

L A N D M A R K S
P R E S E R V A T I O N
C O M M I S S I O N
S T A F F R E P O R T

REFERRAL
NOVEMBER 3, 2022

2720 Hillegass Avenue – Willard Park Clubhouse

Demolition Referral: Use Permit (#ZP2022-0095) to demolish a recreational building originally completed circa 1971; APN 54-1711-27

I. Application Basics

A. Zoning District: Restricted Two-Family Residential (R-2)

B. Parties Involved

Project Applicant: Wendy Wellbrock
City of Berkeley, Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront
Department
1947 Center Street
Berkeley, CA

Evaluator: Rincon Consultants, Inc.
449 15th Street, Suite 103
Oakland, CA

Property Owner: City of Berkeley
2180 Milvia Street
Berkeley, CA

C. Staff Recommendation: Consider the evaluation and then take no action.

II. Background

On June 9, 2022, the applicant submitted a Use Permit application to demolish the existing clubhouse and restroom, and construct a 3,285 square-foot community center, and a new detached restroom. At this time, the Use Permit application #ZP2022-0095 is under review by the Zoning Officer, and anticipated to reach the Zoning Adjustments Board (ZAB) in 2023. More information about this project application can be found here:

<https://www.cityofberkeley.info/zoningapplications/>

Pursuant to Berkeley Municipal Code (BMC) Section 23.326.070, any application for a Use Permit to demolish a non-residential building or structure which is 40 or more years old shall be forwarded to the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) for review prior to consideration of the Use Permit for demolition. Given the lack of a current, City-wide comprehensive historic resource survey, the referral requirement is understood to address the potential for the loss of unidentified significant resources.

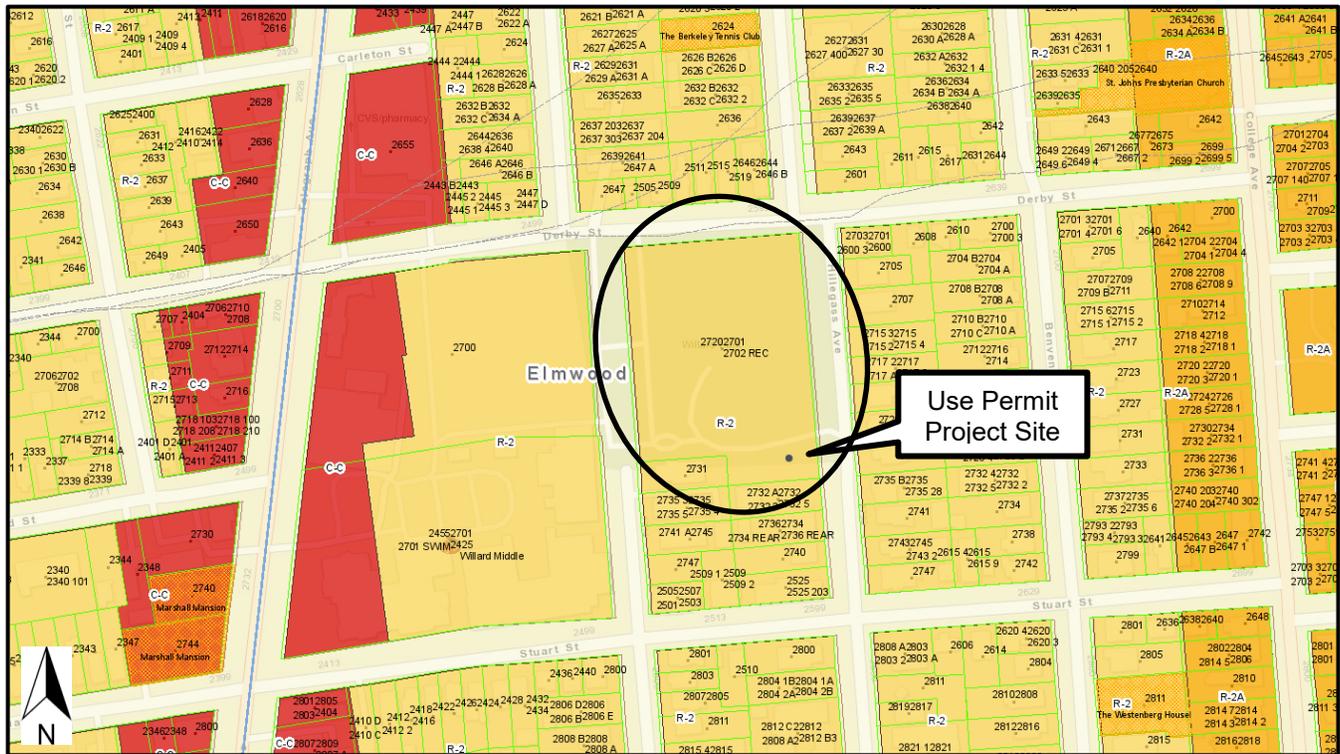
In considering the proposed demolition of a structure, the Commission will weigh the potential to meet the significance criteria for COB Landmarks and Historic Districts in the City's Landmarks Preservation Ordinance (Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter 3), which are relatively specific and appear to align with the California Register. The Commission will also weigh the potential to meet the broader COB Structure of Merit criteria, which can include structures that are neither individually architecturally distinctive nor associated with significant people or events but may qualify as contributors to identified districts, areas, or clusters. The LPC may initiate a designation or take no action based on the significance criteria, but still forward comments regarding potential project conditions such as relocation, salvage, and/or photographic documentation to the Zoning Adjustments Board for consideration in its action on the application.

III. Historical Resources

The subject building does not appear on the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources, or the State Historic Resources Inventory.

Nearby City Landmarks and Structures of Merit include: the Marshall Mansion at 2740-2744 Telegraph Avenue (1901, 1905), and the Berkeley Tennis Club at 2624 Hillegass Avenue (1908).

Figure 1: Vicinity Map



	Landmarks / Structure of Merit; LM,		Parcels
	Features		Demolished
	Districts		Partially Demolished

Figure 2: 2720 Hillegass Avenue – North elevation, 1980 (Rincon; 2021)



Figure 3: 2720 Hillegass Avenue – Northeast elevation, 1980 (Rincon; 2021)



Figure 4: 2720 Hillegass Avenue – As-built drawings, 1971, north elevation (Rincon; 2021)

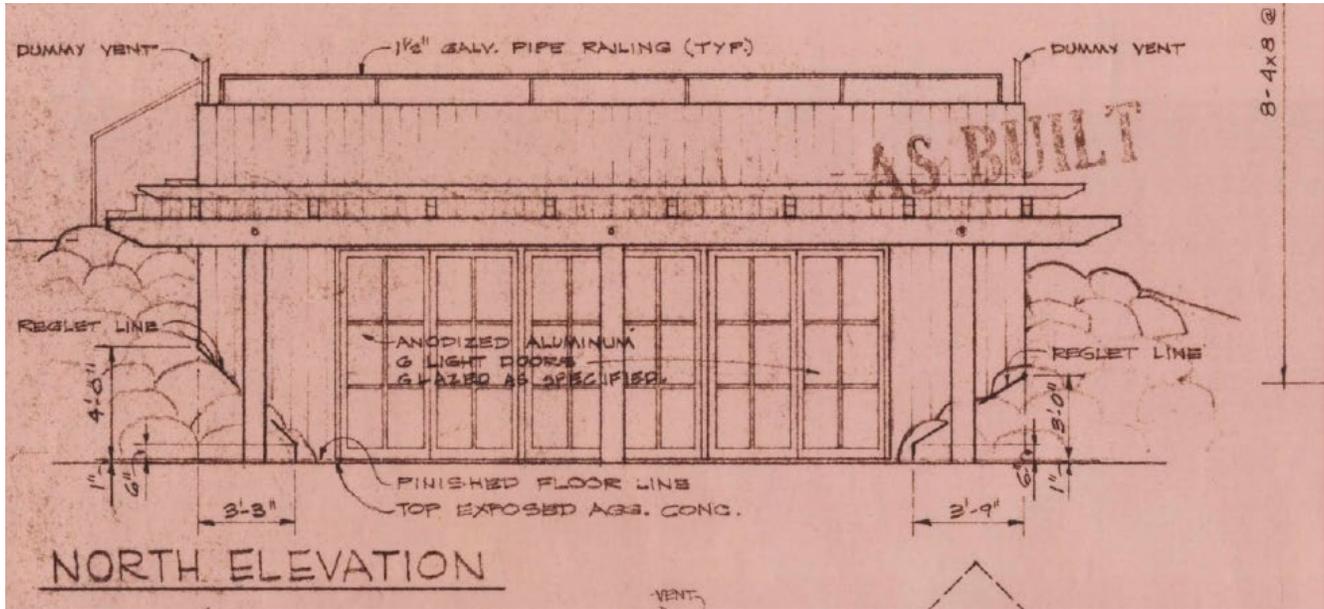


Figure 5: 2720 Hillegass Avenue – As-built drawings, 1971, east elevation (Rincon; 2021)

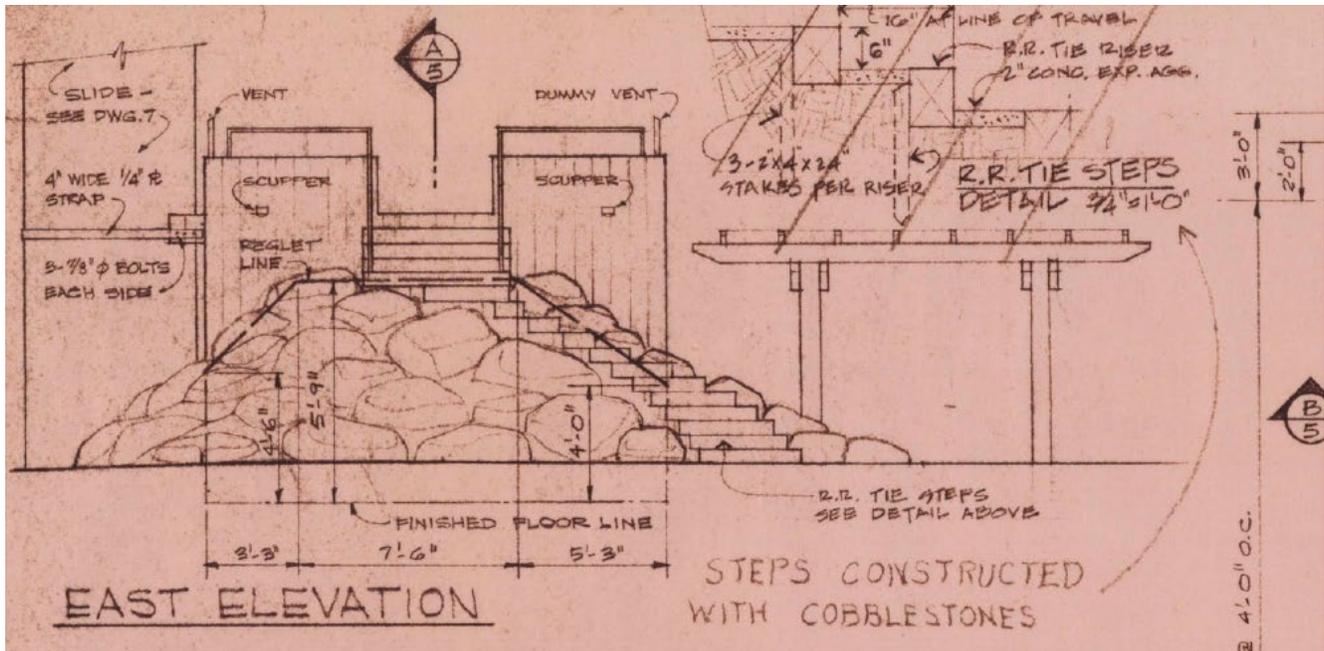


Figure 6: 2720 Hillegass Avenue – As-built drawings, 1971, south elevation (Rincon; 2021)

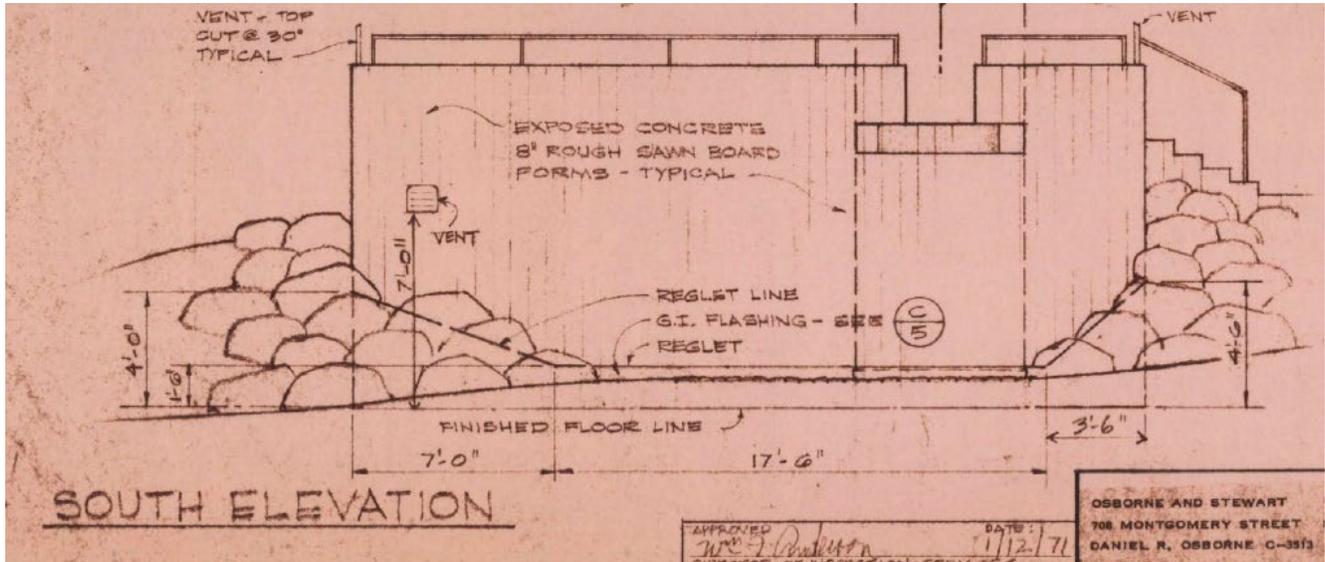


Figure 7: 2720 Hillegass Avenue – As-built drawings, 1971, west elevation (Rincon; 2021)

