This house and its grounds have been incorporated into the campus of Chatham University. The house is now the Mellon Center and the 32-acre Chatham Arboretum includes parts of the landscape.

<sup>29</sup> "Mellon Park Preservation and Management Plan," 34.

landscape vignette remain. All of the rest of the Olmsted firm's landscape work on the Mellon estate has disappeared. However, the areas where they occurred were not assigned to other uses in the transition from private estate to public park. The availability of these sites, along with the remarkable detail of Olmsted's historic plans for them, makes the possibility of restoration of these landscape designs possible.<sup>30</sup>

*The Walled Garden, 1929:* Olmsted Brothers was still under contract to the Mellons in the late 1920s, when the family commissioned the Walled Garden. The decision to engage a very different firm, Vitale and Geiffert, for this project may signify the Mellons' preference for more formal, traditional garden design and acknowledgement that the Olmsted's strengths lay elsewhere.

Vitale and Geiffert was a New York-based landscape architecture firm which made its reputation in the design of private estates for wealthy clients, including Pierre DuPont, Isaac and Solomon Guggenheim, Benjamin Moore, and Conde Nast.<sup>31</sup> Italian-born Ferruccio Vitale (1875-1933) grew up in and around Renaissance-era architecture and gardens near Florence. Trained as an engineer, he emigrated to the United States as a military attache in 1898 and became the protege of George F. Pentacost, Jr., a landscape architect and partner (with Samuel Parson, Jr.) in the New York firm of Parsons and Pentacost. Pentacost and Vitale formed their own partnership in 1905.

Thereafter, Vitale's practice was fluid. He sometimes practiced independently and readily formed new partnerships and associations as suited his career. He partnered with former apprentices Arthur Brinckerhoff and Alfred Geiffert, Jr., in 1917, forming Vitale, Brinckerhoff, and Geiffert. After Brinckerhoff withdrew in 1924, Vitale and Geiffert continued to practice together under the old name until 1932. Geiffert then carried on the practice under the name of Vitale and Geiffert after Vitale's death in 1933.<sup>32</sup> "Together, Vitale and Geiffert were complementary and well suited to each other. Their combined talents produced the best of Vitale's works."<sup>33</sup>

Among these best works were the Walled Garden on the Mellon estate. Geiffert's 1957 obituary in the *New York Times* mentioned the firm's work on the Mellon estate in the same sentence as its estate design for John D. Rockefeller III.<sup>34</sup> Vitale and Geiffert accepted civic commissions during the Great Depression, but their work in the 1910s and '20s was a departure from that of other landscape architects of the time, who sought public works commissions to first make their reputations in the

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<sup>30</sup> "Mellon Park Preservation and Management Plan," 6

<sup>31</sup> Charles A. Birnbaum and Robin S. Karson, *Pioneers of American Landscape Design* (New York: McGraw Hill, 2000), 417-418.

<sup>32</sup> Birnbaum and Karson, 417-418; Schnadelbach, 34-35.

<sup>33</sup> Schnadelbach, 34.

<sup>34</sup> "Alfred Geiffert, Garden Designer" (*New York Times*: August 27, 1957), 29.

public sector.<sup>37</sup>

Vitale and Geiffert practiced landscape architecture and garden design in a neoclassical idiom that contrasted with the picturesque romanticism of Olmsted and his followers. Their design methodology was based on the fine arts and on principles of architectural composition: space, volume, plane, axis, point, and counterpoint. They did not copy or derive their designs from historic gardens, but created formal spaces with informal plantings that were abstract versions of their classical prototypes. Their work became more simplified, modern and abstracted over time.<sup>35</sup>

Vitale and Geiffert's gardens were structured, often sunken or enclosed, with broad terraces of grass and steps at level changes. They often designed "serial spaces," horizontal compositions of interconnected or interdependent spaces that flowed from one to another. Within this scheme, spaces of various scales were designed to be comfortable for one person, for a couple, or for a large garden party.<sup>36</sup> These they handled architecturally in clearly defined terraces separated by walls or stairs.<sup>37</sup> Vitale said that in garden design, he sought to create a sense of seclusion: "A garden ought to be an intimate, personal, sheltered spot, not a public parade ground."<sup>38</sup>

All of Vitale and Geiffert's design signatures can be found in the Walled Garden of the Mellon estate, completed near the end of their partnership (Vitale died in 1933). Its Gothic west wall reflects the Mellons' preference for a medieval design vocabulary such as defined their house and their renovations to the Scaife house. At the opposite end, the garden now opens to the larger landscape, but the bay window of R.B. Mellon's study originally related that end to the house.

The fountain by sculptor Edmond Amateis in front of the west wall is the garden's focal point and defines its strong central axis along its broad grassy terrace. The fountain's whimsical forms—a ring of chubby children playing musical instruments and the heads of fish and turtles—seem to make a statement that the garden, though formal, is meant for enjoyment rather than serious contemplation. Along both sides of the central terrace, in parallel, are the serial spaces: the north and south terraces, defined by walls. Like the Terraced Garden, the Walled Garden was a well-defined space, intended to extend the architecture of the house out into the landscape.<sup>39</sup> Current

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<sup>35</sup> Schnadelbach, 36.

<sup>36</sup> Schnadelbach, 52.

<sup>37</sup> Schnadelbach, preface, 31-34.

<sup>38</sup> Ferruccio Vitale, in Agnes Edwards, "Ferruccio Vitale's Gardens," *House Beautiful* vol. 40 (June 1916), 15. In Schnadelbach, 32.

<sup>39</sup> "Mellon Park Preservation and Management Plan," 32.



plantings of lilies and other perennials in beds also planted with single trees and bordered with low hedges are reflective of those originally designed by Vitale and Geiffert.

*The Park Landscape, 1946-1952:* The final significant landscape campaign occurred between 1946 and 1952 and served to transition the Mellon estate and other former private properties to their new, combined function as a public park.

The Mellons' gift of the former Carr estate north of Fifth Avenue explicitly for a recreation area may have been a direct response to the 1944 conflict over the use of the Marshall property, in which some city council members voted to turn down the gift if it wasn't used for recreational purposes. As seen in the deed restrictions governing the Mellons' original gift of their parents' estate, preservation of its landscape qualities was important to them. Concentration of the Mellon Park Recreation Area north of Fifth Avenue seems to have been a deliberate strategy to address the public—and political—desire for recreational facilities while keeping them from impacting the landscape design of the former estate. Writing about Mellon Park in 1960, a journalist stated directly, "To preserve the beauty of the estate, to keep it intact as a place of meditation and sylvan retreat, the recreation facilities are separated to the north by Fifth Avenue."<sup>40</sup>

The Mellons' desire to control the outcome of their donation of the former Carr estate is shown by the fact that they provided a landscape plan along with it, plus seed funds so that the tract's development could begin without delay. They selected a design team of respected, seasoned professionals: Charles M. Stotz and Edward Stotz, Jr., Architect and Engineer; Ralph Griswold, landscape architect; James McClain, planning officer of the Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association; and Gilmore D. Clarke, consulting landscape architect. Each brought particular and relevant expertise.

Charles M. Stotz and Edward Stotz, Jr., Architect and Engineer, was the successor firm to that of Edward Stotz, a successful Pittsburgh architect who designed (among other commissions) Schenley High School and the Oakmont Country Club house. His son Charles Moore Stotz entered the firm in 1923, and Charles and his brother, Edward, Jr., took it over from their father and renamed it in 1936. Charles M. Stotz developed an interest in architectural history and historic preservation in the 1930s when he served as chairman of the Western Pennsylvania Architectural Survey and of the Western Pennsylvania section of the Historic American Buildings Survey. The publication of his survey work, *The Early Architecture of Western Pennsylvania* (1936), is a classic reference. Charles Stotz became one of the first architects in the country to develop a specialty in the preservation and restoration of

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<sup>40</sup> William Faust, "The First Mellon Park" (*Pittsburgh Press*: Sept. 4, 1960), 66.

historic buildings,<sup>41</sup> which at the time was regarded to mean those built in the 18th and early 19th centuries. Although there were no such buildings to preserve on the Mellon Recreation Area site, Charles Stotz was familiar with Mellon Park due to his work for the Pittsburgh Garden Center in the former Mellon garage. His sensitivity to historic contexts would have been an asset, as would the engineering expertise of his brother and partner, Edward, Jr.

For the Recreation Area, the Stotz firm was engaged to design the pool, bathhouse, and community building. A perspective rendering by Charles M. Stotz of these features, printed in the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* in January, 1946, shows the buildings connected by a long colonnade at one end of the pool. The pool is shown in two parts—a small half-moon shaped wading pool at one end and a larger rectangular swimming pool with a fountain—in a sunken area of the site surrounded by walls and steps which also served as seating. (Figure 24) These features were not built. They may have been too expensive, and/or this ambitious program may have exceeded the capacity of the park area for which it was planned.

Ralph Esty Griswold (1894-1981) was an accomplished landscape architect who had just stepped down as superintendent of the Pittsburgh Bureau of Parks in 1945 when the Mellons engaged him to work on the Recreation Area design. He had studied landscape architecture at Cornell and, under Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., for three years in Rome. Griswold was the first professional landscape architect hired by the City as an agency director. He oversaw the City's park development from 1934-1945 and was a strong advocate for the city park system, winning WPA funds to improve their infrastructure in lasting and beautiful ways during the Great Depression. Griswold also worked successfully to integrate active recreational amenities, such as ball courts and swimming pools, into city parks that had been planned in the 19th century for more genteel, passive recreation. In his private practice, which bookended his public service, Griswold designed the landscapes at Chatham Village in the 1930s and Point State Park in the 1950s. As these commissions show, Griswold was capable of both traditional, picturesque and more modern, abstracted design approaches. Doubtless his recent experience with Pittsburgh's park department made him a valuable liaison to the city administration, in addition to his demonstrated landscape design skills.