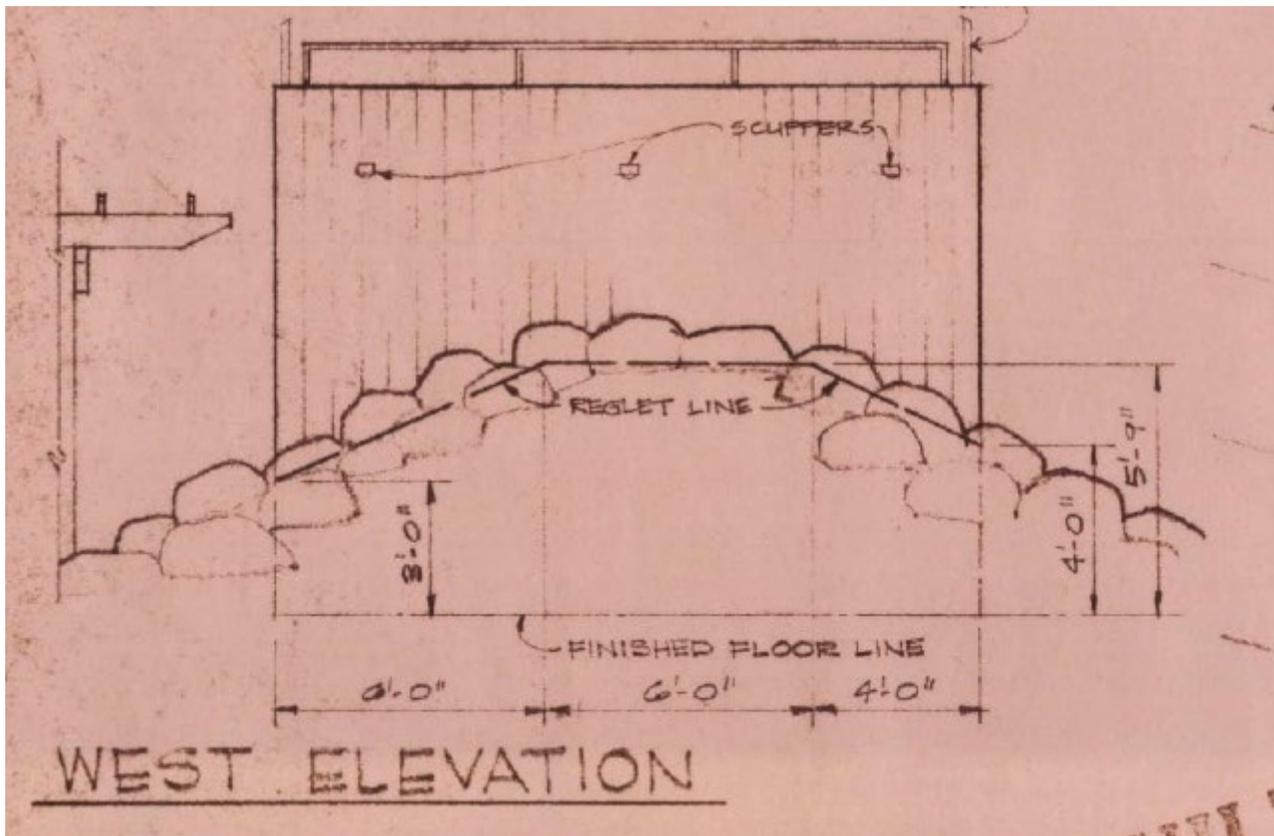
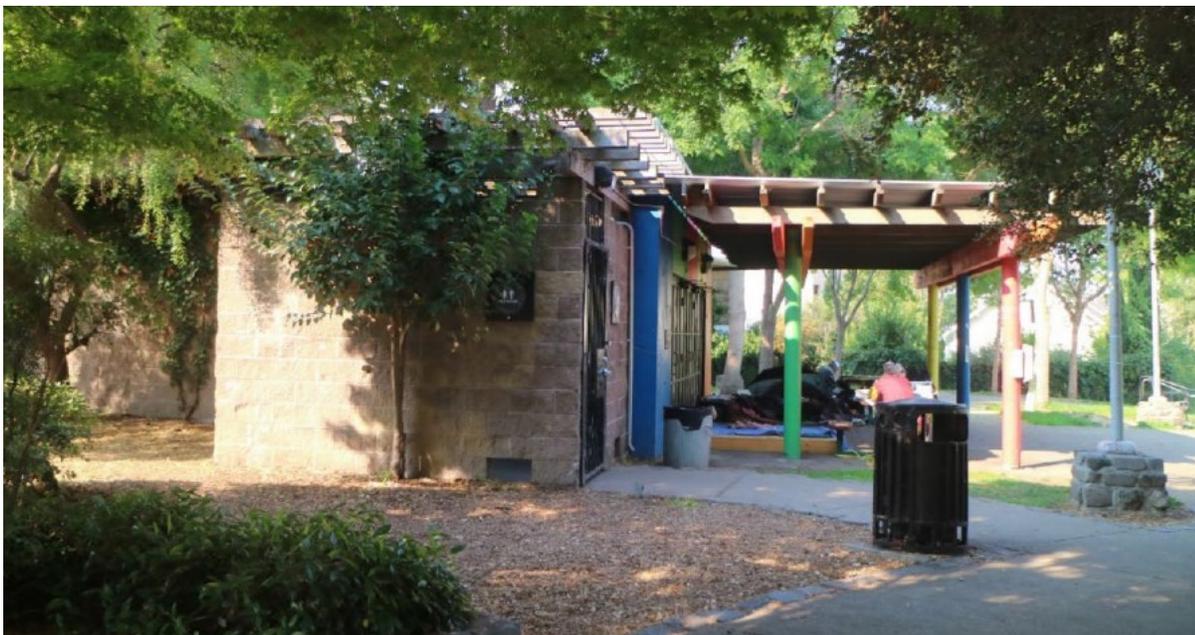


Figure 8: 2720 Hillegass Avenue – Current site conditions, north elevation (Rincon; 2021)



Figure 9: 2720 Hillegass Avenue – Current site conditions, east elevation (Rincon; 2021)



IV. Property Description

The historic resource evaluation (HRE), and DPR523A and B forms, for the subject property was completed in September 2021 by Rincon Consultants; please see Attachment 1 of this report. The HRE provides a description of the site's history and development, the building's construction history, previous owners and occupants, and a historical and architectural context, which are summarized below.

Parcel & Building Description: The subject parcel is a City park located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Derby Street and Hillegass Avenue. Regent Street ends at a cul-de-sac at the southwest corner of the lot. Tennis courts are built over the Regent Street right-of-way, and a path connects Regent Street to Derby Street. The approximately 111,000-sq. ft. parcel is relatively flat and features one single-story building, the clubhouse, at the southeast corner of the lot. The lot also contains a large lawn area, hardscaping and benches, and a playground.

The clubhouse building is constructed of concrete blocks. On the north façade, a series of aluminum-frame glazed doors open onto a patio space. Painted metal poles support a wood trellis over the patio. The walls of the building are comprised of concrete blocks, with painted vertical wood planks on the north and west elevations. On the southeast side of the clubhouse is a concrete block addition, with a metal gate doorway, and a wooden trellis on the roof. The roof over the main part of the building, near the main doors, has a wooden parapet wall, with metal framing above the parapet wall. The style of the building is contemporary, with concrete block construction, plain metal supports, a flat roof, and a wooden trellis.

Brief Site History: Before the park was developed, the land consisted of seventeen lots with single-family dwellings. The parcels were gradually purchased by the City in the 1950s and 1960s.

In May 1969, the City began construction of Willard Park. The park opened in the fall of 1969, featuring only a field of turf, and was used for political demonstrations related to People's Park (then temporarily closed) and the Vietnam War. During this period, Willard Park was unofficially called Ho Chi Minh Park.

Meanwhile, designs for the second phase of development, which included the clubhouse, were approved in 1971. The park and clubhouse officially opened on June 20, 1971. Political gatherings declined after People's Park re-opened in 1972. However, Willard Park continued to be used for countercultural events, such as the Lord Chaitanya festival from 1971 to 1973, and the East Bay Lesbian/Gay Day from 1973 until 1981.

The original design of the clubhouse reflected the Arts and Crafts movement and the First Bay Tradition, with cobblestone walls and open stairs; see Figures 2-7, above. In 1991, the stone walls and rooftop stairs were removed, and an addition at the southeast portion of the building was added. According to the plans, the stones were relocated to Aquatic Park.

Architects/Designers: The clubhouse was designed by architects Daniel R. Osborne (1934-2014) and Zach R. Stewart (1928). They designed civic projects such as campgrounds in Olema and Duncan Mills; elementary schools in Nevada County, Stinson Beach, and Bolinas; and the Plumas County Museum. Private commissions include the home of poet Gary Snyder in the Sierra foothills. In the 1960s, the pair were involved in cultural and social movements in San Francisco, including providing the staging for the Trips Festival at Longshoremen's Hall, and producing concerts at Grace Cathedral.

More details on the history of the subject property are available in the HRE, Attachment 1.

V. Evaluation of Significance Criteria

Historic Context¹: For the purpose of contextualizing and focusing this discussion of potential historical significance, staff suggests that the building's period of significance would have begun with the extant structure's date of completion in 1971 and continued until 1982, at least 40 years prior to this demolition referral, in accordance with BMC Section 23.326.070(C). Owing to the subject building's design, continued use for recreation, and its location in a public park in Berkeley, it is associated with the historical theme of Berkeley's community development.

Significance Criteria: The subject building has been evaluated based on the criteria of the California Register of Historical Resources and the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance (LPO/BMC Chapter 3.24). The existing building is more than 50 years old and, therefore, may be considered eligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources. Because it is more than 40 years old, BMC Section 23C.08.050 requires that it be evaluated for potential local significance prior to issuance of any demolition entitlement.

In determining the potential significance of this building, the evaluator has analyzed the property's extant features and any associated parties against the criteria of the California Register of Historical Resources (CR) and the LPO/BMC Chapter 3.24. The evaluation concentrates on possible associations with events (CR-1, BMC Sections 3.24.110(A)(2) and (B)(2)), persons (CR-2, BMC Section 3.24.110(A)(4)), architectural design (CR-3, BMC Sections 3.24.110(A)(1)(a-c) and (B)(2)(a and c)), and information/education (CR-4, BMC Section 3.24.110(A)(3)). The results of the consultant's and staff's evaluations are discussed below.

¹ National Register Bulletin #15, Item V: *How to Evaluate a Property within its Historic Context* (2002); National Register Bulletin #16A, Section III: *How to Complete the National Register Registration – Period of Significance* (1997).

Events – CR Criterion 1/BMC Criteria *Historical and Cultural Value*

The building is associated with the historical pattern of community development in Berkeley. Between 1969 and 1972, the park was the site of political rallies and marches, and during the 1970s and 1980s it was a site for countercultural gatherings, and it continues to be useful to the community as a gathering place. Although the park is associated with political and cultural events, the clubhouse is not associated with political and cultural events. A study of the clubhouse's history revealed no information linking the clubhouse to any events or singular episode of primary importance to Berkeley's history. For this reason, it does not exhibit historical significance under the local or state criteria.

Persons – CR Criterion 2/BMC Criterion *Cultural Value*

With respect to potential significant persons and cultural value, the consultant's research confirmed that the clubhouse is not associated with significant people, nor with the movement or evolution of religious, cultural, governmental, social, and economic developments of the City.

Design – CR Criterion 3/BMC Criteria *Architectural Merit*

The original design of the clubhouse was Arts and Crafts-inspired with defining features such as: low-scale massing, natural materials including boulders, and unfinished wood elements. The stone features and open rooftop stairs have been removed, and the 1991 concrete block addition is largely utilitarian and not reflective of the style.

Consistent with guidance from the National Park Service, staff has evaluated the integrity of the building's design and found that, due to alterations, the building no longer retains its *design*, essential character-defining *materials*, and examples of *workmanship*.¹ Today, the building could not be considered an outstanding example of a type or style and, therefore, it is not significant for its design.

The architects of the original clubhouse design were successful practitioners in their field, but do not appear to have risen to significance.

Information – CR Criterion 4/BMC Criterion *Educational Force*

There have been no recent CA Historical Resource Information System investigations for the subject parcel or its environs, but previous research concluded that it was not likely to yield archeological information or other sub-surface resources related to pre-history or pre-colonial and tribal cultural resources.

LPO/BMC Criteria for *Structure of Merit*

As a potential Structure of Merit (BMC Section 3.24.110(B)(2)), the clubhouse does not appear to be worthy of preservation as part of a neighborhood, a block, or a street frontage, or a group of buildings which include City Landmarks because it is:

- Neither a contemporary of the nearest City Landmarks and Structures of Merit, nor is it compatible with their style or design.
- Not a good example of design.
- Possesses no historically significant connections to its neighborhood, block, frontage or group of resources.

VI. Recommendation – Take No Action.

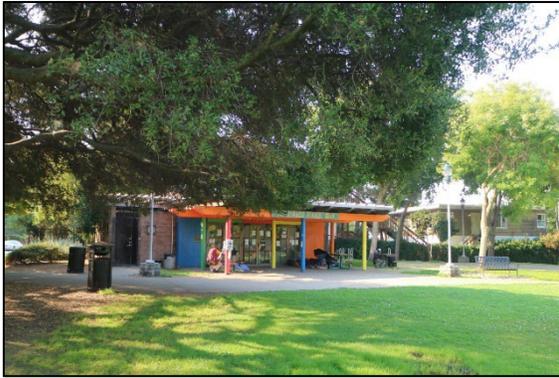
Staff recommends that the Commission consider the extent to which the building meets (or does not meet) the criteria for designation as a City Landmark or Structure of Merit, and then **Take No Action** to initiate this property.

Attachments:

1. Historic Resources Evaluation Report, prepared by Rincon Consultants, 449 15th Street, Suite 103, Oakland, CA; dated September 2021.
2. Correspondence Received

Prepared by: Allison Riemer, Associate Planner, ariemer@cityofberkeley.info, 510-981-7433

Reviewed by: Fatema Crane, Principal Planner/LPC Secretary; fcrane@cityofberkeley.info, 510-981-7413



Frances Willard Park, Berkeley, California

Historic Resources Evaluation Report

prepared for

ELS Architecture + Urban Design

Diana Hayton AIA, Principal
2040 Addison Street
Berkeley, California 94704

prepared with the assistance of

Rincon Consultants, Inc.

449 15th Street, Suite 103
Oakland, California 94612
Contact: Debi Howell-Ardila, MHP

September 2021



RINCON CONSULTANTS, INC.

Environmental Scientists | Planners | Engineers

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1 Introduction

Rincon Consultants, Inc. (Rincon) was retained by ELS Architecture + Urban Design of Berkeley, California (Client), to complete a historic resources evaluation of Frances Willard Park, in support of park upgrades and new construction; the proposed project primarily would impact the Willard Park Clubhouse. The project is subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) with the City serving as the lead CEQA agency. This report provides the substantial evidence necessary to make a historic resources determination of Willard Park; this study does not include an impacts analysis or project review.

Frances Willard Park is located in the residential neighborhood of Elmwood in southeast Berkeley. The park occupies a gently sloping site and is bounded by Derby Street (north), Hillegass Avenue (east), Willard Middle School (west), and single-family residences with frontage on Regent Street and Hillegass Avenue, respectively (south). The facilities span just over 118,500 square feet on a 2.7-acre site. The park address is 2730 Hillegass Avenue (Assessor's Parcel Number 54-1711-27) (Figure 1 and Figure 2). It is owned and operated by the Parks Division of the City of Berkeley Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Department.

In the preparation of this evaluation, Ms. Howell-Ardila conducted an intensive-level survey of Frances Willard Park in August 2020. Ms. Howell-Ardila photographed and documented the overall features and spaces of the park. In order to ascertain the current historic resource status of Willard Park, Rincon reviewed the listings of the California Historic Resources Inventory, California Built Environment Resource Directory, and City of Berkeley Landmark and Structure of Merit listings. As of August 2020, Willard Park has not been designated as a landmark at the federal, state, or local level nor recorded as an eligible historic resource through evaluation or survey.

Archival research was completed in August 2020. Research methodology focused on the review of a variety of primary and secondary source materials relating to the history and development of Willard Park. Sources included historic maps, aerial photographs, and written histories of the area.

Rincon also coordinated with Anthony Bruce, the Executive Director of the Berkeley Architectural Heritage Association (BAHA) to inquire about materials and information regarding the park and its history. The online collections of the Online Archive of California and the University of California Calisphere were also searched. Other research materials consulted as part of this study included:

- Historical site plans of Willard Park;
- Historic aerial photographs, topographical maps, and Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Maps;
- Historic periodicals and newspapers, including the Oakland Tribune, San Francisco Examiner, Berkeley Gazette, and other historical newspapers;
- Historical photographs of Willard Park available via Flickr.com and other sources.

Rincon Senior Architectural Historian Debi Howell-Ardila, MHP, served as the principal investigator and author of this report. Rincon Architectural Historian James Williams, MA, contributed to research and coauthored sections of the report. Rincon Cultural Resources Principal Shannon Carmack and Principal Abe Leider reviewed this report for quality control.

Figure 2 Project Location, Frances Willard Park, Berkeley



2 Regulatory Setting

2.1 Federal

National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)

The NRHP was established by the NHPA of 1966 as “an authoritative guide to be used by Federal, State, and local governments, private groups and citizens to identify the Nation’s cultural resources and to indicate what properties should be considered for protection from destruction or impairment” (CFR 36 CFR 60.2). The NRHP recognizes properties that are significant at the national, state, and local levels. A property is eligible for the NRHP if it is significant under one or more of the following criteria:

1. Criterion A: It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history;
2. Criterion B: It is associated with the lives of persons who are significant in our past;
3. Criterion C: It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; and/or
4. Criterion D: It has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. In general, a resource must be 50 years of age to be considered for the NRHP, unless it satisfies a standard of exceptional importance.

In order to retain eligibility for the NRHP, a property must meet one of these criteria and retain historic integrity (defined below).

2.2 State

CEQA requires a lead agency determine whether a project may have a significant effect on historical and archaeological resources (Public Resources Code [PRC], Section 21084.1) and tribal cultural resources (PRC Section 21074 [a][1][A]-[B]). A historical resource is a resource listed in, or determined to be eligible for listing, in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), a resource included in a local register of historical resources, or any object, building, structure, site, area, place, record, or manuscript that a lead agency determines to be *historically significant* (State CEQA Guidelines, Section 15064.5[a][1-3]).

A resource shall be considered *historically significant* if it meets any of the following criteria:

- 1) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of California’s history and cultural heritage;
- 2) Is associated with the lives of persons important in our past;
- 3) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of an important creative individual, or possesses high artistic values; or
- 4) Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

In addition to meeting these criteria, in order to qualify for the NRHP and the CRHR, a property must retain “historic integrity” such that it continues to convey the reasons for its historic significance. “Historic integrity” is a composite of seven different aspects or qualities that, taken together, express the significance of a historic property. According to National Register Bulletin No. 15, in order to retain integrity and qualify for the NRHP, a property must have most if not all of these seven aspects:

- 1) Location – the place where the historic property was constructed or where an event occurred;
- 2) Design – the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, and style of a property;
- 3) Setting – the physical environment of a historic property;
- 4) Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property;
- 5) Workmanship – the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory;
- 6) Feeling – a property’s expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time;
- 7) Association – the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.

2.3 Local

2.3.1 City of Berkeley Municipal Code

Chapter 3.24 of the City of Berkeley Municipal Code, also known as the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance, establishes the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC). The LPC maintains a list of structures, sites and areas, including landmarks and historic districts, having a special historical, architectural, or aesthetic interest or value. Criteria for designation are as follows.

- A. Landmarks and historic districts. General criteria which the commission shall use when considering structures, sites, and areas for landmark or historic district designation are:
 1. Architectural merit:
 - a) Property that is the first, last, only or most significant architectural property of its type in the region;
 - b) Properties that are prototypes of or outstanding examples of periods, styles, architectural movements or construction, or examples of the more notable works of the best surviving work in a region of an architect, designer or master builder;
 - c) or Architectural examples worth preserving for the exceptional values they add as part of the neighborhood fabric.
 2. Cultural value: Structures, sites and areas associated with the movement or evolution of religious, cultural, governmental, social and economic developments of the City;
 3. Educational value: Structures worth preserving for their usefulness as an educational force;

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4. Historic value: Preservation and enhancement of structures, sites and areas that embody and express the history of Berkeley/Alameda County/California/United States. History may be social, cultural, economic, political, religious or military;
 5. Any property which is listed on the National Register described in Section 470A of Title 16 of the United States Code.
- B. Structures of merit. Criteria which the commission shall use when considering a structure for structure of merit designation are as follows:
1. General criteria shall be architectural merit and/or cultural, educational, or historic interest or value. If upon assessment of a structure, the commission finds that the structure does not currently meet the criteria as set out for a landmark, but it is worthy of preservation as part of a neighborhood, a block or a street frontage, or as part of a group of buildings which includes landmarks, that structure may be designated a structure of merit.
 2. Specific criteria include, but are not limited to one or more of the following:
 - a) The age of the structure is contemporary with (1) a designated landmark within its neighborhood, block, street frontage, or group of buildings, or (2) an historic period or event of significance to the City, or to the structure's neighborhood, block, street frontage, or group of buildings.
 - b) The structure is compatible in size, scale, style, materials or design with a designated landmark structure within its neighborhood, block, street frontage, or group of buildings.
 - c) The structure is a good example of architectural design.
 - d) The structure has historical significance to the City and/or to the structure's neighborhood, block, street frontage, or group of buildings. (Ord. 5686-NS Section 1 (part), 1985; Ord. 4694-NS Section 3.1, 1974)

The LPC is also responsible for reviewing and deciding on permit applications for alterations to such structures and sites. According to Section 3.24.200, "No person shall carry out or cause to be carried out on a designated landmark, in a designated historic district or structure of merit, any construction, alteration, or demolition for which a City permit is required, without approval by the commission." To allow demolition of a landmark, the LPC must find that it "is in such condition that it is not feasible to preserve or restore it, taking into consideration the economic feasibility of alternatives to the proposal, and balancing the interest of the public in preserving the designated landmark, historic district or structure of merit or portion thereof and the interest of the owner of the landmark site, historic district, or structure of merit site in its utilization.

3 Site Description

Frances Willard Park is located in the residential neighborhood of Elmwood in southeast Berkeley. The park occupies a gently sloping site and is bounded by Derby Street (north), Hillegass Avenue (east), Willard Middle School (west), and single family residences with frontage on Regent Street and Hillegass Avenue, respectively (south). The facilities span just over 118,500 square feet on a 2.7-acre site. The park address is 2730 Hillegass Avenue (Assessor's Parcel Number 54-1711-27). It is owned and operated by the Parks Division of the City of Berkeley Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Department.

The park amenities include a large lawn area with mature trees, two lighted tennis courts, a tot play area, picnic area, paths made of historic cobblestones, and a clubhouse located in the southeastern corner of the park. The existing clubhouse consists of a 565-square-foot building, with an attached 114-square-foot restroom and 486-square-foot trellis area.

The focal point of the park is a large grass lawn and recreation area. Most of the other amenities, such as hardscaping/benches, the playground, and built environment features such as the clubhouse are located along the periphery of the central lawn. The lawn and park are framed and accented with mature trees throughout (a number of which pre-date the establishment of the park). Brick and stone hardscaping and planters also appear throughout, with a concentration of features along the northeastern entrance and eastern border of the park. Historic light standards line the western border of the park and are located throughout the park.

The principal built environment feature of the park is the clubhouse, located in the southeast corner of the park. One story in height, the clubhouse displays a series of aluminum-frame glazed doors, opening onto a patio space. The patio is sheltered beneath a simple wood trellis supported on metal pole supports. The walls display painted concrete-block and vertical wood planks. The original stone walkway and concrete stairs leading to an open rooftop area have been removed and replaced with a concrete-block restroom, fronted by a metal gate.

The northeast corner of the park features stone hardscaping and an entrance gate. Similar hardscaping features, with rough-hewn stone, are located near the entrance to the park and clubhouse, in the southeast portion of the park.

The western portion of the park is home to tennis courts and a playground area. In the northwestern corner of the park, at the sidewalk along Derby Street, is the 1978 "Potter's Wall," a low, undulating, decorative wall clad in recycled ceramics. The Potter's Wall was designed in the organic, expressive style of Spanish architect Antoni Gaudi. Planters and a bench are built into the wall.

The following photographs provide an overview of the spaces and features of Willard Park.

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Figure 3 Eastern entrance to park and clubhouse, east perspective



Figure 4 Rear (southeast) elevation of the clubhouse; the concrete block walls house a restroom added to the building in the 1990s



Figure 5 Overview of Willard Park Clubhouse, north perspective



Figure 6 Northwest corner of Willard Park, showing light standard, stone hardscaping, and mature trees in central lawn



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Figure 7 1978 Potter's Wall along Derby Street, northeast perspective



Figure 8 Overview of Willard Park, west perspective along Derby Street



Figure 9 Overview of Willard Park, lawn and trees, northwest perspective



Figure 10 Overview of Willard Park, lawn, trees, and playground, north perspective



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Figure 11 Overview of Willard Park, northeastern entrance gate



Figure 12 Overview of Willard Park, detail of northeastern entrance gate hardscaping



Figure 13 Overview of Willard Park, detail of hardscaping along east boundary/sidewalk



Figure 14 Overview of Willard Park, southeast perspective



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Figure 15 Overview of Willard Park, stone planters, east entrance



Figure 16 Overview of Willard Park, east entrance detail



4 Neighborhood Setting and Historic Context

4.1 Neighborhood History and Context

As noted above, Willard Park falls within the neighborhood of Elmwood in southeast Berkeley, located between the north-south corridors of College and Telegraph Avenues, south of the University of California, Berkeley.

During its founding years, Berkeley owed much of its initial development to its proximity to regional transportation routes, emerging commercial and industrial centers, and the establishment of the University of California, Berkeley. Originally founded in Oakland in 1855 as the “College of California,” the university relocated to Berkeley in 1866. The City of Berkeley incorporated in 1878, a year after the Southern Pacific Railroad line reached the Bay Area in 1877. Through the late nineteenth century, Berkeley remained a small town with emerging neighborhoods and commercial corridors, in particular along San Pablo and University Avenue, ringed by agricultural uses on the city periphery.

In addition, the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and fire caused widespread displacement and an exodus out of San Francisco to East Bay towns like Berkeley and Oakland. During the opening years of the twentieth century, the Elmwood neighborhood saw a great increase in new settlement and construction as a result of these and other factors.

In addition, in terms of the stylistic character of its early architecture, Berkeley and early neighborhoods like Elmwood became centers for the Arts and Crafts movement. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the City overall saw a flowering of Arts and Crafts architecture—in particular, in its “First Bay Tradition” of the Bay Area-influenced Arts and Crafts style. Early practitioners in Berkeley of the First Bay Tradition included architects such as Bernard Maybeck, Julia Morgan, John Galen Howard, Ernest and Almeric Coxhead, John Hudson Thomas, and James Placheck (many of whom not only practiced but also resided in the Berkeley Hills surrounding UC Berkeley).

The First Bay Tradition expanded on and redefined the Arts and Crafts architecture emerging on the East Coast in the work of architects such as Henry Hobson Richardson and McKim, Mead and White. One of the most significant West Coast innovations was the focus on site-specific design and creating connections between the indoors and outdoors, buildings, landscaping, and setting:

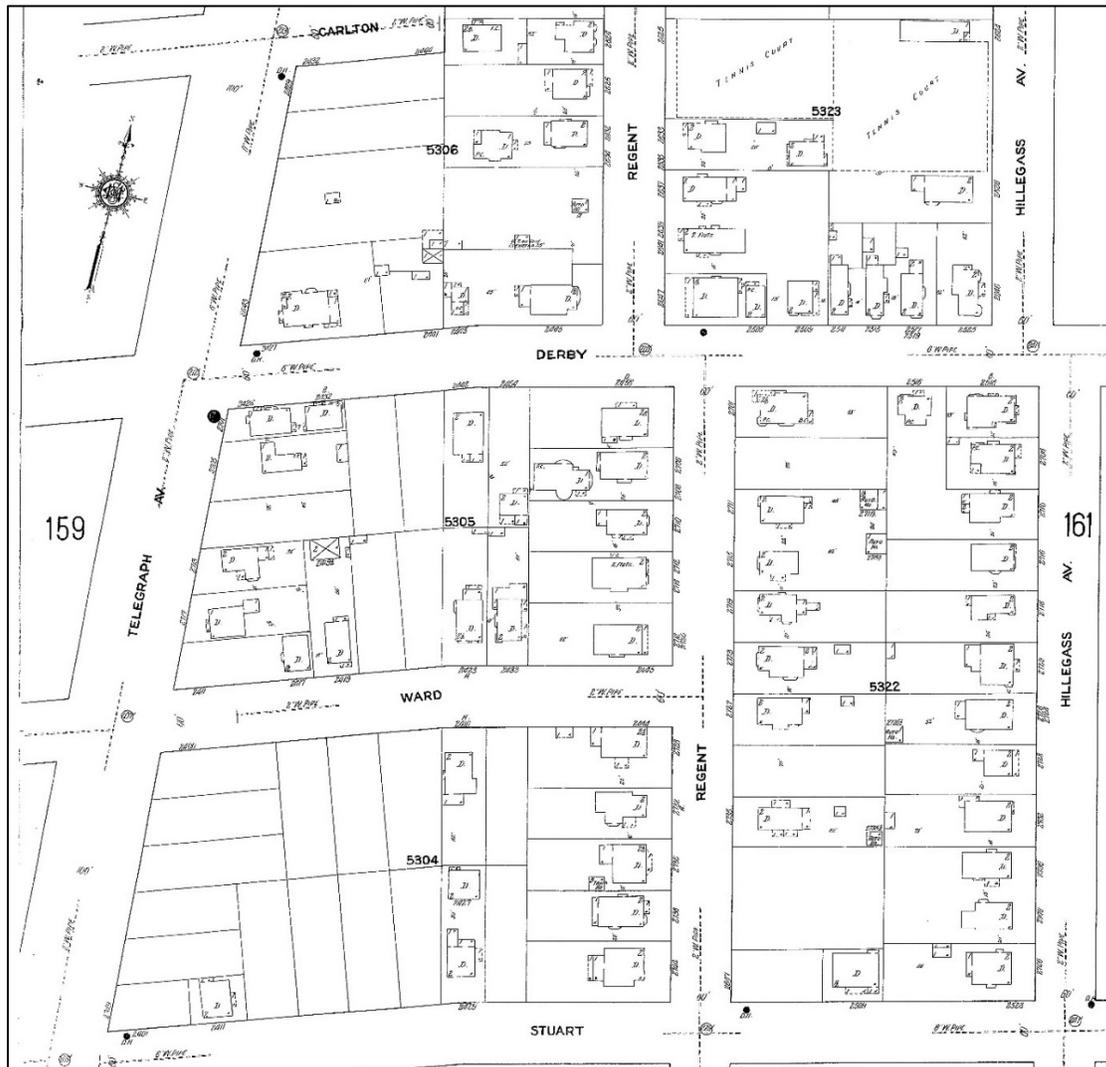
What the Bay Tradition added to the Shingle Style was environment, and in particular the generosity of and therefore, connection to outdoor space, open and cheerful western skies, hills alternating gold and green, and sculptural woodlands. In fact, it is the connections between setting, landscape and architecture where early Bay Area buildings fully succeeded the Shingle-Style of their Eastern mentors. (Preservation Architecture 2007)

In this way, Berkeley’s woodsy setting and indoor-outdoor integration became important features for the new First Bay Tradition. As William Wilson Wurster wrote, “The First Bay Tradition went beyond a strictly architectural expression; it also reflected a life style” (Stern Cerny 1990). Commentators at the time recognized this “unique quality” and cohesive, distinctive neighborhood character it created.

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With the post-1906 construction boom in Berkeley, including in Elmwood, the character of the residential neighborhood around and in Willard Park was one of Arts and Crafts-inspired Craftsman homes, clad with brown wood shingles and enveloped in landscaping. Some of the neighborhood's original landscaping, in the form of mature evergreen trees, survives in Willard Park. This general description was also reflected in the Home Owners' Loan Corporation 1937 survey of Elmwood. At the time, surveyors noted the "dignified" architectural character of the neighborhood's homes and the average date of construction of 1905 (HOLC 1937).¹ In terms of the neighborhood, it was deemed to have "excellent local and San Francisco transportation, convenient to schools, University of California, recreational facilities and local shopping centers" (HOLC 1937).

Figure 17 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, showing degree of build-out, by 1911, of Elmwood and future site of Willard Park



Source: Environmental Data Resources, 2020

¹ It is worth noting the highly problematic nature of Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) survey data. Conducted in cities throughout the United States in the 1930s, the HOLC program provided fuel for racially discriminatory housing practices. The resulting data provides a window onto 1930s-era neighborhoods that is rare and useful for its level of detail on the built environment but that generally should be not used without a caveat on the program and its negative, lasting effect on neighborhoods and communities of color.

Into the twentieth century, Berkeley expanded rapidly, through the meteoric growth of the University of California, Berkeley, the downtown commercial corridor, as well as industrial development along the city periphery. Residential expansion grew, as well, with neighborhoods into the Berkeley flats and hills showing increasing numbers of new tracts and residential settlement.

With the advent of the automobile, as well as road construction and infrastructure improvements, residential development expanded further from the city's historical center. During and immediately after World War II, the combination of in-migration to California and the postwar baby boom fueled further growth, and Berkeley approached its peak population of over 110,000 by 1950.

The City rapid population growth coincided with massive, Cold War-era investments in American public universities. A prime beneficiary of federal research grants, the University of California, Berkeley, experienced postwar surge in enrollments, which grew from 7,700 in 1944 to 21,000 in 1946. The University's growth contributed to Berkeley's emergence as intellectual center. By the 1960s, Berkeley was transformed from a small town to a cosmopolitan "republic of letters where independent newspapers, poetry, music, art, and theater proliferated" (Suri 2004).

In terms of Elmwood and the area around Willard Park, it had been largely developed for residential use by the opening decades of the twentieth century. The proximity to the north-south corridors of Telegraph Avenue to the south and College Avenue to the north made the neighborhood accessible to downtown shopping areas and the Civic Center as well as UC Berkeley to the north. As shown on the 1911 Sanborn Fire Insurance map, the neighborhood primarily consisted of axial, residential-sized lots on a rectilinear street grid. Nearly all of the lots had already been improved with two-story, single-family homes. At this time, Regent Street followed an uninterrupted course between Stuart and Derby Streets. As of 1911, Frances Willard School, which is currently located immediately west of the park, had not yet been developed, and the school site was home to several residences (ProQuest 2020).

As of 1939, the year the first available aerial photograph of the area was taken, the area was fully developed and had much the same predominantly residential character as it has today (Figure 18).