James McClain was a former staff member of the Pittsburgh City Planning Department who moved to a new position as administrative secretary of the Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association in 1945. Founded in 1918 and active through the 1960s, the Pittsburgh Regional Planning Association was a precursor to the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, which formed in 1944 to coordinate civic, regional, federal, and private efforts to clean Pittsburgh's air and water and modernize its infrastructure through urban renewal. Richard King Mellon was the Planning

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<sup>41</sup> "Charles Morse Stotz, Leader in Architectural Restoration" (New York Times: March 9, 1985), 16.

Association's president in the 1940s. Mellon's appointment of McClain to the design team for the Mellon Recreation Area suggests that he saw Mellon Park as an asset, along with a clean, modern, revitalized downtown, that would help ensure the future of the region. The photographic record of the Allegheny Conference supports this idea. During the early 1960s, James McClain photographed many urban renewal sites for the Allegheny Conference: among them were the tennis courts in the Mellon Park Recreation Area. (Figure 25) McClain would have provided a direct link between the Recreation Area's design and its benefactors, R.K. Mellon and Sarah Mellon Scaife. He also would have been connected to Ralph Griswold as a result of his previous position in city government.

The fourth member of the Mellon Park Recreation Area team, listed as consulting landscape architect, was Gilmore D. Clarke. Clarke was a New York landscape architect and associate of Vitale and Geiffert who briefly became a partner in that firm after Vitale's death in 1933. Unlike Vitale and Geiffert, Clarke had a robust career in public works. He was Chairman of the National Commission on Fine Arts, established to advise Congress on art and architecture in the capital, from 1937-1950, and he worked on the design of the National Mall. In 1939, Clarke formed a long-lasting partnership with one of his employees, Michael Rapuano. Clarke and Rapuano worked with New York Parks Commissioner Robert Moses to design the public spaces around most of the parkways, housing projects, and parks that Moses planned. Projects with which the Mellons would have been familiar in 1945 included the restoration of Bryant Park (1930), the Conservatory Garden in Central Park (1937), and the New York World's Fair of 1939. Clarke and Rapuano also designed or redesigned numerous parks and playgrounds in New York during the Great Depression.<sup>42</sup> The connection to Vitale and Geiffert, coupled with Clarke's extensive experience designing public landscapes and urban recreation areas, likely made Clarke a desirable addition to the team the Mellons assembled to design the Recreation Area.

Exactly how the site planning and landscape design work for the Mellon Park Recreation Area was distributed among Griswold, McClain, and Clarke is not documented. However, their collaboration resulted in an efficient arrangement of a wide variety of passive and active functions in close proximity to one another without loss of the spacious feeling of a park. The Mellon Park Recreation Area is generally regarded as an addendum to the parkland created from the former Mellon and neighbor estates across Fifth Avenue: useful, but without historical or design significance. However, the Recreation Area has its own design genius, unsurprising considering the magnitude of talent employed to produce it.

Griswold, McClain, and Clarke worked cleverly with what they were given: a triangular site almost, but not quite, evenly bisected by Beechwood Boulevard. By calling for the vacation of the northern

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<sup>42</sup> "Clarke and Rapuano," The Cultural Landscape Foundation: <https://tclf.org/pioneer/clarke-rapuano>. Retrieved June 26, 2020.

half of the boulevard, the designers maintained existing vehicular access to the site; avoided disruptive through traffic; and gained ground already the correct size and configuration for a ball field in the right angle at the site's north. A berm separates the field from passive uses to the southeast, and the field's curved outfield softens the triangle's harsh geometry. Building on this, curvilinear paths and a parkland landscape of trees in softly rolling lawn create a zone for strolling, picnicking, and other passive uses in the southeastern section of the triangle. As this is the part of the property where the Carr house stood, it is likely that the landscape architects of the 1940s made use of existing topography and trees to mirror the pastoral character of the estate lawns across Fifth Avenue.

The extant segment of Beechwood Boulevard divides this passive park zone clearly from the active uses in the triangle's southwest corner, in addition to providing vehicular access and parking. The playground, basketball, and tennis courts along Fifth Avenue are buffered from the busy street by another berm, which places them at a lower grade than the cartway. Two smaller athletic fields are nestled between the Fifth Avenue zone and the larger field to the north in the part of the site where the 1945 plans placed Stotz's pool, bathhouse, and community building.

The use of this area as additional ball fields helps preserve a spacious, open feeling to the landscape while allowing for intensive recreational use. A tree-lined walkway provides access to all of the features in the southeast zone and to the smaller access path at the perimeter of the site.

The City commenced its final design development for Mellon Park in 1951 upon taking title of the former Frew and Darsie estates. The Department of Parks and Recreation hired Simonds and Simonds, an up-and-coming firm, to draw up plans to unify these new parcels with the existing park landscape.

Simonds and Simonds was founded by John Ormsbee Simonds and his brother, Philip, in 1939. John Simonds earned a Masters in Landscape Architecture from Harvard University in 1938 (Philip ran the business side of the partnership). While at Harvard, John Simonds aligned himself with the teachings of his professor Walter Gropius, former head of the Bauhaus in Europe.

Simonds' skill with modernism in landscape design positioned him and his firm to flourish during the post-World War II boom and the Pittsburgh Renaissance, during which downtown Pittsburgh was revitalized from a polluted, industrial work place to a modern city of new corporate skyscrapers, plazas, and parks. Simonds and Simonds received many city park commissions, large and small, in Pittsburgh during the 1950s and '60s. Their magnum opus, Mellon Square Park, in downtown Pittsburgh was—like Mellon Park in the east end—closely tied to the urban renewal vision of Richard King Mellon. Compared to Mellon Square, Simonds and Simonds' work on Mellon Park was

early and relatively minor in scope. However, the firm's interventions in Mellon Park at the beginning of the 1950s help define its landscape to the present.

Simonds and Simonds' first job in Mellon Park, in 1950, was to prepare drawings for the restoration of the pool in the lower terrace of the Terraced Garden and the reconstruction of the balustrade atop the garden wall. The familiarity with the park gained in this small, straightforward job may have helped Simonds and Simonds win the contract for integrating the Frew and Darsie properties the next year.

Tasked with expanding the public park by bringing new, formerly private properties into its landscape, Simonds and Simonds called for the removal of all remains of the demolished Frew and Darsie houses as well as the fencing and landscape screening that had existed between them and the Mellon estate. Otherwise, the landscapes around the houses appear to have been left much as they were, implying that there were no significant designed landscape features, such as formal gardens, on the Frew and Darsie properties to either remove or preserve. Most significantly, Simonds and Simonds addressed pedestrian circulation around Mellon Park. The Mellon, Frew, and Darsie estates had historically each had its own vehicular drive off of Fifth Avenue but, being separate properties, did not have paths that interconnected them. Simonds and Simonds designated the Mellon and Frew drives as the primary walking paths into the park from Fifth Avenue and altered their alignments slightly to branch into new, subsidiary walkways that connected the park's various focal features: the Mellon house site, the Walled Garden, and the Terraced Garden. The Frew drive received a new pedestrian connection to the Mellon house site, which flowed into the path up along the northern edge of the Beechwood Boulevard parkland. By eliminating the Darsie drive altogether, Simonds and Simonds relegated that site to a somewhat secluded status as a corner lowland of the park. The overall result was a landscape seamlessly integrated to seem like a continuation of the Mellons' Fifth Avenue and Beechwood Boulevard lawns. Its circulation system served the entire park and diminished the previous experience of individual landscape units, each connected to Fifth Avenue.

4. *Its identification as the work of an architect, designer, engineer, or builder whose individual work is significant in the history of development of the City of Pittsburgh, the State of Pennsylvania, the Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States;*  
*This site may meet this Criterion.*
  
5. *Its exemplification of important planning and urban design techniques distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design or detail;*  
*This site does not meet this Criterion.*

6. *Its location as a site of an important archaeological resource;*  
*This site does not meet this Criterion.*
7. *Its association with important cultural or social aspects or events in the history of the City of Pittsburgh, the State of Pennsylvania, the Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States*  
*This site does not meet this Criterion.*
8. *Its exemplification of a pattern of neighborhood development or settlement significant to the cultural history or traditions of the City, whose components may lack individual distinction*  
*This site does not meet this Criterion.*
9. *Its representation of a cultural, historic, architectural, archeological, or related theme expressed through distinctive areas, properties, sites, structures, or objects that may or may not be contiguous*  
*This site does not meet this Criterion.*
10. *Its unique location and distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City of Pittsburgh*  
*This site may meet this Criterion.*

## 10. Integrity

Mellon Park retains integrity of location, setting, design, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association.

Its location is the same as the original Mellon estate donated to the City in 1943 and includes all other subsequent lands acquired by the City to expand the park during its period of significance. The park also has strong integrity of setting amid the streetcar suburb neighborhoods of Shadyside, Point Breeze, and Squirrel Hill, which display a strong late 19th-early 20th century character.