By 1946, the clearing of former residential parcels between Regent Street and Telegraph Avenue had begun in order to construct Frances Willard School. The school was expanded and its older buildings razed and replaced over the next two decades.

Aside from a modest increase in commercial and/or institutional development along Telegraph and College avenues, there were few notable changes to the subject property or its vicinity until after 1968 (EDR 2020).

The following aerial photographs present a visual overview of the construction chronology of Willard Park and the surrounding neighborhood.

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Figure 18 1939 aerial of Willard Park (in red) and surrounding neighborhood, which consists primarily of early twentieth-century homes on an axial street grid, with mature landscaping throughout



Figure 19 1968 aerial of Willard Park (in red) and surrounding neighborhood, a year prior to the construction of Willard Park



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Figure 20 1974 aerial of Willard Park (in red) and surrounding neighborhood; People's Park appears in the third block directly to the north from Willard Park

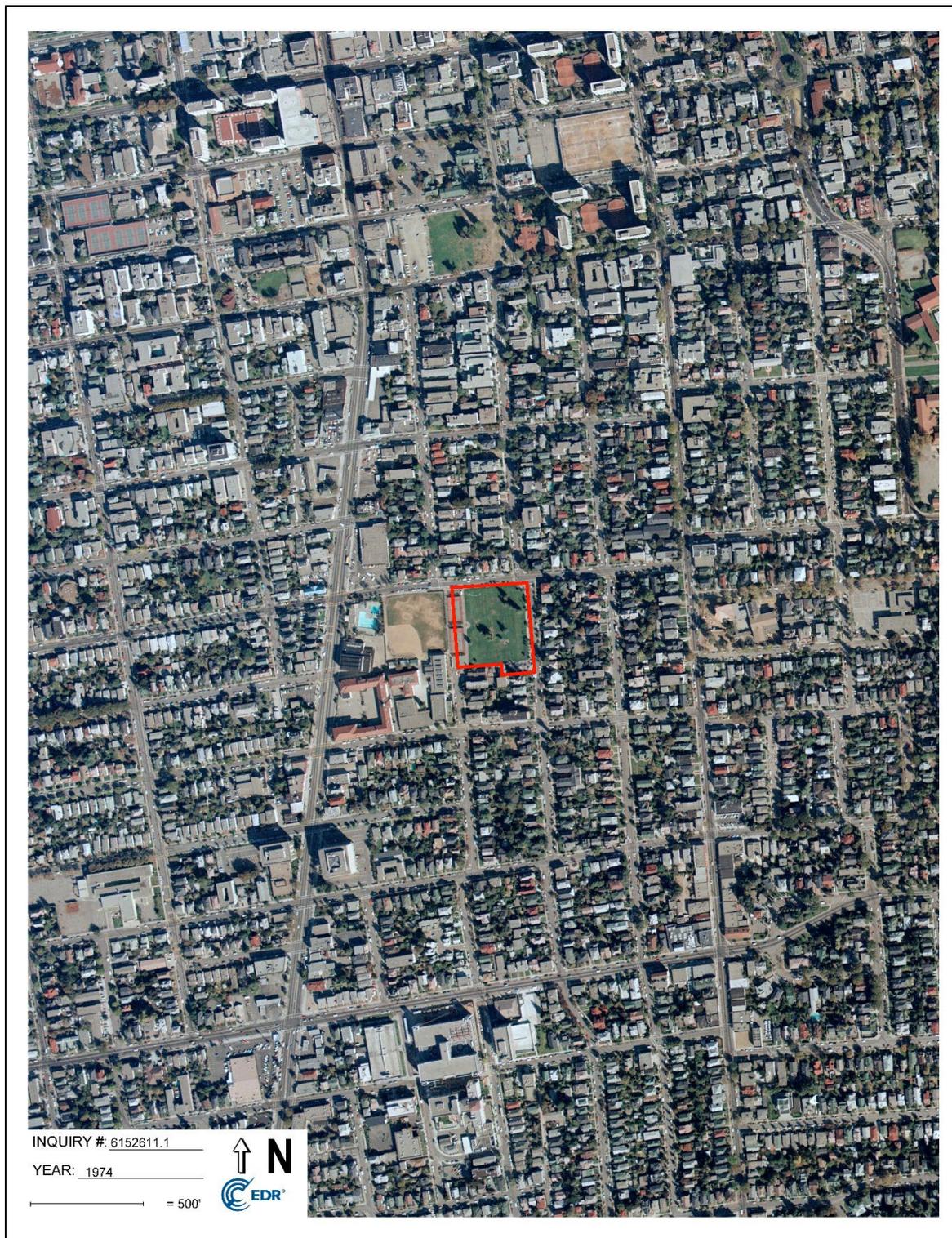


Figure 21 Detail of the Willard Park area immediately before and after construction, in 1968 and 1974; surviving mature trees appear in the 1974 image



4.2 Willard Park Construction Chronology and Social History

Planning for Willard Park began in 1950s, as city officials recognized the need for a recreational facility in southeast Berkeley, and ultimately chose the subject site for redevelopment as a park (Oakland Tribune 9/17/1957). The City Council began authorizing the piecemeal acquisition of residential properties in the area by 1957 (Oakland Tribune 7/24/1957). While some property owners sold their homes willingly, opposition to the park plan arose, spearheaded by Southeast Berkeley Property Owners' Association, whose officers all resided on the 2700 block of Hillegass Avenue, where the park would be constructed. According to reporting by the Oakland Tribune, the organization was established "to protect their private homes and income property in the Hillegass-Derby-Regent block against" the development of the proposed park (Oakland Tribune 9/26/1957).

By 1964, the City had purchased most of the 17 parcels earmarked by local planners, but the program stalled briefly (City of Berkeley Parks Division 2020). In 1968, land acquisitions resumed, after the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded local authorities a series of open space land grants to cover half the cost of acquiring the six parcels the City had not yet purchased. In April 1969, after years of planning and preparation, an agreement was reached for Willard Park to move forward as a user-developed park with joint use between the City and Willard Junior High School. That same year, in 1969, the remaining buildings and homes were demolished and removed, and the interim park was constructed by the fall of 1969. Construction for the park moved forward, with amenities including a "recreation building, tot lot, play lot, turf field, tennis and basketball courts" (Oakland Tribune 1/19/1968).

According to the original drawings, the clubhouse was designed by the San Francisco-based firm of Daniel R. Osborne and Zach R. Stewart (available drawings do not specify a landscape architect). Both architects attended the architecture program at Stanford University, and after working on for separate firms in the 1950s and early 1960s, the two started their firm in the mid-1960s (Online Archive of California 2021). The firm was extremely well-known in the Berkeley architecture scene as well as the cultural and social developments of 1960s San Francisco. The firm designed the staging for the Trips Festival at Longshoreman's Hall in 1966, the America Needs Indians and Sensorium series, and the 4,000 Years concerts at Grace Cathedral (Online Archive of California 2021). Their works include elementary schools in Nevada County, the Ahwahnee pool and the dining hall at Sunrise High Sierra Camp at Yosemite National Park, the Plumas County Museum, and poet Gary Snyder's private residence on San Juan Ridge in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada.

Before the park was officially inaugurated on June 20, 1971, the community utilized the park for gatherings (explored in more detail below). In 1976, the park's tot lot playground was renovated; in May 1982, the park was renamed for Frances Willard, a suffragette and temperance leader.

Figure 22 As-built drawings of Willard Park Clubhouse, east elevation, with original cobblestone wall and stairs leading to rooftop space; the cobblestone wall and stairs were removed in the 1990s

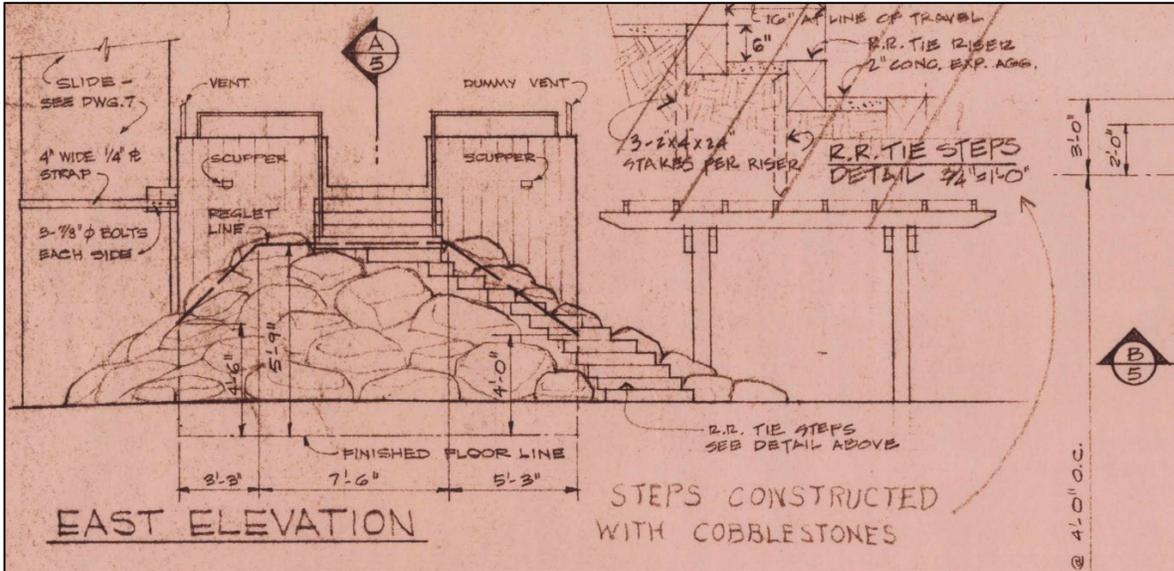
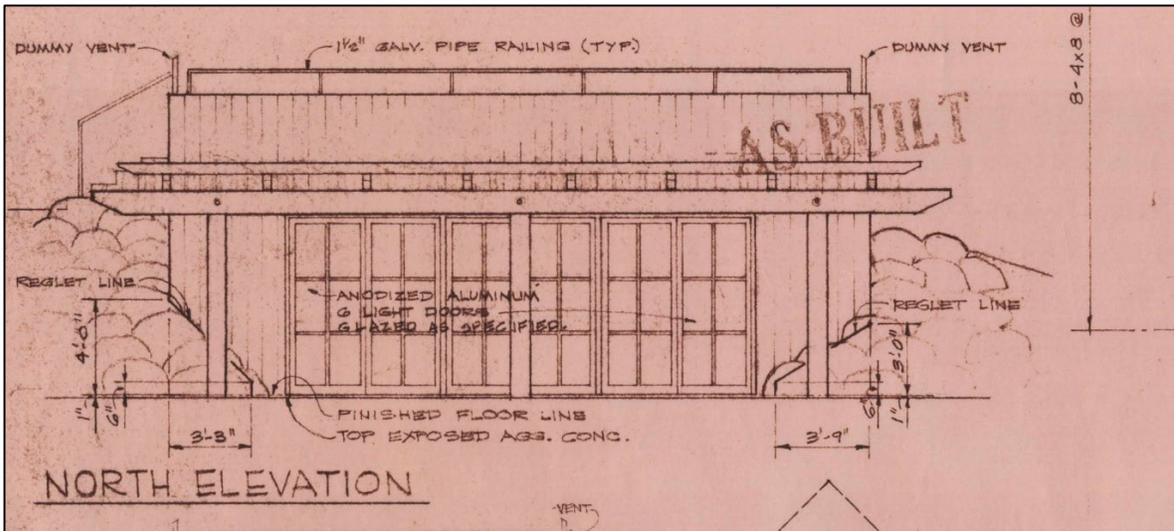
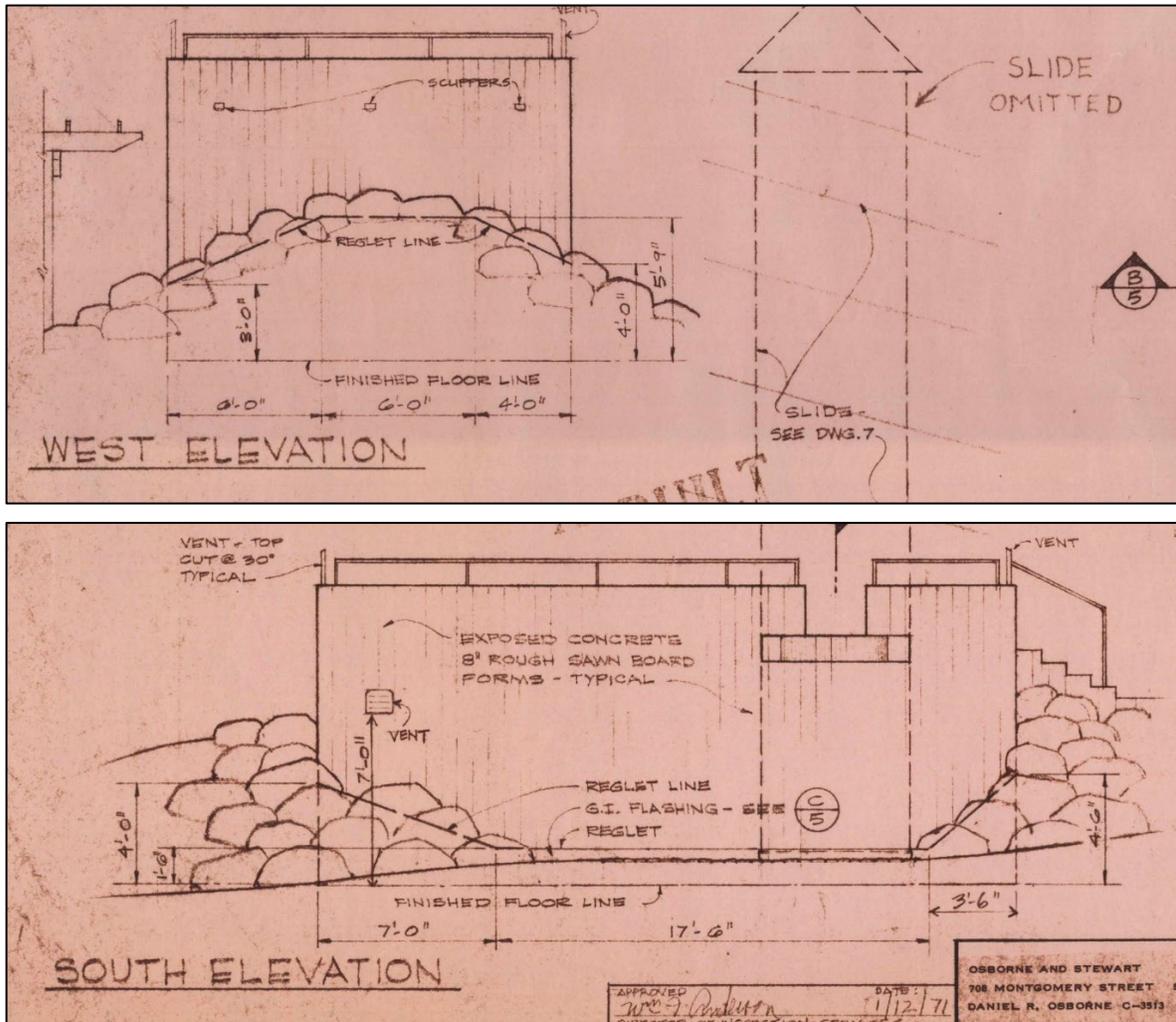


Figure 23 As-built drawings of Willard Park Clubhouse, façade (top), with original cobblestone features on east and west elevations; west elevation (center); and south elevation (bottom)



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When initial development of the park began in the 1969, the site became linked to an ongoing controversy over People’s Park, located two blocks to the north. Mayor Wallace J.S. Johnson announced the City’s plans to begin construction of Willard Park in May, just days into the political fight over People’s Park.

At the core of the People’s Park protests was the contention among some activists that restrictions imposed by the University of California, Berkeley, for on-campus political activities had created the need for an off-campus “free-speech area,” as an alternative to Sproul Plaza. During Willard Park’s first years of operation, People’s Park site remained off-limits by University decree, and Willard Park served as a base for political demonstrations (Wittmeyer 2004).

Political pressure seems to have hastened the City’s opening of Willard Park. Construction began in the fall of 1969, and the park soon opened with an interim design consisting solely of a “turfed” field. Further landscaping, buildings, other amenities were scheduled for development in the near-term (Oakland Tribune 9/19/1969).

Even before the park’s official inauguration in 1971, organizers soon put the space to use as an off-campus site for demonstrations concerning People’s Park, the Vietnam War, and other political

issues of the day. In the spirit of the times, activists nicknamed the space Ho Chi Minh Park, a name that remained in use unofficially for many years (Branning 1970; San Francisco Examiner 1982).

On July 4, 1970, the park served as the starting point for a 300-strong march along Telegraph Avenue toward the UC Berkeley campus. Marking “Liberation Day” or alternately “Anti-Honor America Day,” the demonstration culminated in violence between protesters and police. By one report, “[protesters] threw rocks and firecrackers” and “city and campus police chased them in full battle gear” (Oakland Tribune 7/5/1970; 7/6/1970 San Francisco Examiner 7/12/1970). In December 1971, the antiwar organization Bay Area Veterans Against the War received permission to host an event at Willard Park. About 150 veterans camped at the park to “make sure that ‘people at Christmas don’t forget there’s no peace on earth’” (San Francisco Examiner 12/21/1971).

On May 8, 1972, Willard Park served as the starting point for a rally and march that was pivotal in the permanent opening of People’s Park. The event began as a large non-violent demonstration against President Richard M. Nixon’s authorization of the mining of Haiphong Harbor near Hanoi. However, by evening the atmosphere had turned “riotous,” and protesters clashed with police in the streets. The conflict culminated in protesters’ dismantling of the eight-foot chain-link fence that lined the perimeter of the People’s Park site (Oakland Tribune 5/9/1972). The University subsequently acceded to the activists’ demands and allowed construction of the People’s Park to resume.

After 1972, the use of Willard Park for political gatherings appears to have declined. A search of the newspaper database newspapers.com shows that at least one more major political rally took place at the park following the reopening of People’s Park (a November 8, 1972 demonstration over Nixon’s reelection) (Oakland Tribune 11/2/1972). Search results on Independent Voices, an online database of underground and alternative periodicals, shows a similar decline after 1972 (Independent Voices 2020). However, even with waning activism against the Vietnam War, the park continued to host large events falling in a generally countercultural milieu.

Through the early 1970s, Willard Park was the site the Society for Krishna Consciousness’ annual Lord Chaitanya festival, which began at Sproul Plaza with a parade and ended in a day long fete at Willard Park (San Francisco Examiner 3/14/1971; Oakland Tribune 3/3/1972; Berkeley Gazette 3/9/1973). By 1973 and until at least as recently as 1981, the park was home to the annual East Bay Gay Day (later East Bay Lesbian/Gay Day) festival, sponsored by East Bay Gay and other gay and lesbian rights organizations (Berkeley Gazette 6/19/1973; 6/18/1974; 6/20/1975; 6/1/1976; 6/17/1978; North East Bay Independent and Gazette 5/15/1981).

In addition, in 1974, a memorial service for Angela Atwood, who was one of six Symbionese Liberation Army members killed in a Los Angeles gunfight (San Francisco Examiner (3/9/1974). Other events at the park in this period marked the Greenpeace Save the Wales campaign and Earth Day, in addition to multiple performances by the San Francisco Mime Troupe (Berkeley Gazette 9/10/1976; North East Bay Independent and Gazette 6/19/1978).

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Figure 24 Lord Chaitanya Festival at Willard Park, 1974



In addition to its role as a public gathering space during the late 1960s and early 1970s, Willard Park served as a neighborhood park for area families, residents, and visitors. In 1970, in support of expanding the park's amenities, the Willard Park Citizens Committee approved designs for a second phase of development (City of Berkeley Parks Division 2020). Features of the new development included a playground, clubhouse, mural wall, tennis courts, restroom and pay phone kiosks, and new landscaping. The park centered on the Arts and Crafts-inspired clubhouse, with its distinctive cobblestone walls and open stairs, and adjacent playground, located at the northeast corner of the park.

Two notable motifs in the park's landscape design were the use of sizeable boulders, cobblestones, and similar masonry elements to mark boundaries. Removed in the 1990s, the cobblestone walls flanking the clubhouse, for example, and boulder alignments in other areas, were key features of the park's design. Original site plans depict large collections of boulders partially enclosing the playground, lining the boundary with an adjacent nursery school, and providing a barrier at the Regent Street dead end (City of Berkeley Department of Public Works 1971). Historic photographs of the park show that, in some locations, boulders were stacked several feet high (WD Watson 2006).

Masonry elements in the 1971 plans included a low wall, curb strip, and edge strip. An original drinking fountain was also constructed with a rough-hewn masonry pedestal and basin (City of Berkeley Department of Public Works 1971). While there are no remnants of the boulders and some masonry features have been removed, the masonry motif remains evident in the drinking fountain base. The figures below depict features constructed in the park's second phase of development.

In May 1978, the Potter’s Wall feature was constructed to the north of the tennis court. Influenced by Spanish architect Antoni Gaudi’s designs for Parque Guell in Barcelona, Spain, local sculptor Andrew Werby designed the wall as structure with an irregular, organic form clad in a recycled ceramics applique. A crew of volunteers constructed the approximately 50-foot long, 3-foot high concrete form using the “stack sack” method (Wescover 2020; North East Bay Independent and Gazette 5/18/1978; 5/23/1978). Planters and a bench were built into the wall. The Alameda County Neighborhood Council, California Arts Council, and City of Berkeley funded the wall’s construction with a combined \$1,600 in grants. Merchants donated materials, and local potters donated the ceramic shards worked into the face of the wall (North East Bay Independent and Gazette 5/23/1978).

Figure 25 Willard Park Clubhouse, East and North Elevations, ca. 1980; photo shows the original stonewalls and features flanking the building



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Figure 26 Play Lot and Tot Lot, Facing West, ca. 1980



Figure 27 View of Willard Park from Hillegass Avenue, Facing Southwest, ca. 1980



Figure 28 Detail of original stone walls and stairs, Willard Park Clubhouse, ca. 1980



In 1982, the park was formally dedicated to Frances Willard, a reformer who founded the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WTCU) in 1878. Although the site had been in use as Willard Park for over a decade, it had not been opened officially. Members of the WTCU joined local political leaders for a dedication ceremony, which also marked the completion of a \$20,000 renovation of the “tot area” funded under the 1974 Measure Y bond issue (North East Bay independent and Gazette 5/7/1982; City of Berkeley Parks Division 2020).

In the late 1980s and 1990s, the neighborhood advocacy organization Friends of Willard Park spearheaded several improvements to the park. These included the construction of a new “tot lot;” improved lighting, irrigation, and circulation measures; laying of a new cobblestone entry on Hillegass Avenue; and a “rose walk” near the Potter’s Wall. The latter project was designed in part to deter overnight camping in the park, which had been an issue of contention since at least as early as 1990 (FWP 1997; Guttman 1990).

In addition, the City carried out a variety of projects at the park, including the addition of restrooms to the clubhouse and removal of the stone features in 1991 and construction of new circulation paths and changes to the children’s play areas in circa 1994 (City of Berkeley Department of Public Works 1991; 1994). These projects led to the removal of several features constructed in the 1970s, including the stone walls and steps on the east elevation of the clubhouse, the restroom and pay phone kiosks, and the original playground areas.

The following drawings from the original as-built plans and 1991 alterations show the appearance of the clubhouse following the removal of stone walls and rooftop stairs and construction of concrete-block addition. According to the 1991 architectural plans, the stones removed from the clubhouse were relocated to Aquatic Park in west Berkeley.

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Figure 29 North elevation, as-built design (top) and 1991 alterations (bottom), showing the removal the cobblestone framing and features on the east and west elevations

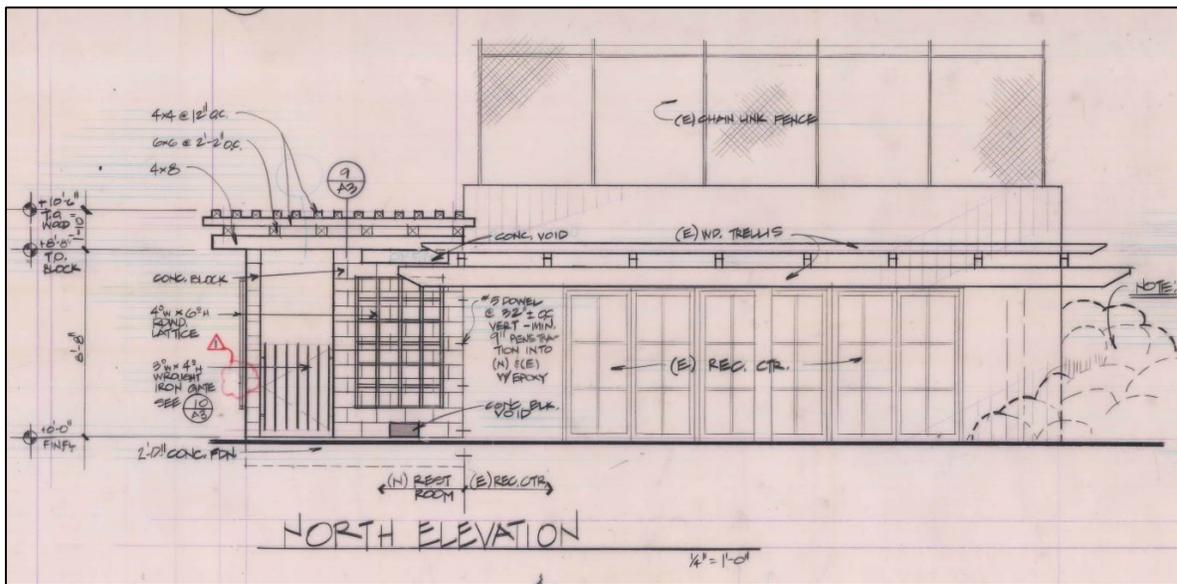
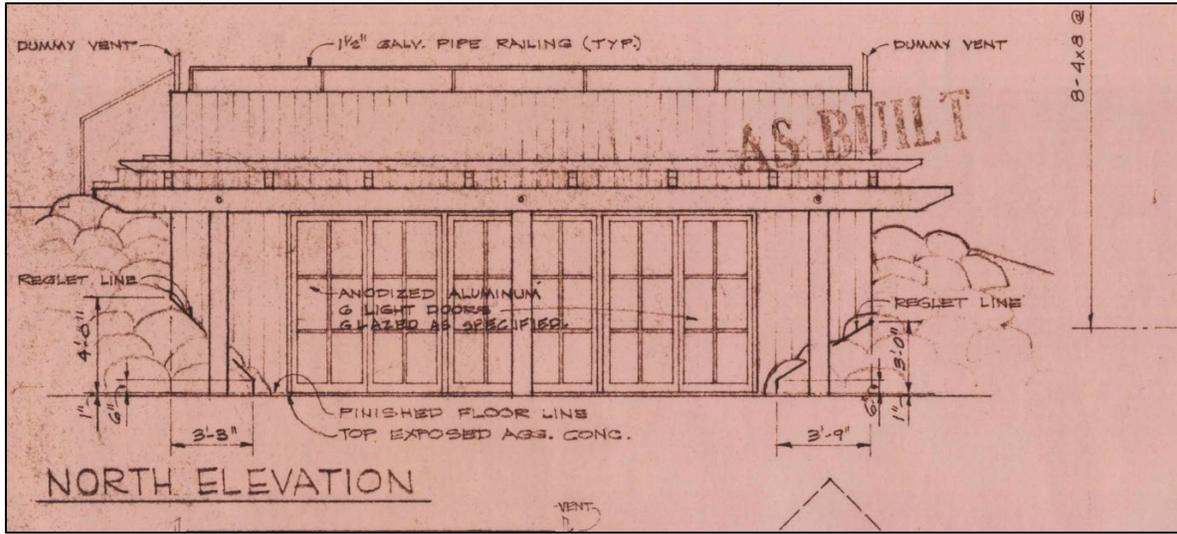
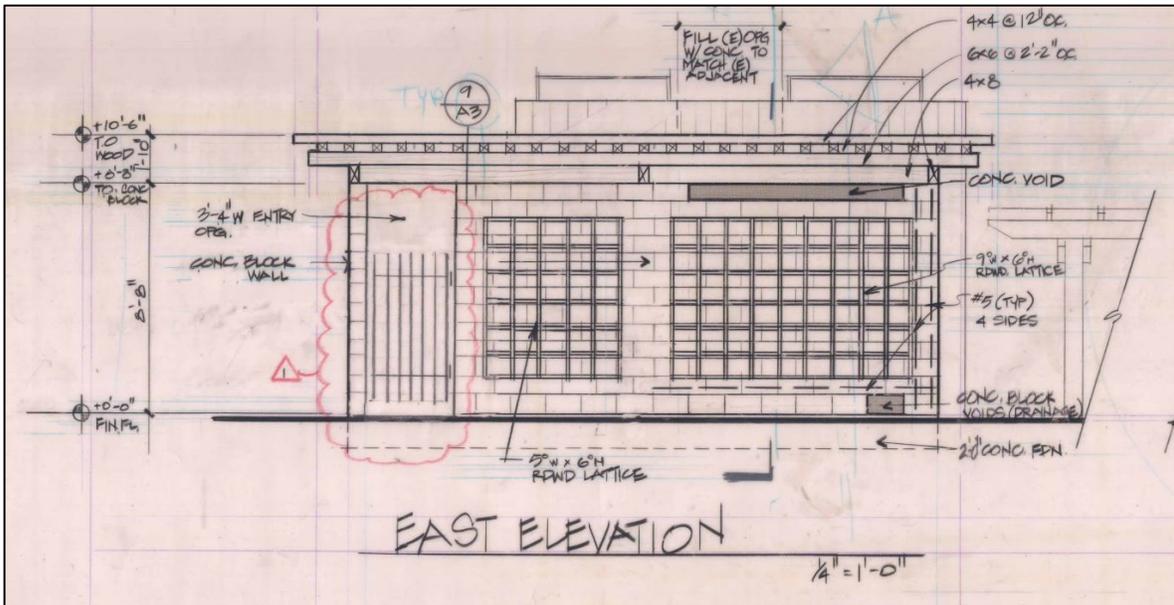
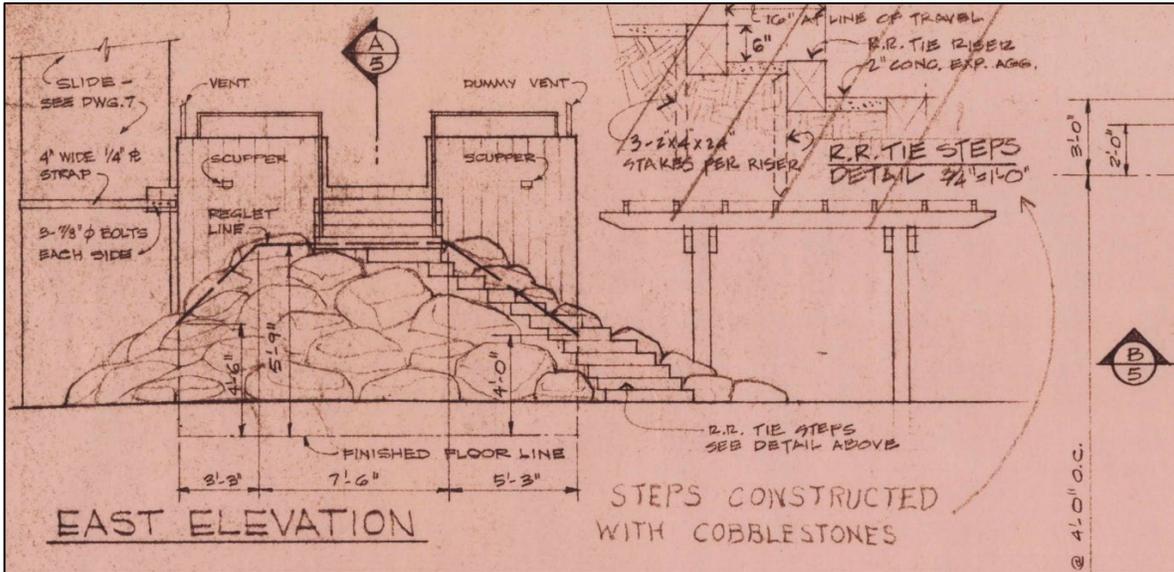


Figure 30 East elevation, with original cobblestone wall and stairs (top) and new 1991 plans (bottom), with cobblestone wall and stairs removed



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Figure 31 West elevation, with as-built original cobblestone features (top) and 1991 appearance and new concrete-block wall (bottom)