The park's integrity of design, workmanship, and materials are evident in the extensive remnants of the historic gardens and grounds associated with the Mellon estate and later revisions to unify it with adjacent former private estates into one coherent park landscape. Many important landscape architects, including Vitale and Geiffert, Olmsted Brothers, Ralph Griswold, Gilmore

D. Clarke, and Simonds and Simonds contributed to these landscapes during the first half of the 20th century, and their designs are largely still evident. Original estate designer Alden and Harlow's architectural contributions to the landscape are strongly represented by the Terraced Garden and the scroll stair above Fifth Avenue. Sculpture designed specifically for the Walled Garden by Edmond Amateis and an intact system of wrought iron fencing throughout the former Mellon grounds by Samuel Yellin are further examples of the excellence of materials, design, and workmanship which were preserved in the Mellon estate's conversion to public parkland.

An early decision to concentrate the park's recreational facilities in a well-designed complex north of Fifth Avenue has freed the historic former estate grounds from the pressure to provide these functions. Thus the various original characters of the park landscape, from formal to pastoral to recreational, have been preserved, and Mellon Park retains integrity of feeling and association both as a luxurious private estate and as a public landscape dedicated to retreat and recreation.

**Mellon Park**  
**Historic Nomination Form**  
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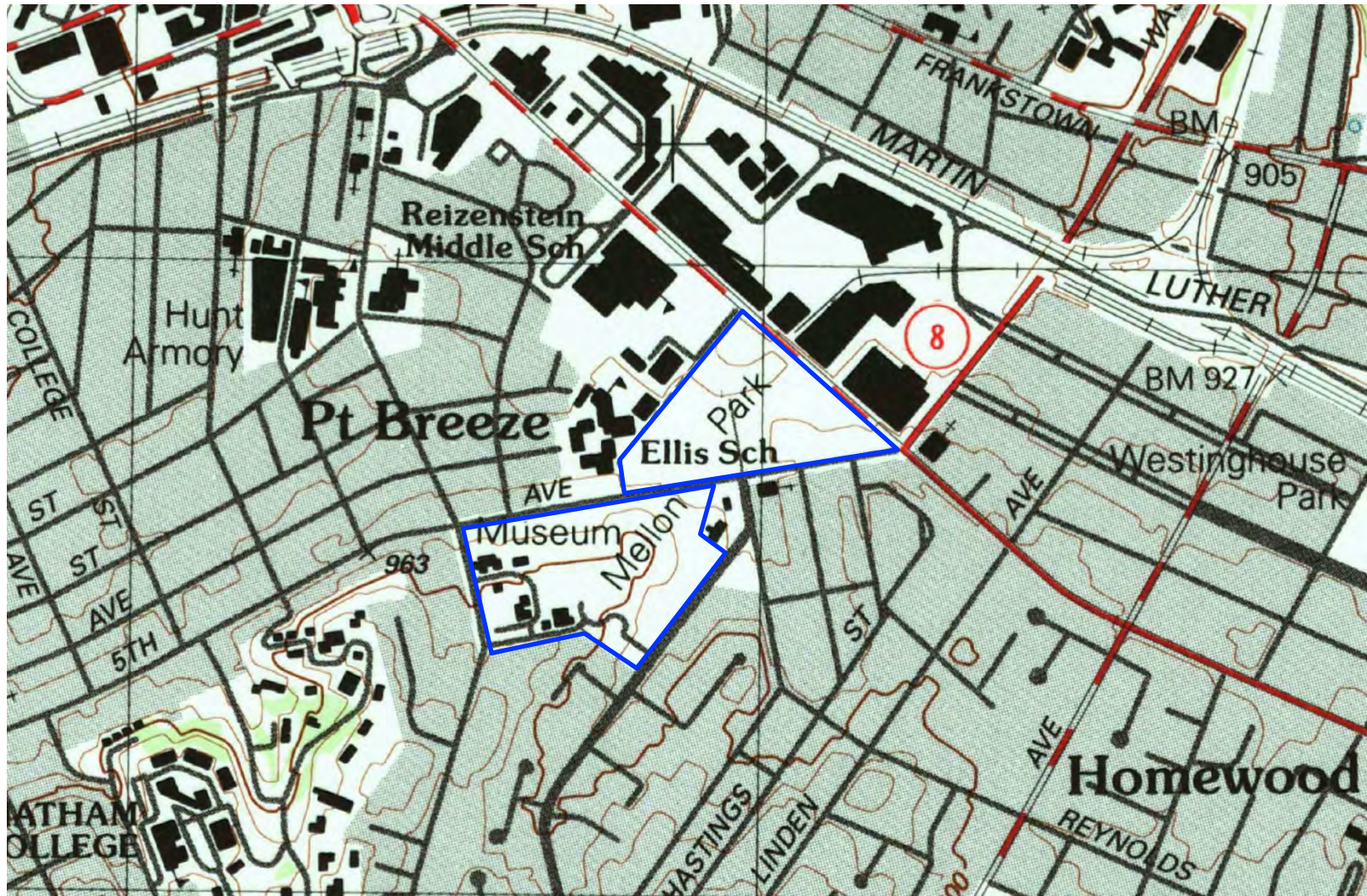
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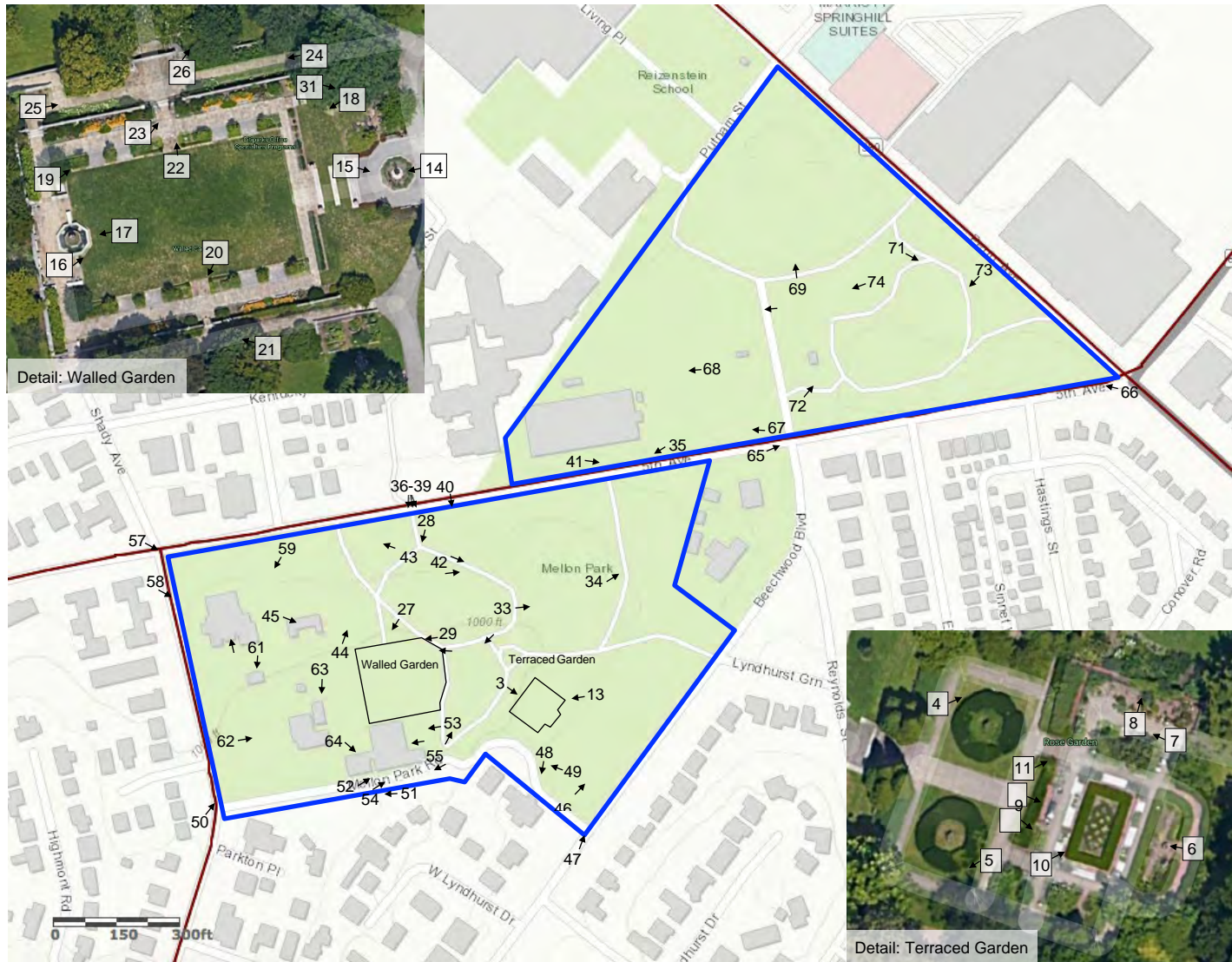
**Mellon Park**  
**Historic Nomination Form**  
**Photo Log**



Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County



# Site Plan and Photo Key



Mellon Park

**List of Photographs**

<u>Photo No.</u>	<u>Photo Description</u>	<u>Camera Facing</u>
1	Mellon house site	NE
2	Mellon house site and entrance to Walled Garden	SW
3	Terraced Garden, view across upper terrace	SE
4	Terraced Garden, north side of upper terrace	NE
5	Terraced Garden, south side of upper terrace	SW
6	Terraced Garden, lower terrace	W
7	Terraced Garden, north side wall of lower terrace	NW
8	Terraced Garden, detail of north side wall	N
9	Terraced garden, lower terrace	SE
10	Terraced Garden, former pool in lower terrace	NE
11	Terraced Garden, view to NE from upper terrace	NE
12	Terraced Garden, view to S from upper terrace	SE
13	North side of Terraced Garden from Beechwood Boulevard parkland	W
14	Walled Garden	W
15	View from Walled Garden steps to Mellon house site	E
16	Walled Garden from fountain plaza at west end	NE
17	Fountain at west end of Walled Garden	W
18	Walled Garden, view to SW	SW
19	Walled Garden, north side	NE
20	Walled Garden, gate to south terrace	SW
21	South terrace of Walled Garden	NW
22	Walled Garden, gate to north terrace	N
23	Walled Garden, gate to north terrace	NE
24	Walled garden, gate to north terrace from east	W
25	Walled Garden, north terrace	E
26	View from north terrace over Fifth Ave. parkland	NE
27	Walled Garden balustrade and scroll stair	SW
28	View of Walled Garden from near main gate	SW
29	East stair to north terrace of Walled Garden	W
30	Granite frog sculpture	W
31	Memorial installation at NE mound	SE
32	Fifth Avenue parkland	E
33	Frew house site	E
34	View of Darsie house site from Frew house site	S
35	Historic estate fencing along Fifth Avenue	NE
36	Main gate to Mellon estate from Fifth Avenue	S
37	Detail of wrought iron main gate to Mellon estate	SE

# Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA

## Photo List, cont'd.

<u>Photo No.</u>	<u>Photo Description</u>	<u>Camera Facing</u>
38	Detail of wrought iron main gate to Mellon estate	S
39	Detail of wrought iron main gate to Mellon estate	SW
40	Detail of wrought iron Mellon estate fence	S
41	Frew estate gate and drive from Fifth Avenue	E
42	Mellon estate main drive from Fifth Avenue	SE
43	Fifth Avenue parkland and pedestrian gate	NW
44	Fence between Fifth Ave. parkland and agricultural area	NE
45	“Chicken coop” uphill from former vegetable garden	SE
46	View of Beechwood Boulevard parkland from drive	NE
47	Wrought iron fence along Beechwood Boulevard	NE
48	Unmowed vegetation marking former lily pond site	S
49	Boulders at former lily pond site	NW
50	Mellon Park Road, former service drive from Shady Ave.	NE
51	Mellon Park Road and south side of garden center	W
52	Gate by Samuel Yellin at former service entrance	NE
53	Phipps Garden Center, modern additions in foreground	W
54	South side of garden center along Mellon Park Road	NE
55	Cast iron water fountain in front of garden center	W
56	Rock garden (1976) opposite garden center	W
57	Former Marshall estate at With and Shady avenues	SE
58	Marshall house from Shady Avenue	SE
59	Marshall house from park	SW
60	Marshall house from rear parking area	N
61	Marshall garage	S
62	Scaife house from Shady Avenue	E
63	Scaife house rear additions	S
64	Scaife garage	SE
65	Entrance to Mellon Park Recreation Area, Fifth Avenue	NE
66	Mellon Park Recreation Area from Fifth and Penn	NW
67	Playground, basketball courts, tennis courts	W
68	Walkway between Fifth Ave. zone and ball fields	W
69	Main ball field at north corner of park	N
70	Middle and Little fields	W
71	Parkland along Penn Avenue	SE
72	Picnic shelter and parkland landscape	NE
73	“Steelcityscape” (1976)	SW
74	“Five Factors” (1973)	W



**Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA**



**Photo 1.** Mellon house site, view to NE



**Photo 2.** Mellon house site, view to SW and Walled Garden



## Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA



**Photo 3.** Terraced Garden, view ESE across upper terrace from top of stairs



**Photo 4.** Terraced Garden, north side of upper terrace from above



## Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA



**Photo 5.** Terraced Garden, south side of upper terrace. Edging of former pool can be seen at base of wall behind left tree trunk



**Photo 6.** Terraced Garden, lower terrace, view from eastern edge back toward upper terrace with decorative wellhead in foreground, retaining wall and stairs from upper terrace in background



**Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA**



**Photo 7.** Terraced Garden, north side wall of lower terrace



**Photo 8.** Terraced Garden, detail of north side wall showing sundial and dolphin scroll



## Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA



**Photo 9.** Terraced Garden, lower terrace, view to SE from edge of upper terrace



**Photo 10.** Terraced Garden, lower terrace, former pool at center, view to NE



**Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA**



**Photo 11.** Terraced Garden, view to NE from upper terrace



**Photo 12.** Terraced Garden, view to S from upper terrace



## Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA



**Photo 13.** North side of Terraced Garden from Beechwood Boulevard parkland



**Photo 14.** Walled Garden much as it would have appeared from Mellon house study, with octagonal planting bed in foreground



## Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA



**Photo 15.** View from steps of Walled Garden to Mellon house site



**Photo 16.** Walled Garden: view NE over central terrace from fountain plaza at west end



**Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA**



**Photo 17.** Fountain at west end of Walled Garden

**Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA**



**Photo 18.** Walled Garden, view to SW



**Photo 19.** Walled Garden, north side



## Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA



**Photo 20.** Walled Garden, gate to south terrace. Building with center wall gable beyond is original Mellon carriage house, now part of Phipps Garden Center.



**Photo 21.** South terrace of Walled Garden between it and garden center



**Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA**



**Photo 22.** Walled Garden, gate to north terrace overlooking Fifth Avenue



**Photo 23.** Walled Garden, gate to north terrace overlooking Fifth Avenue



**Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA**



**Photo 24.** Walled Garden, gateway to north terrace from east



**Photo 25.** Walled Garden, north terrace, view to east



**Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA**



**Photo 26.** View from north terrace over former Mellon estate grounds to Fifth Avenue



**Photo 27.** Walled Garden balustrade and scroll stair from Fifth Avenue parkland



## Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA



**Photo 28.** View of Walled Garden from near main Mellon estate gate from Fifth Avenue



**Photo 29.** East stair to north terrace of Walled Garden and boulders



**Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA**



**Photo 30.** Granite frog sculpture relocated from lily pond (no longer extant)



**Photo 31.** Memorial installation on mound at NE corner of Walled Garden



**Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA**



**Photo 32.** Fifth Avenue parkland



**Photo 33.** Frew house site



## Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA



**Photo 34.** View of Darsie house site from Frew house site; path is former Frew drive



**Photo 35.** Historic estate fencing along Fifth Avenue: from east to west, Darsie, Frew, Mellon. Beyond the Mellon estate, the Marshall property did not have a permanent fence.



**Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA**



**Photo 36.** Main vehicular gate into Mellon estate from Fifth Avenue; wrought iron by Samuel Yellin



**Photo 37.** Detail of wrought iron main gate to Mellon estate



**Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA**



**Photo 38.** Detail of wrought iron main gate to Mellon estate



**Photo 39.** Detail of wrought iron main gate to Mellon estate

**Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA**



**Photo 40.** Detail of wrought iron Mellon estate fence, Fifth Avenue



**Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA**



**Photo 41.** Frew estate gate and drive from Fifth Avenue, now a pedestrian walkway



**Photo 42.** Mellon estate main drive from Fifth Avenue, now a pedestrian walkway



## Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA



**Photo 43.** Crabapple trees in Fifth Avenue parkland with pedestrian gate visible in Mellon estate fence below



**Photo 44.** Fence separating Fifth Avenue parkland from agricultural area of Mellon estate; northwest corner of Walled Garden at right



**Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA**



**Photo 45.** “Chicken Coop” uphill from former vegetable garden at west end of Mellon estate



**Photo 46.** Beechwood Boulevard parkland, view to NE from drive



## Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA



**Photo 47.** Fence enclosing Mellon estate at Beechwood Boulevard, designed by Samuel Yellin; gate to vehicular drive (Mellon Park Road)



**Photo 48.** Unmowed vegetation marking former lily pond site along drive from Beechwood Boulevard



## Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA



**Photo 49.** Boulders in overgrowth at former lily pond site



**Photo 50.** Mellon Park Road, former service entrance from Shady Avenue, and parking on former Scaife property



## Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA



**Photo 51.** Mellon Park Road, view to west. Phipps Garden Center at right, modern addition in foreground; Scaife garage with gable and dormers at left center



**Photo 52.** Entry gate by Samuel Yellin at former service entrance to Mellon estate (now Mellon Park Road)



## Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA



**Photo 53.** Phipps Garden Center, modern additions and terrace in foreground, Mellon garage visible in rear



**Photo 54.** Side of Garden Center along Mellon Park Road. Change in brick color and cornice material mark transition from original garage to modern addition.



## Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA



**Photo 55.** Modified cast iron Murdock water fountain in front of garden center



**Photo 56.** Rock garden (1976) opposite garden center



## Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA



**Photo 57.** View of Mellon Park from intersection of Fifth and Shady Avenues: former Marshall estate (now Pittsburgh Center for the Arts)



**Photo 58.** Marshall house, enlarged terrace, enclosed porte cochere, and retaining wall from Shady Avenue

## Mellon Park - Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, PA



**Photo 59.** Marshall house, enlarged terrace, and art installation from park



**Photo 60.** Marshall house from rear parking area. Main entrance to Center for the Arts is through lobby addition at center. Two-story gallery addition is visible at right.