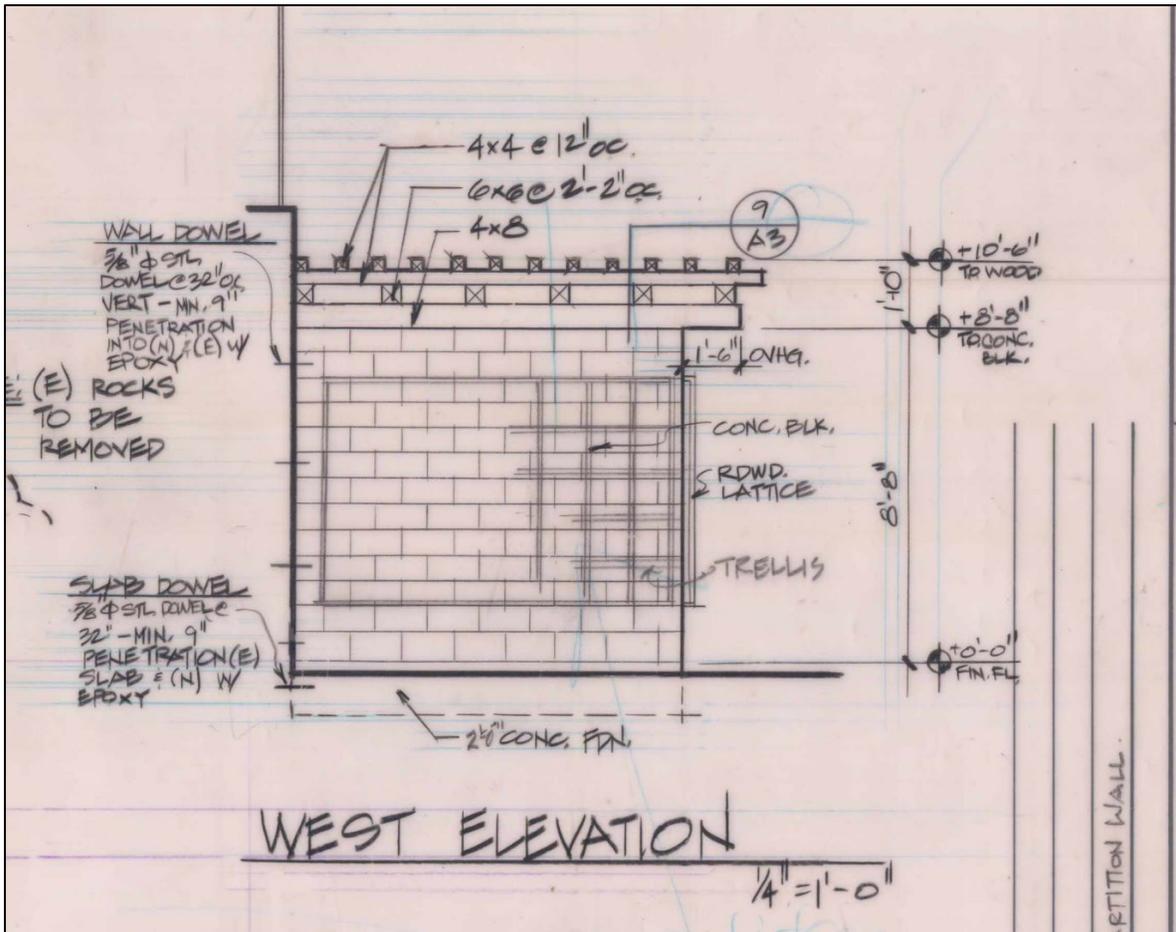
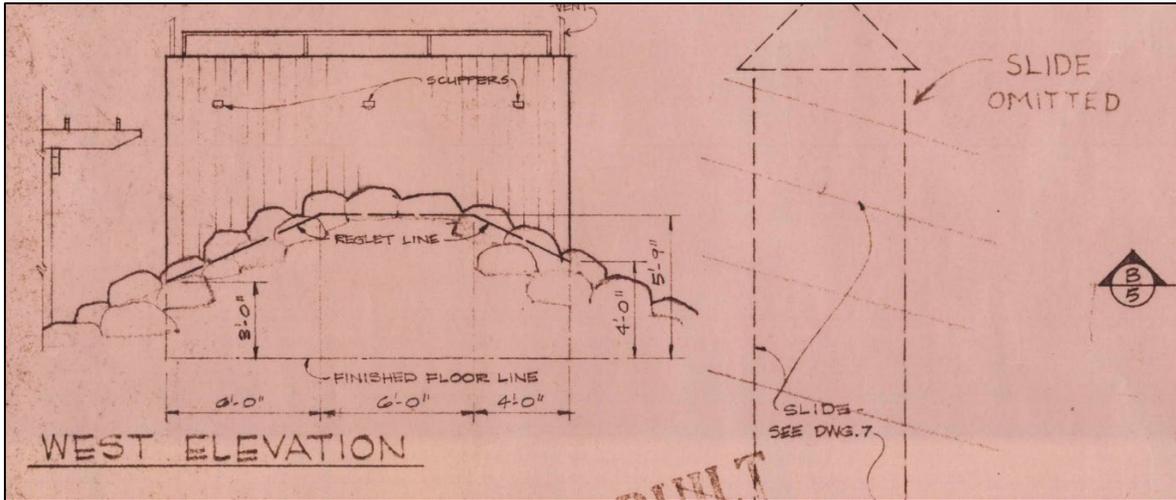
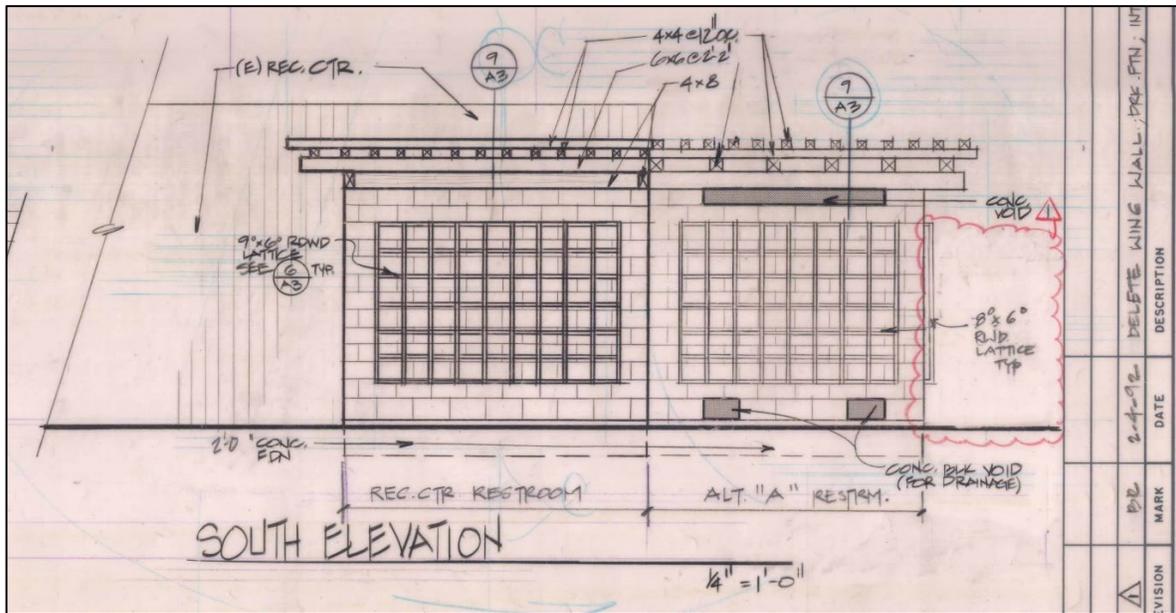
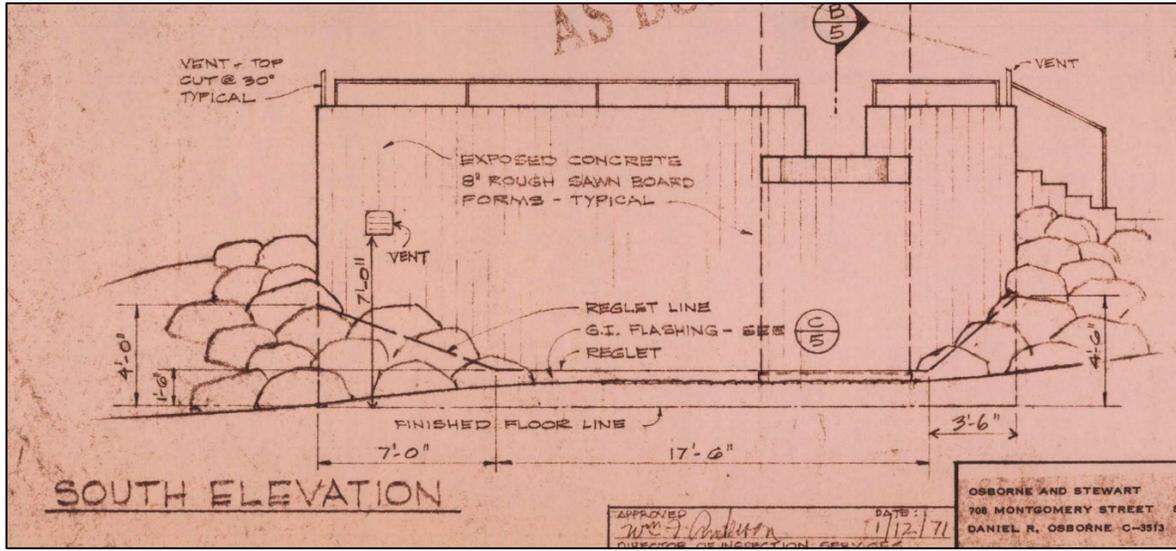


Figure 32 South elevation, with original cobblestone feature flanking the building (top) and 1991 plans for removal of cobblestone features (bottom)



5 Evaluation

Willard Park and its components—including the clubhouse and other built features—do not appear to meet the criteria for landmark listing at the federal, state, or local level, either as individual resources, a historic district, or a cultural landscape. The park and its components do not meet the criteria associated with significant events, patterns of development, or people who were significant in the history of the city, region, state, or nation. The park and its components, including the clubhouse, do not represent a distinctive example of an architectural type or style, or the work of a master. Because Willard Park and its features do not qualify for federal, state, or local list, neither the park nor any of its components qualify as historical resources pursuant to CEQA.

As noted in Section 4, as a public space in Berkeley in the late 1960s/early 1970s, Willard Park had a brief association with the Antiwar Movement and other grassroots political movements. The City of Berkeley opened Willard Park as an interim park space in the fall of 1969. Before the official inauguration of the park in June 1971, prior to the opening of People’s Park, Berkeley activists unofficially renamed the property Ho Chi Minh Park and began using it for socializing, entertainment, education, political organizing, and political demonstrations.

Between 1969 and 1972, the park was the site of several rallies and marches. Although use of the park for antiwar and free speech events was short-lived (those activities declined after 1972), the park remained the site of community festivals, such as the Lord Chaitanya Festival and early occurrences of East Bay Lesbian/Gay Day, and alternative arts performances, including several by the famed San Francisco Mime Troupe.

While this association with community activism and culture is noteworthy, it is relatively short when compared with the history of People’s Park; for Willard Park, research identified through this study did not suggest that this association rises to the level required to confer eligibility as a landmark at the federal, state, or local level.

In addition, research did not reveal an association of the park with any individuals known to have made significant contributions to the history of the city, state, region or nation. Its design and architecture are that of a typical neighborhood park, and neither the park as a whole nor any of its components embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values. Willard Park also appears ineligible under the remaining City of Berkeley Landmark designation criteria.

Given the park’s brief but noteworthy history as a gathering space for antiwar, counter-culture, and Free Speech movement events, Willard Park appears to warrant special consideration in local planning (6L California Historic Resources Status code). The 6L code does not confer status as a historical resource per CEQA but is used to signal that local planning may wish to extend special consideration to the resource.

(Depending on the City’s plans and needs, special consideration in local planning could take the form of creating interpretive panels to document and share Willard Park’s history with the public. Such interpretive information could include the pre-park history as a neighborhood of early twentieth-century wood-shingled homes, as well as the park’s role in Berkeley’s counter-culture movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. This, however, is not a mitigation measure but rather an option should the City wish to recognize the park’s history in this manner. The 6L CHR status code does not trigger any requirements under the LPC ordinance or CEQA.)

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Appendix A

DPR Series 523 Forms

State of California — The Resources Agency DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION PRIMARY RECORD		Primary # HRI # Trinomial NRHP Status Code 6Z
Other Listings Review Code	Reviewer	Date

Page 1 of 10

*Resource Name or #: Frances Willard Park

P1. Other Identifier: Willard Park, 2730 Hillegass Avenue

***P2. Location:** Not for Publication Unrestricted *a. County: Alameda

and (P2b and P2c or P2d. Attach a Location Map as necessary.)

*b. **USGS 7.5' Quad:** Oakland West **Date:** 1993 T 01S; R 04W; ¼ of ¼ of Sec 12 ; S.B. B.M.
 c. Address: 2730 Hillegass Avenue City: Berkeley Zip: 94705
 d. UTM: Zone: ; mE/ mN (G.P.S.)
 e. Other Locational Data: (e.g., parcel #, directions to resource, elevation, etc., as appropriate)
 Assessor's Parcel Number 54-1711-27

***P3a. Description:** (Describe resource and its major elements. Include design, materials, condition, alterations, size, setting, and boundaries)

Frances Willard Park is located in the residential neighborhood of Elmwood in southeast Berkeley. The park occupies a gently sloping site and is bounded by Derby Street (north), Hillegass Avenue (east), Willard Middle School (west), and single family residences with frontage on Regent Street and Hillegass Avenue, respectively (south). The facilities span just over 118,500 square feet on a 2.7-acre site. The park address is 2730 Hillegass Avenue (Assessor's Parcel Number 54-1711-27). It is owned and operated by the Parks Division of the City of Berkeley Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Department. Description continued on page 4 of the Continuation Sheet.

***P3b. Resource Attributes:** HP29. Landscape Architecture. HP31. Urban Open Space.

***P4. Resources Present:** Building Structure Object Site District Element of District Other (Isolates, etc.)

P5a. Photo or Drawing (Photo required for buildings, structures, and objects.)



P5b. Description of Photo: (View, date, accession #)
View southwest of the clubhouse.

***P6. Date Constructed/Age and Sources:** Historic
 Prehistoric Both
 1969, Original As-built drawings

***P7. Owner and Address:**
 Parks Division of the City of Berkeley
 Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront
 Department
 2180 Milvia Street
 Berkeley, CA 94704

***P8. Recorded by:** (Name, affiliation, and address)
 Rincon Consultants, Inc.
 180 N. Ashwood
 Ventura, CA 93003

***P9. Date Recorded:** 9/16/2021

***P10. Survey Type:** (Describe) Intensive

***P11. Report Citation:** (Cite survey report and other sources, or enter "none.")

Howell-Ardila, Debi. 2021. *Frances Willard Park, Berkeley, California Historic Resources Evaluation Report*. Rincon Consultants Project No. 20-09331.

***Attachments:** NONE Location Map Sketch Map Continuation Sheet Building, Structure, and Object Record
 Archaeological Record District Record Linear Feature Record Milling Station Record Rock Art Record
 Artifact Record Photograph Record Other (List):

DPR 523A (1/95)

*Required information

State of California — The Resources Agency DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION BUILDING, STRUCTURE, AND OBJECT RECORD	Primary # HRI#
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*NRHP Status Code 6L

*Resource Name or # (Assigned by recorder) Frances Willard Park

- B1. Historic Name: Frances Willard Park
 B2. Common Name: Willard Park, 2730 Hillegass Avenue
 B3. Original Use: Public Park
 B4. Present Use: Public Park

*B5. Architectural Style: N/A

*B6. Construction History: (Construction date, alterations, and date of alterations)

Planning for Willard Park began in 1950s, as city officials recognized the need for a recreational facility in southeast Berkeley, and ultimately chose the subject site for redevelopment as a park (Oakland Tribune 9/17/1957). The City Council began authorizing the piecemeal acquisition of residential properties in the area by 1957 (Oakland Tribune 7/24/1957). While some property owners sold their homes willingly, opposition to the park plan arose, spearheaded by Southeast Berkeley Property Owners' Association, whose officers all resided on the 2700 block of Hillegass Avenue, where the park would be constructed. According to reporting by the Oakland Tribune, the organization was established "to protect their private homes and income property in the Hillegass-Derby-Regent block against" the development of the proposed park (Oakland Tribune 9/26/1957). See Continuation Sheet page 4.