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**Photo 61.** Marshall garage, now woodworking studios for Pittsburgh Center for the Arts



**Photo 62.** Scaife house from Shady Avenue



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**Photo 63.** Rear additions (1989) to Scaife house: classroom wing, raised shelter, and kiln house



**Photo 64.** Scaife garage

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**Photo 65.** Entrance to Mellon Park Recreation Area from Fifth Avenue, access via vacated section of Beechwood Boulevard at left



**Photo 66.** Eastern corner of Mellon Park Recreation Area at intersection of Fifth and Penn avenues



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**Photo 67.** Playground/spray park, basketball courts, and tennis courts (under fabric dome) along Fifth Avenue edge of recreation area



**Photo 68.** Walkway between Fifth Avenue zone of recreation area and ball fields to the north



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**Photo 69.** Main ball field at north corner of Mellon Park Recreation Area



**Photo 70.** Middle and Little fields beyond parking area on former Beechwood Blvd.



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**Photo 71.** Parkland along Penn Avenue (at right)



**Photo 72.** Picnic shelter and parkland landscape in recreation area



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**Photo 73.** "Steelcityscape" (1976) by Arunel deRoy Gruber near Penn Avenue



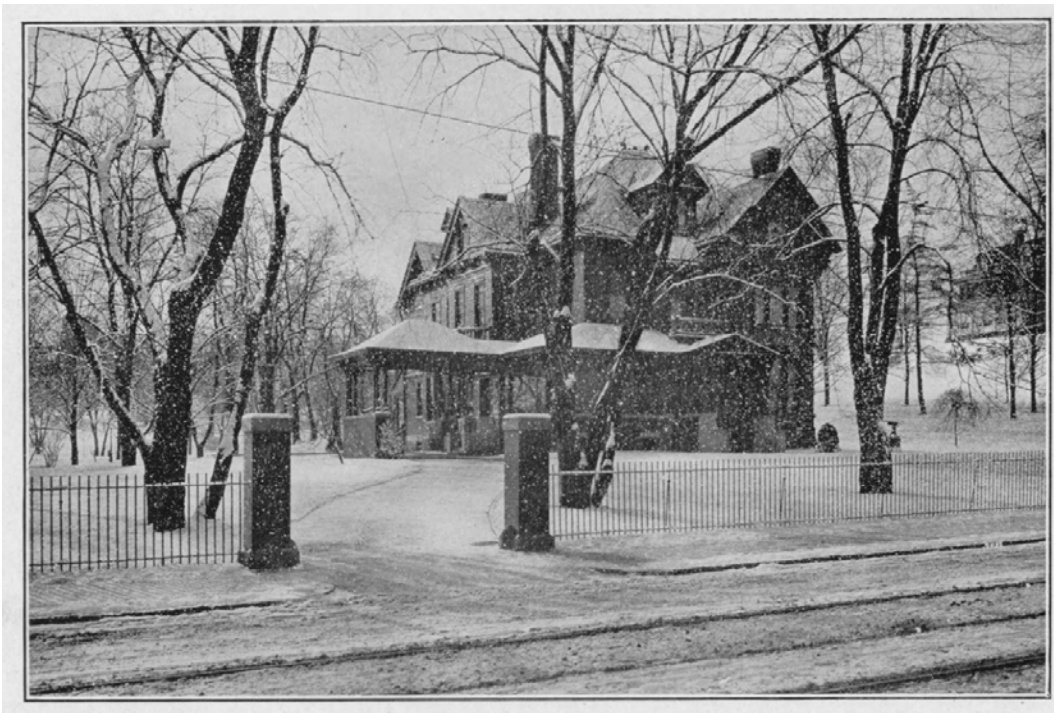
**Photo 74.** "Five Factors" (1973) by Peter Calaboyas

**Mellon Park**

**Historic Nomination Form**

**Supporting Documents**

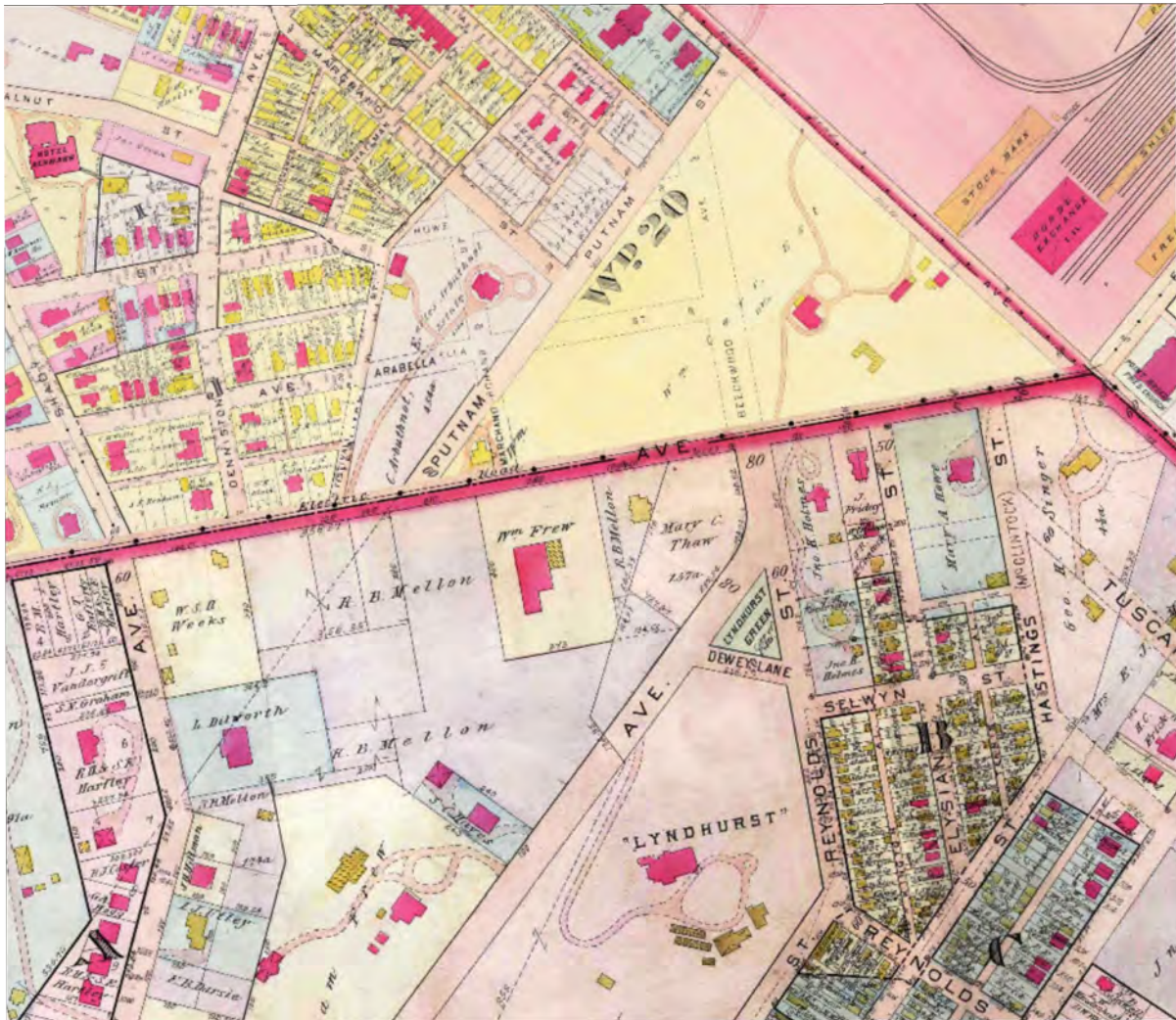




**Figure 1.** 6544 Fifth Avenue, the first house owned by R.B. and Jennie Mellon; later known as Darsie property after subsequent owner. A portion of the Frew estate, “Beechwood,” is visible at right. (*Palmer’s Pittsburgh*, 1905)



**Figure 2.** “Beechwood,” estate of William and Emily Frew, Fifth Avenue, 1905 (*Palmer’s Pittsburgh*, 1905)



**Figure 3.** Hopkins plat map of 1904 showing first Mellon residence, Frew estate, and undeveloped property owned by R.B. Mellon between Fifth Avenue and Beechwood Boulevard (labeled "Ave."). North of Fifth, Beechwood Boulevard is shown platted but not yet built to Putnam Street across the Carr estate. (Hopkins, G. M. *Atlas of the City of Pittsburgh*, 1904)





**Figure 4.** Hopkins plat map of 1911. The angled footprint of the Mellon estate house is shown in relation to the garage (left of house; shown as a frame structure), conservatory (L-shaped structure below house), and unidentified building, possibly the “chicken coop” or its precursor (upper left of house). (Hopkins, G. M. *Atlas of the City of Pittsburgh*, 1911)