*B7. Moved? No Yes Unknown Date: Original Location:

*B8. Related Features:

- B9a. Architect: Daniel R. Osborne and Zach R. Stewart
 b. Builder: Not Identified

*B10. Significance: Theme: N/A

Area: N/A

Period of Significance: N/A

Property Type: N/A

Applicable Criteria: N/A

(Discuss importance in terms of historical or architectural context as defined by theme, period, and geographic scope. Also address integrity.)

Willard Park and its components – including the clubhouse and other built features – do not appear to meet the criteria for landmark listing at the federal, state, or local level, either as individual resources, a historic district, or a cultural landscape. The park and its components are not associated with significant events, patterns of development, or people who were significant in the history of the city, region, state, or nation (Criteria A/1 and B/2). The park and its components, including the clubhouse, do not represent a distinctive example of an architectural type or style, or the work of a master (Criteria C/3). The cultural resources records search and archival research did not identify any evidence to suggest the property has potential to yield important information. The property is not eligible under Criterion D/4. Because Willard Park and its features do not qualify for federal, state, or local list, neither the park nor any of its components qualify as historical resources pursuant to CEQA. See Continuation Sheet page 4.

B11. Additional Resource Attributes: (List attributes and codes)

*B12. References:

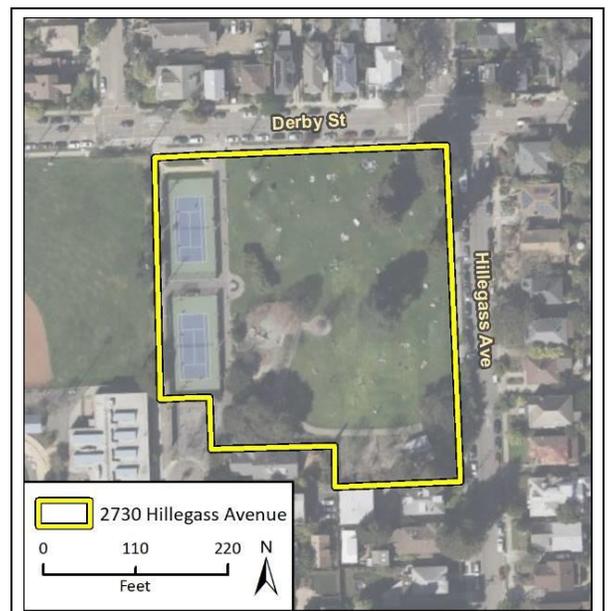
See Continuation Sheet page 4.

B13. Remarks:

*B14. Evaluator: Ashley Losco, Rincon Consultants, Inc.

*Date of Evaluation: September 16, 2021

(This space reserved for official comments.)



State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
LOCATION MAP

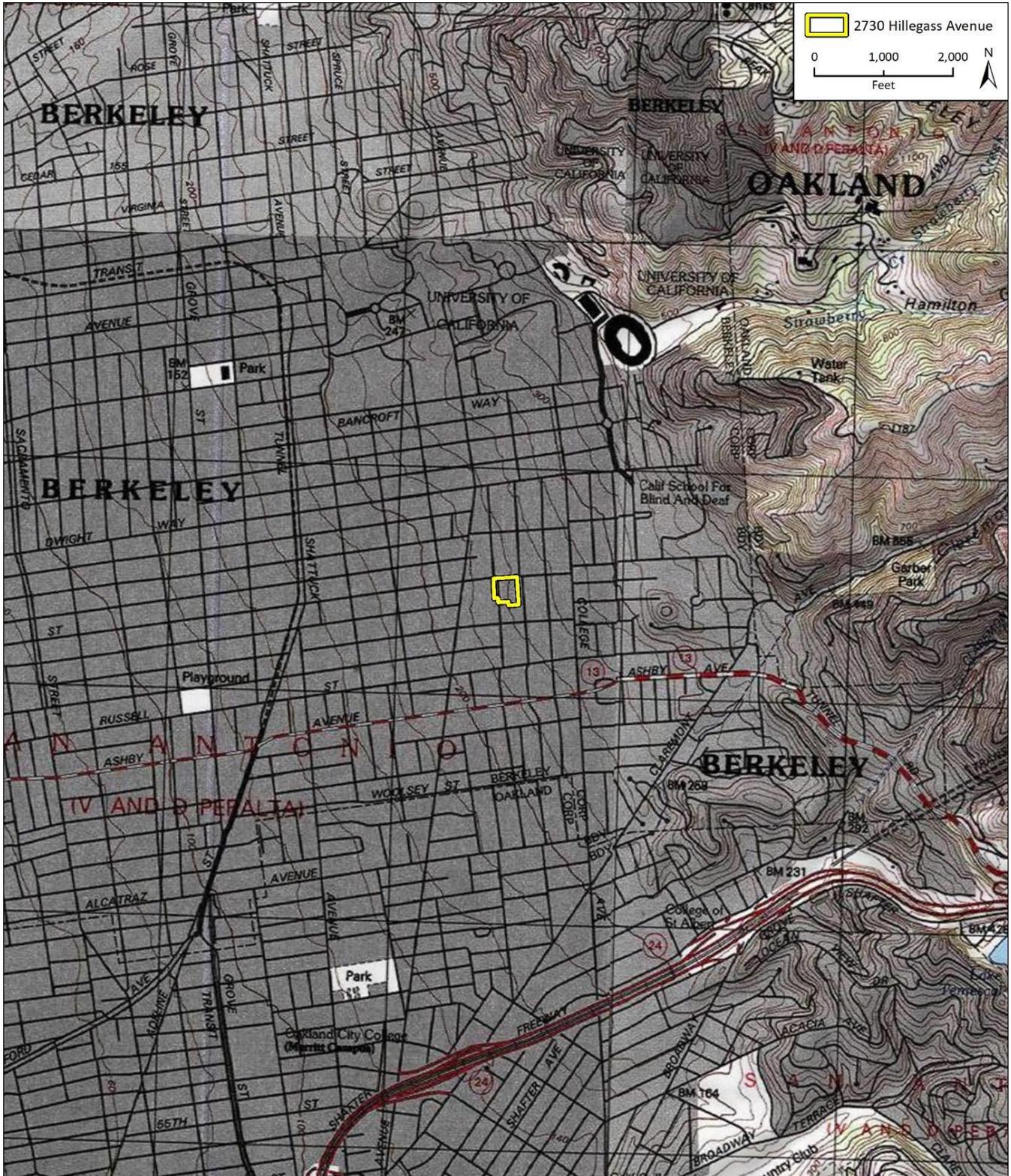
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*Resource Name or #: Frances Willard Park

*Map Name: USGS Oakland West Quadrangle

*Scale: 1:24,000 *Date of Map: 1993



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DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

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*Resource Name or # Frances Willard Park

*Recorded by: Rincon Consultants, Inc.

*Date: 9/16/2021

■ Continuation □ Update

***P3a. Description (Continued from Page 1):**

The park amenities include a large lawn area with mature trees, two lighted tennis courts, a tot play area, picnic area, paths made of historic cobblestones, and a clubhouse located in the southeastern corner of the park. The existing clubhouse consists of a 565-square-foot building, with an attached 114-square-foot restroom and 486-square-foot trellis area.

The focal point of the park is a large grass lawn and recreation area. Most of the other amenities, such as hardscaping/benches, the playground, and built environment features such as the clubhouse are located along the periphery of the central lawn. The lawn and park are framed and accented with mature trees throughout (a number of which pre-date the establishment of the park). Brick and stone hardscaping and planters also appear throughout, with a concentration of features along the northeastern entrance and eastern border of the park. Historic light standards line the western border of the park and are located throughout the park.

The principal built environment feature of the park is the clubhouse, located in the southeast corner of the park. One story in height, the clubhouse displays a series of aluminum-frame glazed doors, opening onto a patio space. The patio is sheltered beneath a simple wood trellis supported on metal pole supports. The walls display painted concrete-block and vertical wood planks. The original stone walkway and concrete stairs leading to an open rooftop area have been removed and replaced with a concrete-block restroom, fronted by a metal gate.

The northeast corner of the park features stone hardscaping and an entrance gate. Similar hardscaping features, with rough-hewn stone, are located near the entrance to the park and clubhouse, in the southeast portion of the park.

The western portion of the park is home to tennis courts and a playground area. In the northwestern corner of the park, at the sidewalk along Derby Street, is the 1978 "Potter's Wall," a low, undulating, decorative wall clad in recycled ceramics. The Potter's Wall was designed in the organic, expressive style of Spanish architect Antoni Gaudi. Planters and a bench are built into the wall.

***B6. Construction History (Continued from Page 2):**

By 1964, the City had purchased most of the 17 parcels earmarked by local planners, but the program stalled briefly (City of Berkeley Parks Division 2020). In 1968, land acquisitions resumed, after the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development awarded local authorities a series of open space land grants to cover half the cost of acquiring the six parcels the City had not yet purchased. In April 1969, after years of planning and preparation, an agreement was reached for Willard Park to move forward as a user-developed park with joint use between the City and Willard Junior High School. That same year, in 1969, the remaining buildings and homes were demolished and removed, and the interim park was constructed by the fall of 1969. Construction for the park moved forward, with amenities including a "recreation building, tot lot, play lot, turf field, tennis and basketball courts" (Oakland Tribune 1/19/1968).

According to the original drawings, the clubhouse was designed by the San Francisco-based firm of Daniel R. Osborne and Zach R. Stewart (available drawings do not specify a landscape architect). Both architects attended the architecture program at Stanford University, and after working on for separate firms in the 1950s and early 1960s, the two started their firm in the mid-1960s (Online Archive of California). The firm was extremely well-known in the Berkeley architecture scene as well as the cultural and social developments of 1960s San Francisco. The firm designed the staging for the Trips Festival at Longshoreman's Hall in 1966, the America Needs Indians and Sensorium series, and the 4,000 Years concerts at Grace Cathedral (Online Archive of California and SFGate). Their works include elementary schools in Nevada County, the Ahwahnee pool and the dining hall at Sunrise High Sierra Camp at Yosemite National Park, the Plumas County Museum, and poet Gary Snyder's private residence on San Juan Ridge in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada.

Before the park was officially inaugurated on June 20, 1971, the community utilized the park for gatherings (explored in more detail below). In 1976, the park's tot lot playground was renovated; in May 1982, the park was renamed for Frances Willard, a suffragette and temperance leader.

When initial development of the park began in the 1969, the site became linked to an ongoing controversy over People's Park, located two blocks to the north. Mayor Wallace J.S. Johnson announced the City's plans to begin construction of Willard Park in May, just days into the political fight over People's Park. At the core of the People's Park protests was the contention among some activists that restrictions imposed by the University of California, Berkeley, for on-campus political activities had created the need for an off-campus "free-speech area," as an alternative to Sproul Plaza. During Willard Park's first years of operation, People's Park site remained off-limits by University decree, and Willard Park served as a base for political demonstrations (Wittmeyer 2004).

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*Resource Name or # Frances Willard Park

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Masonry elements in the 1971 plans included a low wall, curb strip, and edge strip. An original drinking fountain was also constructed with a rough-hewn masonry pedestal and basin (City of Berkeley Department of Public Works 1971). While there are no remnants of the boulders and some masonry features have been removed, the masonry motif remains evident in the drinking fountain base.

In May 1978, the Potter's Wall feature was constructed to the north of the tennis court. Influenced by Spanish architect Antoni Gaudi's designs for Parque Guell in Barcelona, Spain, local sculptor Andrew Werby designed the wall as structure with an irregular, organic form clad in a recycled ceramics applique. A crew of volunteers constructed the approximately 50-foot long, 3-foot high concrete form using the "stack sack" method (Wescover 2020; North East Bay Independent and Gazette 5/18/1978; 5/23/1978). Planters and a bench were built into the wall. The Alameda County Neighborhood Council, California Arts Council, and City of Berkeley funded the wall's construction with a combined \$1,600 in grants. Merchants donated materials, and local potters donated the ceramic shards worked into the face of the wall (North East Bay Independent and Gazette 5/23/1978).

In 1982, the park was formally dedicated to Frances Willard, a reformer who founded the Women's Christian Temperance Union (WTCU) in 1878. Although the site had been in use as Willard Park for over a decade, it had not been opened officially. Members of the WTCU joined local political leaders for a dedication ceremony, which also marked the completion of a \$20,000 renovation of the "tot area" funded under the 1974 Measure Y bond issue (North East Bay independent and Gazette 5/7/1982; City of Berkeley Parks Division 2020).

In the late 1980s and 1990s, the neighborhood advocacy organization Friends of Willard Park spearheaded several improvements to the park. These included the construction of a new "tot lot;" improved lighting, irrigation, and circulation measures; laying of a new cobblestone entry on Hillegass Avenue; and a "rose walk" near the Potter's Wall. The latter project was designed in part to deter overnight camping in the park, which had been an issue of contention since at least as early as 1990 (FWP 1997; Guttman 1990).

In addition, the City carried out a variety of projects at the park, including the addition of restrooms to the clubhouse and removal of the stone features in 1991 and construction of new circulation paths and changes to the children's play areas in circa 1994 (City of Berkley Department of Public Works 1991; 1994). These projects led to the removal of several features constructed in the 1970s, including the stone walls and steps on the east elevation of the clubhouse, the restroom and pay phone kiosks, and the original playground areas.

***B10. Significance (Continued from Page 2):**

Willard Park falls within the neighborhood of Elmwood in southeast Berkeley, located between the north-south corridors of College and Telegraph Avenues, south of the University of California, Berkeley. During its founding years, Berkeley owed much of its initial development to its proximity to regional transportation routes, emerging commercial and industrial centers, and the establishment of the University of California, Berkeley. Originally founded in Oakland in 1855 as the "College of California," the university relocated to Berkeley in 1866. The City of Berkeley incorporated in 1878, a year after the Southern Pacific Railroad line reached the Bay Area in 1877. Through the late nineteenth century, Berkeley remained a small town with emerging neighborhoods and commercial corridors, in particular along San Pablo and University Avenue, ringed by agricultural uses on the city periphery.

In addition, the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and fire caused widespread displacement and an exodus out of San Francisco to East Bay towns like Berkeley and Oakland. During the opening years of the twentieth century, the Elmwood neighborhood saw a great increase in new settlement and construction as a result of these and other factors.

In addition, in terms of the stylistic character of its early architecture, Berkeley and early neighborhoods like Elmwood became centers for the Arts and Crafts movement. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the City overall saw a flowering of Arts and Crafts architecture – in particular, in its "First Bay Tradition" of the Bay Area-influenced Arts and Crafts style. Early practitioners in Berkeley of the First Bay Tradition included architects such as Bernard Maybeck, Julia Morgan, John Galen Howard, Ernest and Almeric Coxhead, John Hudson Thomas, and James Placheck (many of whom not only practiced but also resided in the Berkeley Hills surrounding UC Berkeley).

The First Bay Tradition expanded on and redefined the Arts and Crafts architecture emerging on the East Coast in the work of architects such as Henry Hobson Richardson and McKim, Mead and White. One of the most significant West Coast innovations was the focus on site-specific design and creating connections between the indoors and outdoors, buildings, landscaping, and setting:

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“What the Bay Tradition added to the Shingle Style was environment, and in particular the generosity of and therefore, connection to outdoor space, open and cheerful western skies, hills alternating gold and green, and sculptural woodlands. In fact, it is the connections between setting, landscape and architecture where early Bay Area buildings fully succeeded the Shingle-Style of their Eastern mentors.” (Preservation Architecture 2007)

In this way, Berkeley’s woodsy setting and indoor-outdoor integration became important features for the new First Bay Tradition. As William Wilson Wurster wrote, “The First Bay Tradition went beyond a strictly architectural expression; it also reflected a life style” (Stern Cerny 1990). Commentators at the time recognized this “unique quality” and cohesive, distinctive neighborhood character it created. With the post-1906 construction boom in Berkeley, including in Elmwood, the character of the residential neighborhood around and in Willard Park was one of Arts and Crafts-inspired Craftsman homes, clad with brown wood shingles and enveloped in landscaping. Some of the neighborhood’s original landscaping, in the form of mature evergreen trees, survives in Willard Park.

This general description was also reflected in the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation 1937 survey of Elmwood. At the time, surveyors noted the “dignified” architectural character of the neighborhood’s homes and the average date of construction of 1905 (HOLC 1937). In terms of the neighborhood, it was deemed to have “excellent local and San Francisco transportation, convenient to schools, University of California, recreational facilities and local shopping centers” (HOLC 1937).