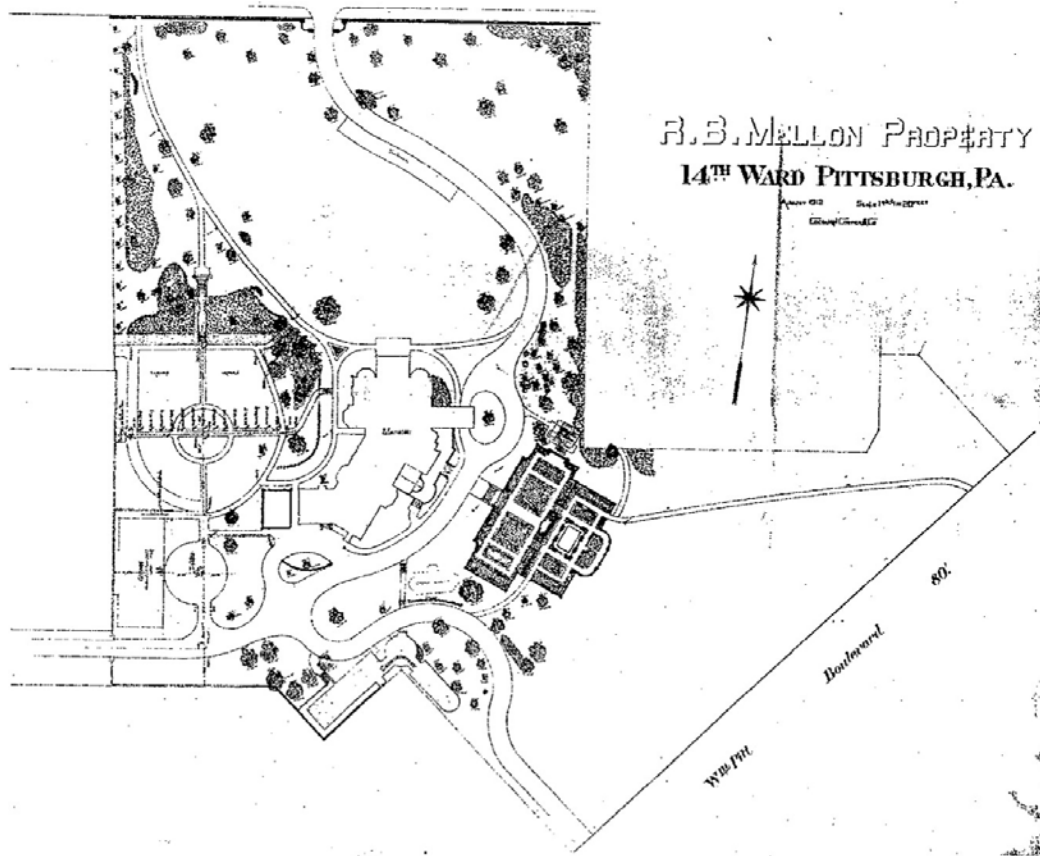




**Figure 5.** 1914 postcard of Mellon estate house viewed from lower terrace of Terraced Garden (Allegheny County Archive)



**Figure 6.** Alden and Harlow's floor plans of the Mellon estate house show the axial relationship of the library to the Terraced Garden. The diagonal axis through the hall and R. B. Mellon's bay-windowed office would later define the house's relationship to the Walled Garden. (*Architectural Record*, Sept. 1911)



**Figure 7.** 1912 plan of Mellon estate by Edeburn and Cooper, civil engineers (NPS Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, in Mellon Park Preservation and Management Plan, 2000)



**Figure 8.** Fifth Avenue, 1917. The Mellon estate's wrought iron fence by Samuel Yellin and granite gate pier with their address, 6500, at right (Pittsburgh City Photographer Collection)

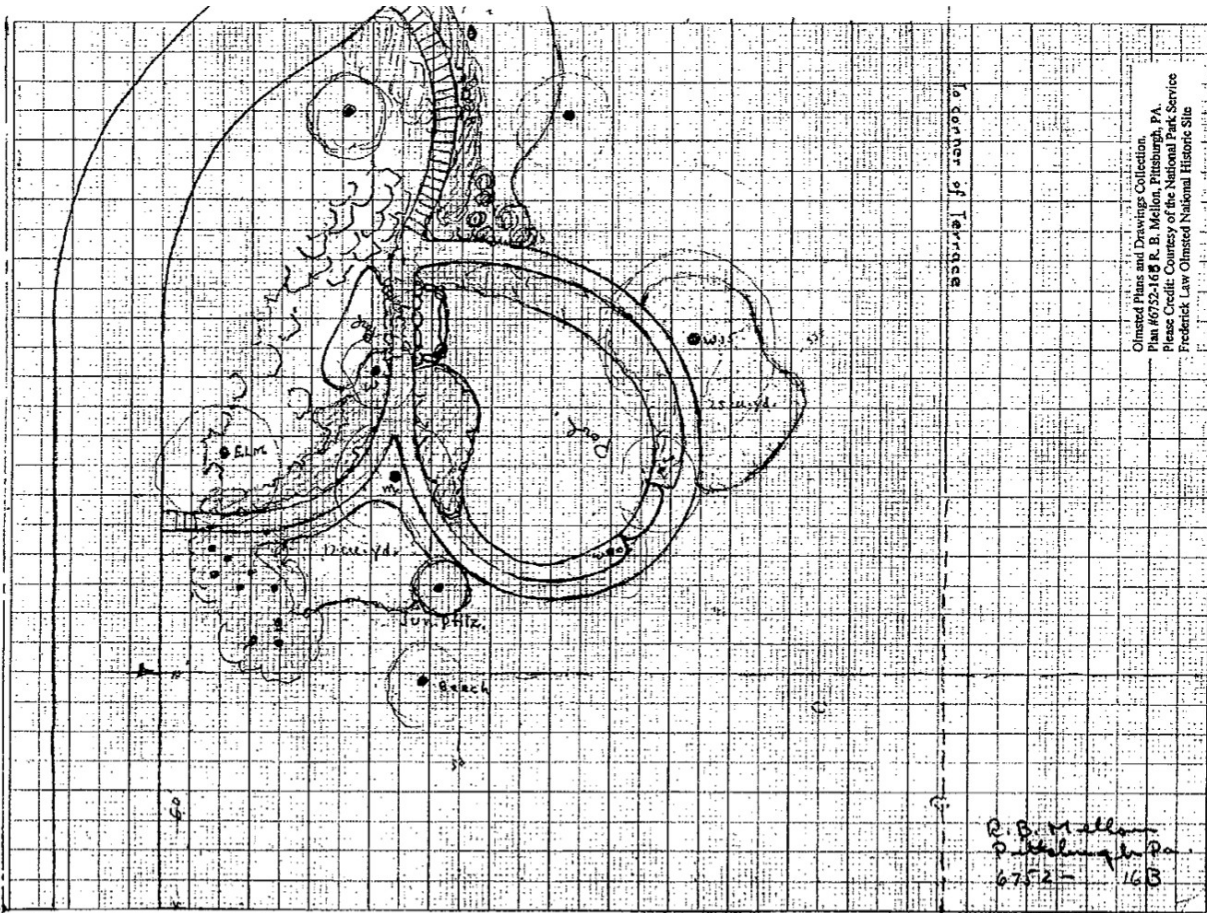




**Figure 9.** Walled Garden by Vitale and Geiffert, ca. 1935



**Figure 10.** Walled Garden by Vitale and Geiffert, ca. 1935



**Figure 11.** Olmsted Brothers' general planting scheme for lily pond at drive from Beechwood Boulevard, 1931. (NPS Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, in Mellon Park Preservation and Management Plan, 2000)



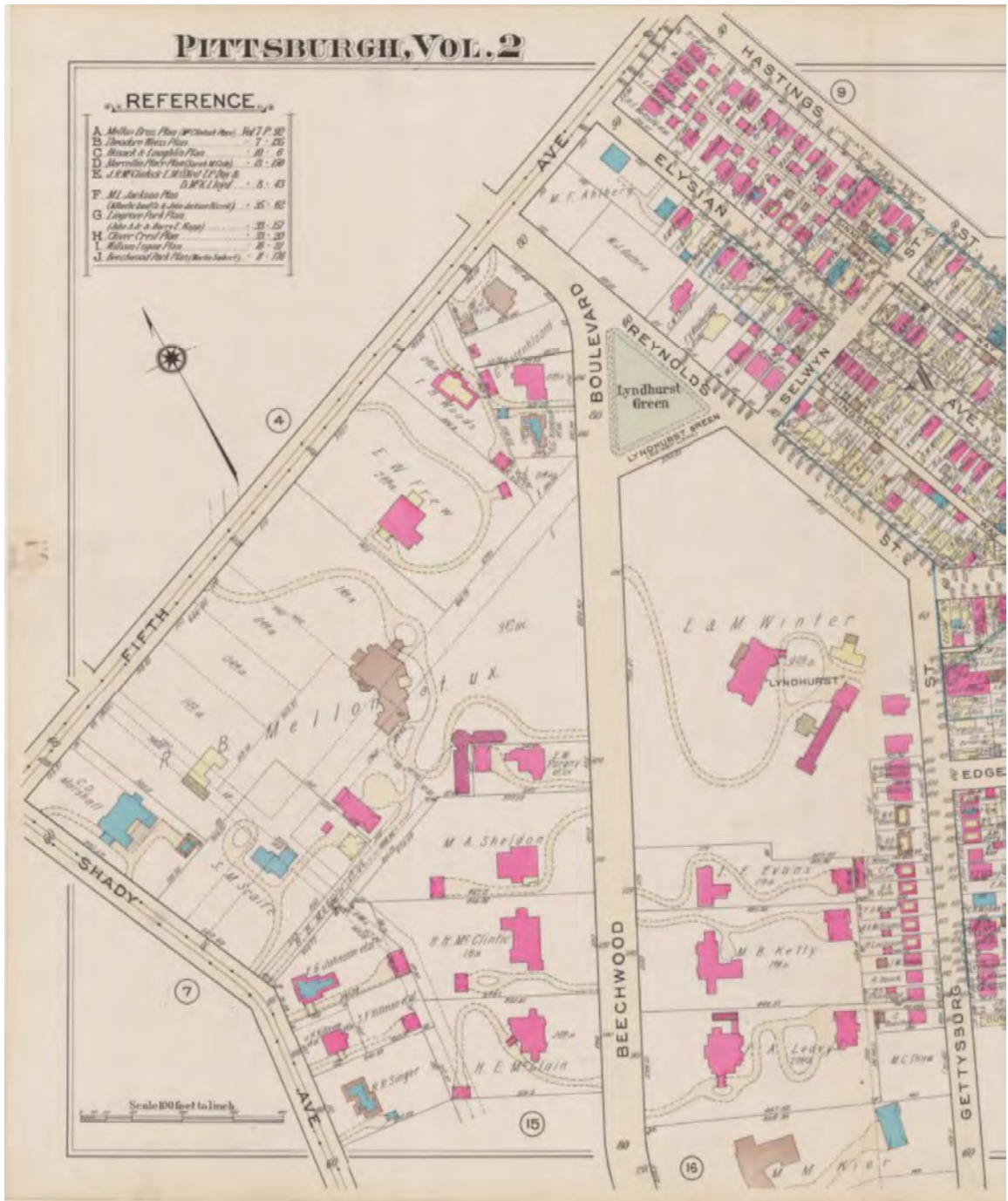
**Figure 12.** Marshall house at Fifth and Shady avenues in 1933



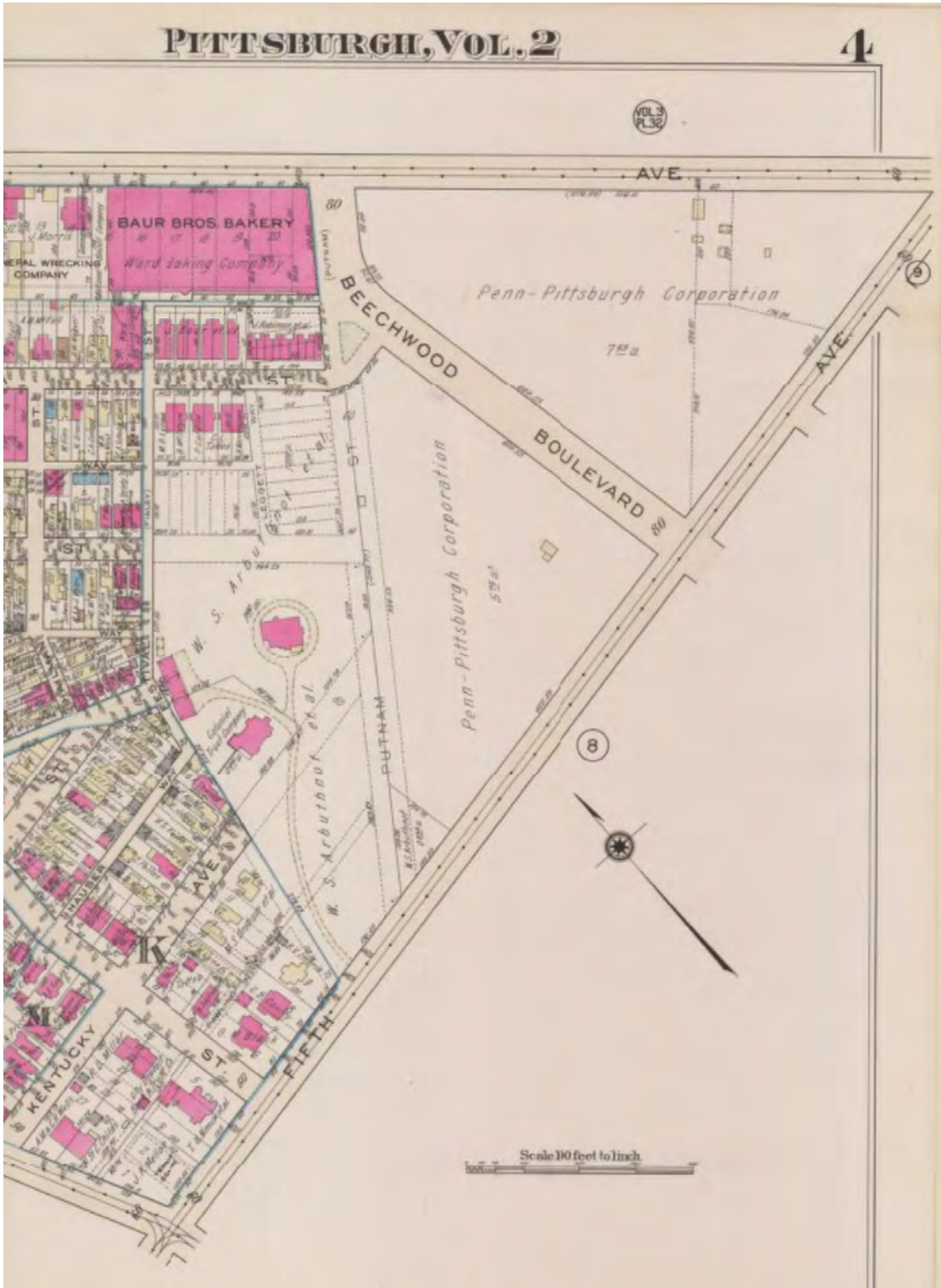


**Figure 13.** Hopkins plat map of 1923. The arrangement of buildings and drives on the Mellon estate is clearly shown. North of Fifth Avenue, the former Carr estate is now bisected by Beechwood Boulevard and owned by R.B. Mellon. The Carr house has been demolished but some outbuildings are still present. (Hopkins, G. M. *Atlas of the City of Pittsburgh*, 1923)





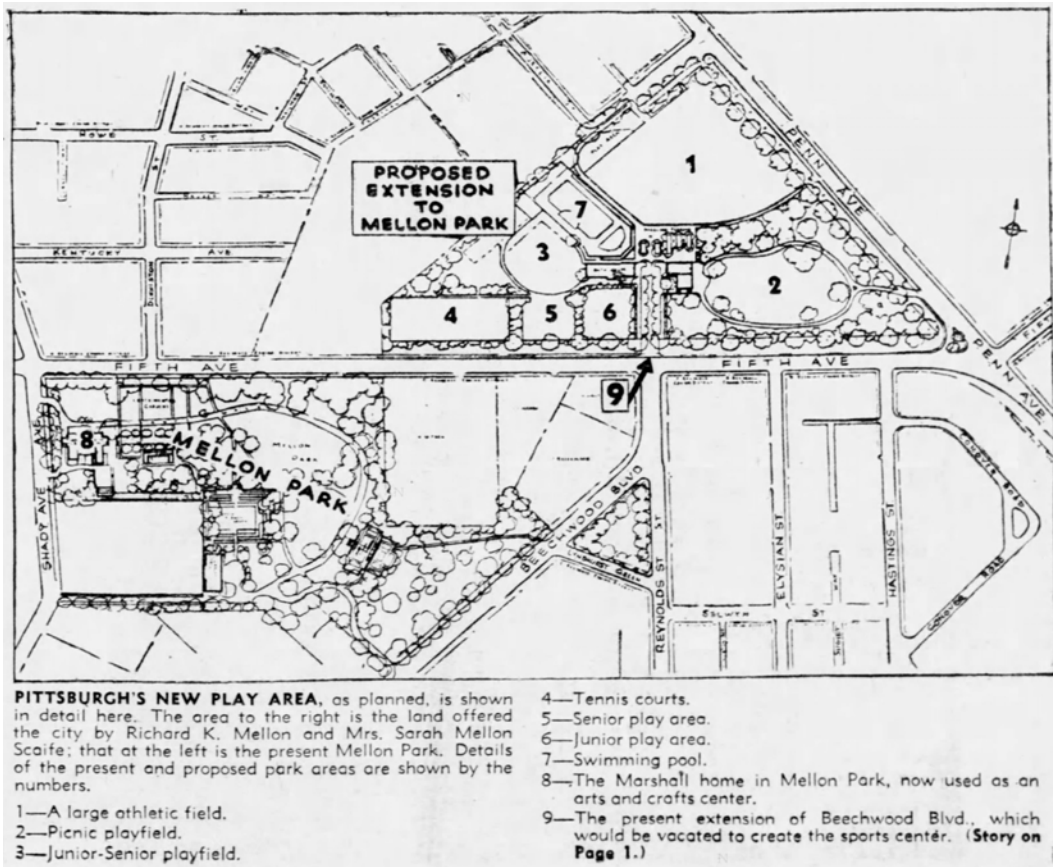
**Figure 14.** Hopkins plat map of 1939. The Mellon estate appears as it did in 1923. The former Dilworth/Greer house to the west is now owned by S(arah M(ellon) Scaife. The Frew and Darsie (now Woods) houses are still standing. (Hopkins, G. M. *Atlas of the City of Pittsburgh*, 1939)



**Figure 15.** Hopkins plat map of 1939. The Mellons' property north of Fifth Avenue is now shown as owned by the Penn-Pittsburgh Corporation. The Carr outbuildings are still standing near Penn Avenue. (Hopkins, G. M. *Atlas of the City of Pittsburgh*, 1939)



**Figure 16.** Carr estate frontage (at left) on Fifth Avenue in 1917; opposite is the intersection with Beechwood (then William Pitt) Blvd. (Pittsburgh City Photographer Collection)



**Figure 17.** Proposed site plan for Mellon Park Recreation Area, 1945 (Pittsburgh Press, Jan. 27, 1946)

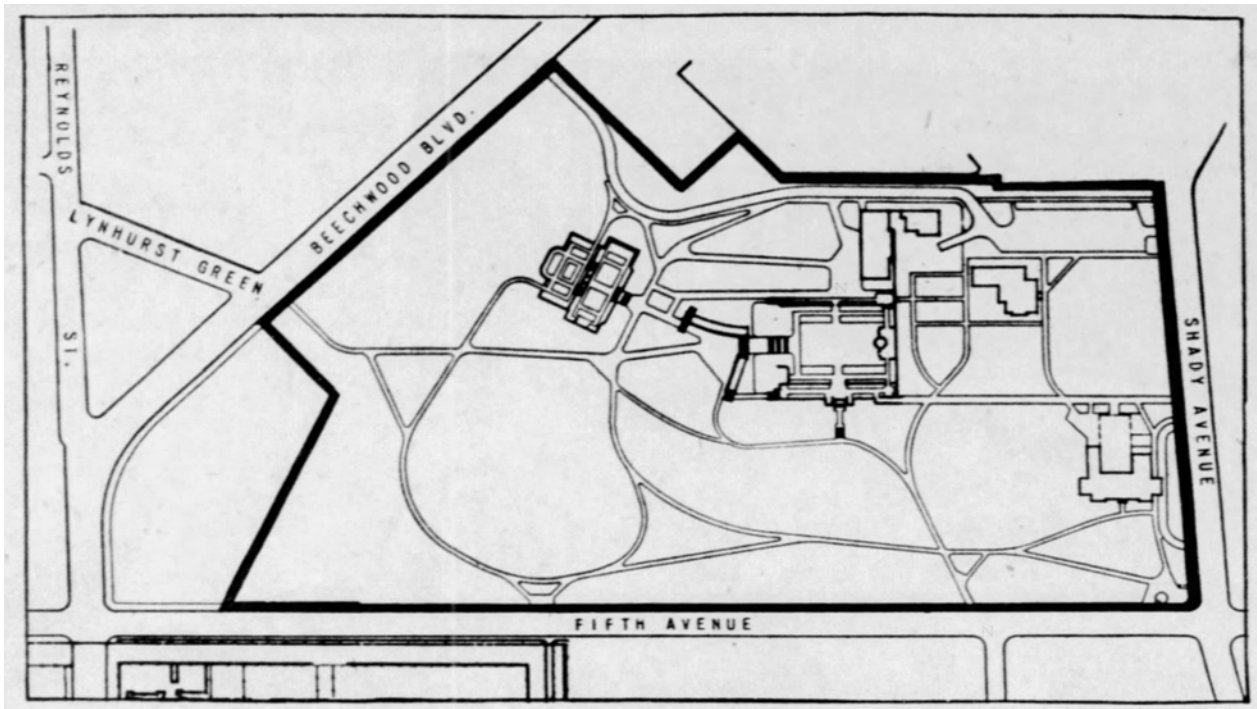




**Figure 18.** Lawrence Dilworth house as designed by Alden and Harlow, 1904 (Floyd: *Architecture After Richardson*)



**Figure 19.** Rose Garden (lower terrace of Terraced Garden), 1951 (Historic Pittsburgh: Allegheny Conference on Community Development photographs)



**Figure 20.** Circulation plan for Mellon Park, Simonds and Simonds, 1951

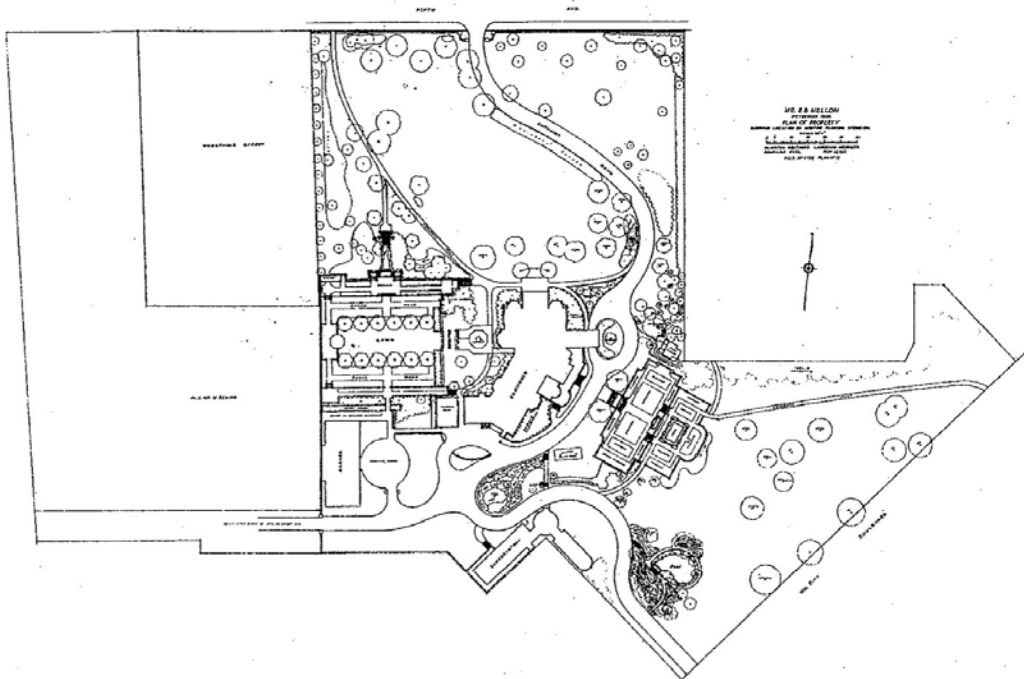


**Figure 21.** Aerial view of Mellon Park, 1956 ([pennpilot.edu](http://pennpilot.edu))

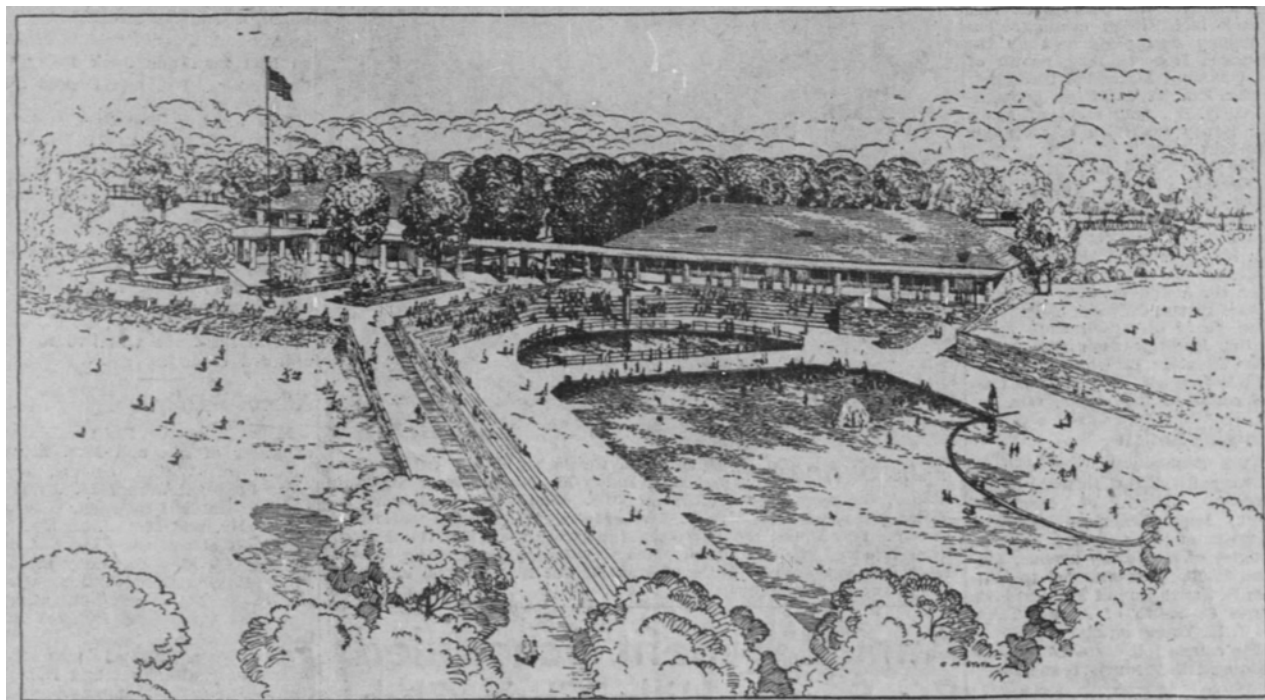




**Figure 22.** Rose Garden (lower terrace of Terraced Garden), 1956 (Historic Pittsburgh: Allegheny Conference on Community Development photographs)



**Figure 23.** Olmsted Brothers plan of Mellon estate, 1931 (NPS Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, in Mellon Park Preservation and Management Plan, 2000)



**Figure 24.** Charles M. Stotz perspective rendering of pool, bathhouse, and community building proposed for Mellon Park Recreation Area (*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 1946)



**Figure 25.** Mellon Park tennis courts, 1963, photographed by James McClain for the Allegheny Conference on Community Development (Historic Pittsburgh: Allegheny Conference on Community Development photographs)