Into the twentieth century, Berkeley expanded rapidly, through the meteoric growth of the University of California, Berkeley, the downtown commercial corridor, as well as industrial development along the city periphery. Residential expansion grew, as well, with neighborhoods into the Berkeley flats and hills showing increasing numbers of new tracts and residential settlement. With the advent of the automobile, as well as road construction and infrastructure improvements, residential development expanded further from the city’s historical center. During and immediately after World War II, the combination of in-migration to California and the postwar baby boom fueled further growth, and Berkeley approached its peak population of over 110,000 by 1950.

The City rapid population growth coincided with massive, Cold War-era investments in American public universities. A prime beneficiary of federal research grants, the University of California, Berkeley, experienced postwar surge in enrollments, which grew from 7,700 in 1944 to 21,000 in 1946. The University’s growth contributed to Berkeley’s emergence as intellectual center. By the 1960s, Berkeley was transformed from a small town to a cosmopolitan “republic of letters where independent newspapers, poetry, music, art, and theater proliferated” (Suri 2004).

In terms of Elmwood and the area around Willard Park, it had been largely developed for residential use by the opening decades of the twentieth century. The proximity to the north-south corridors of Telegraph Avenue to the south and College Avenue to the north made the neighborhood accessible to downtown shopping areas and the Civic Center as well as UC Berkeley to the north. As shown on the 1911 Sanborn Fire Insurance map, the neighborhood primarily consisted of axial, residential-sized lots on a rectilinear street grid. Nearly all of the lots had already been improved with two-story, single-family homes. At this time, Regent Street followed an uninterrupted course between Stuart and Derby Streets. As of 1911, Frances Willard School, which is currently located immediately west of the park, had not yet been developed, and the school site was home to several residences (ProQuest 2020).

As of 1939, the year the first available aerial photograph of the area was taken, the area was fully developed and had much the same predominantly residential character as it has today. By 1946, the clearing of former residential parcels between Regent Street and Telegraph Avenue had begun in order to construct Frances Willard School. The school was expanded and its older buildings razed and replaced over the next two decades. Aside from a modest increase in commercial and/or institutional development along Telegraph and College avenues, there were few notable changes to the subject property or its vicinity until after 1968 (EDR 2020).

Evaluation

Willard Park and its components—including the clubhouse and other built features—do not appear to meet the criteria for landmark listing at the federal, state, or local level, either as individual resources, a historic district, or a cultural landscape. The park and its components do not meet the criteria associated with significant events, patterns of development, or people who were significant in the history of the city, region, state, or nation. The park and its components, including the clubhouse, do not represent a distinctive example of an architectural type or style, or the work of a master. Because Willard Park and its features do not qualify for federal, state, or local list, neither the park nor any of its components qualify as historical resources pursuant to CEQA.

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*Resource Name or # Frances Willard Park

*Recorded by: Rincon Consultants, Inc.

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Continuation Update

As a public space in Berkeley in the late 1960s/early 1970s, Willard Park had a brief association with the Antiwar Movement and other grassroots political movements. The City of Berkeley opened Willard Park as an interim park space in the fall of 1969. Before the official inauguration of the park in June 1971, prior to the opening of People's Park, Berkeley activists unofficially renamed the property Ho Chi Minh Park and began using it for socializing, entertainment, education, political organizing, and political demonstrations.

Between 1969 and 1972, the park was the site of several rallies and marches. Although use of the park for antiwar and free speech events was short-lived (those activities declined after 1972), the park remained the site of community festivals, such as the Lord Chaitanya Festival and early occurrences of East Bay Lesbian/Gay Day, and alternative arts performances, including several by the famed San Francisco Mime Troupe. While this association with community activism and culture is noteworthy, it is relatively short when compared with the history of People's Park; for Willard Park, research identified through this study did not suggest that this association rises to the level required to confer eligibility as a landmark at the federal, state, or local level.

In addition, research did not reveal an association of the park with any individuals known to have made significant contributions to the history of the city, state, region or nation. Its design and architecture are that of a typical neighborhood park, and neither the park as a whole nor any of its components embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values. Willard Park also appears ineligible under the remaining City of Berkeley Landmark designation criteria.

As a potential Structure of Merit, the park, inclusive of the clubhouse, does not appear to be worthy of preservation as part of a neighborhood, a block, or a street frontage, or a group of buildings which include City Landmarks because it is: Neither a contemporary of the nearest City Landmarks and Structures of Merit, nor is it compatible with their style or design. It is not a good example of architectural design, and it does not possess historically significant connections to its neighborhood, block, frontage or group of resources.

Given the park's brief but noteworthy history as a gathering space for antiwar, counter-culture, and Free Speech movement events, Willard Park appears to warrant special consideration in local planning (6L California Historic Resources Status code). The 6L code does not confer status as a historical resource per CEQA but is used to signal that local planning may wish to extend special consideration to the resource.

***B12. References (Continued from Page 3):**

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*Resource Name or # Frances Willard Park

*Recorded by: Rincon Consultants, Inc.

*Date: 9/16/2021

Continuation Update

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State of California — The Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION
CONTINUATION SHEET

Primary #
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*Recorded by: Rincon Consultants, Inc.

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From: [Vincent Casalaina](#)
To: [Crane, Fatema](#)
Subject: RE demolition of the current Willard Park Clubhouse
Date: Saturday, October 22, 2022 3:44:15 PM

WARNING: This is not a City of Berkeley email. Do not click links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

Landmarks Commission:

I am writing in opposition to the request to demolish the iconic Willard Park Clubhouse. This structure was designed by noted architect Zach Stewart. Mr. Stewart was the landscape architect for both Willard Park and Shorebird Park.

With his architectural partner Dan Osborne, Mr. Stewart designed projects that were uniquely tailored to blend into the settings where they were built. Here's how Mr. Stewart's work was described for the school designed for the San Juan Ridge Unified School District:

Osborne and Stewart were sympathetic to the community's desire to build a school uniquely suited to the site and a custom curriculum. Instead of designing a monolithic, industrial "pod" school typical of the time, the architects conceived of a school design inspired by the New England continuous architecture documented in Eric Sloane's book, *An Age of Barns* Children would rotate between classrooms and outdoor spaces for different activities instead of being in a single classroom.

I find this description of his work to be emblematic of the Clubhouse he designed for Willard Park. That building is nestled amongst the trees on the southern boundary of the park and provides both an indoor space for the children in the after school and summer programs housed there as well as encouraging outdoor play on the park's southern grassy field.

I would like to point out that in August 1970, the Willard Park Citizen's Committee approved the final drawing for the park development (as stated in the CoB's description of Willard Park). This park has a long history of community input and even the approval of changes to the park. The Willard community was the prime mover in the construction of the first tot lot in the park. That policy of community involvement has drastically changed in the formulation of the current project.

I am a member of the Willard Neighborhood Association Steering Committee. We have been virtually unable to work with the Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Dept. in crafting the plans for the construction of the Community Center that is planned to replace the Club House. None of our members were invited to participate in the initial design exercises on which the current plans are based.

I ask that you vote against the demolition of the current Club House.

Vincent Casalaina
Resident of the Willard Neighborhood since 1974
Treasurer, Willard Neighborhood Assoc.

Former Chair, Housing Advisory Commission

October 25, 2022

To: Berkeley Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC)
From: Steven Finacom, Commission Member

Regarding: Consideration of Historic Significance of the Willard Park Clubhouse

A few days ago I was made aware, through a community inquiry, that the LPC will be asked to consider the potential historic significance of the circa 1971 clubhouse in Willard Park at its November 3, 2022 meeting.

After learning of that likely agenda item, I asked the Commission Secretary if there was historic documentation related to Willard Park. She provided me on Monday with .pdfs of a **Historic Resource Evaluation (HRE)** dated September 2020) as well as a **California Department of Parks and Recreation Primary Record Form (DPR)** dated September, 2021.

The Commission should receive these documents in the November 3 agenda packet.

I looked through the two forms—HRE and DPR—and did some additional research.

It's my opinion that the forms don't provide sufficient documentation / information on which the LPC can reliably base an informed conclusion about potential historic significance of the Willard clubhouse.

In response, I've prepared this analysis as further background for the LPC in considering Willard Park history, context, significance, and related issues.

I've also, at the end of this analysis (page 11), included some suggestions of mitigation ideas we might wish to consider recommending if the City proceeds with its current plans to demolish the existing clubhouse and build a new club house structure.

Importantly, my analysis doesn't reach a definitive conclusion of potential historic significance for the Willard Park clubhouse. In other words, I'm not writing this to tell the Commission that the clubhouse definitively is, or isn't, historically significant. Instead, I'm endeavoring to identify missing types of information and ask the questions that should be answered—ideally through further research—before making a determination.

Here are the key questions the background materials and research and documentation given to the LPC should have helped to answer:

- (1) Were the designers of Willard Park and the clubhouse significant in a local, regional, and / or national context?
- (2) How do the park and the clubhouse fit into their body of work?

(3) Is Willard Park itself a historically significant feature in Berkeley? In the region?

Let's take these one at a time:

Were the designers of the park and the clubhouse important in architectural history, including in the Bay Area and the Berkeley context?

Well, we haven't been given any detailed information in the DPR form or the HRE that gives us a solid basis for analysis. Instead, we are given one brief paragraph of information about the architects.

"According to the original drawings, the clubhouse was designed by the San Francisco-based firm of Daniel R. Osborne and Zach R. Stewart (available drawings do not specify a landscape architect). Both architects attended the architecture program at Stanford University, and after working on for (sic) separate firms in the 1950s and early 1960s, the two started their firm in the mid-1960s (Online Archive of California). The firm was extremely well-known in the Berkely (sic) architecture scene as well as the cultural and social developments of 1960s San Francisco. The firm designed the staging for the Trips Festival at Longshoreman's Hall in 1966, the America Needs Indians and Sensorium series, and the 4,000 Years concerts at Grace Cathedral (Online Archive of California and SFGate). Their works include elementary schools in Nevada County, the Ahwahnee pool and the dining hall at Sunrise High Sierra Camp at Yosemite National Park, the Plumas County Museum, and poet Gary Snyder's private residence on San Juan Ridge in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada"

This limited summary raises more questions than it answers. For example, where are more complete biographies of the architects? Where is a summary of their body of work?

Where is an analysis of how the design of a public park in Berkeley fits into their body of work and compares to their other work? Were they known for park design, or was this project an outlier in their practice? What works were they primarily known for?

The DPR and the HRE tell us virtually nothing in this regard. This is unfortunate because without this information the LPC is not yet in a position to answer the key question of possible architectural significance of the Willard clubhouse building.

The drafters of the DPR and the HRE may answer that they didn't have sufficient funding to research the architects and their work and its potential significance in further detail. That would be an honest answer, and it would be typical of many HRE's and DPR's done in relation to Berkeley buildings and sites, where well intentioned historical researchers are not given the time, money, or tools to thoroughly research and document their subjects. We've encountered this same situation many times, to our cost and frustration.

But it would also be equally honest to say that the very limited information they did research does not provide sufficient information to draw broad based and broad brush conclusions about the significance of the Willard Park architects and their work.

Curious about the sources of the limited material in the DPR form, I did some online searching and quickly found some of the the same resources the writers found. One is an a description of architect Zach Stewart’s papers held at Stanford University, listed in the Online Archive of California. The other is an obituary for architect Daniel Osborne.

There doesn’t seem to have been further research for the DPR or HRE regarding the architects beyond those two resources and a few other scattered references.

Further research would have filled in more information. In just a few hours of inquiry I was able to find out that architect Zach Stewart is apparently still alive (and presumably could be a source of first hand information?) And that some of the questions raised by the DPR form can easily be answered.

Just one simple example. The DPR says, “*available drawings do not specify a landscape architect*” for Willard Park. Perhaps that is because in a 1970 piece in Landscape Architecture magazine Zach Stewart wrote about how in 1958 he “*decided to become a landscape architect as well as an architect*”. Another online source identifies Daniel Osborne’s wife, Mimi (also a Stanford architecture graduate) as someone who worked with their firm “*on a variety of projects—site assessment, landscape plant selection, audio-visual presentation*”. (<http://www.sweetiesartbar.com/mimi-osborne> From those fragmentary references its possible to intelligently speculate that the firm provided indeed some landscape design services for the park, as well as architectural serves for the club house.

Next, we have the question, **Is Willard Park itself a significant historic resource in Berkeley?**

The HRE and DPR analysis asks and answers the wrong question in this regard. Their historic analysis is almost entirely limited to “*did important events happen there?*” They document and conclude there were a few activist events in the early 1970s, but not much since, and therefore the park has no historic significance.

But most parks and open spaces are not in and of themselves primarily important because of high-profile events held in them. Their significance more typically accrues from their overall role in the community and can accumulate from thousands of small and otherwise insignificant events and experiences involving the daily or occasional relationship of myriad users to the park spaces. That is how many, if not most, parks become “significant” —not necessarily as amazing design artifacts or episodic sites of great or singular events, but as continuously used and useable spaces that become integral—indeed, “significant”—to their communities.

In essence, they create their significance out of many small, interlocking, parts and experiences and context rather than one piece of design character or overwhelming event.

For example, is Lake Merritt a significant historical element in Oakland? I would guess most of us would reply it is. But a historical analysis limited in scope to “*did any important historic events happen at Lake Merritt?*” might construe otherwise.

How does Willard Park fit into the history of park development in Berkeley and the surrounding region?

Helpfully, a historical analysis of the development of Berkeley's parks and open spaces was undertaken in 2008 by UC Berkeley faculty members Louise Mazingo and Marcia McNally. (It does not appear to have been discovered by the DPR and HSE researchers.) The faculty documented and qualified and analyzed the history of Berkeley's many parks and park movements and prepared an excellent summary. I remember visiting their exhibit and listening to their presentations at the time. They provided considerable insight into how to understand the evolution and importance of each part and era of Berkeley's public park system.

Their written and visual summary material is apparently filed in the Environmental Design Archives on the UC Berkeley campus but I have not, in the limited time available, been able to ascertain if it is indeed there and if a copy can be obtained.

I was able to locate a summary of their conclusions that it is worth including here.

The result is an impressive park system that ranges from the ordinary to the cutting edge, but is shaped by certain underlying characteristics:

- Berkeley's hills with rock outcrops, sloping alluvial fan, flatlands, and Bayside, fingered together by creeks, create a "geographic genetics" that give the park system a **bio-locality**.
- The parks lend **local traction to national trends** about how cities function and whom they serve.
- Exuberant participation exposes competing claims on Berkeley's public landscape that also evince a love of the community--**self interest rightly understood**.
- The essence of Berkeley parks is **plain and simple**. Their open format can read as boring but is experienced as democratic.
- **Visions matter**. They have provided Berkeley with compelling back-pocket ideas for when events, people, government, and institutions galvanize around civic notions.

Today the park system, plus the regional and state parks edging the hills and the shore, is arguably an approximation of the "Midway Plaisance," planner Werner Hegemann's 1915 vision for Berkeley. The question is, "What should the next 100 years yield?" On May 3, 2008 we assembled 21 speakers representing four decades of Berkeley park activism to put forward their vision. What resulted was a heartening intersection of resonating ideas for future consideration.

- **1. Berkeley needs a vision drawing for Berkeley's parks that engages the physical structure of the city in a specific way.** Since Berkeley began general planning in 1955, the distinct intentions of *park* planning have been co-opted. It is time to correct this and make Berkeley's bio-local genetics once again integral and visible.
- **2. Berkeley can be transformed from a city with many parks into a city within a park.** This should occur at various connected scales, starting with all Berkeley neighborhoods having a green center.
- **3. Every infrastructure improvement should include strategic thinking about parks.** Making the city's infrastructure add up to a multi-functional green should be the goal. There are opportunities to add strategic parcels to the park system, to exhume and display the city's creeks, and to create hybrid public space.
- **4. Streets are the greatest opportunity to build a layered and linked open space circuit.** They are where most of the water flows and where the City already controls generous existing rights-of-way. Berkeley's streets should treat runoff, move people on foot or bike, instead of automobile, and cool the landscape.
- **5. The city will grow denser but "ecodensity" can be balanced by generous collective public space.** Parks are destinations in the everyday life of the city where citizens meet, greet, and latch on to each other. One proposal is to re-design the Derby-Addison corridor as a 21st century plaisance where a wide green circuit would connect key parts of the city landscape.
- **6. Berkeley needs money for parks.** The legacy of Berkeley's parks is a periodic, flexible commitment to park planning that readied the City for when acquisition and capital improvement opportunities arose. The time is right for another big push in park funding.
- **7. Berkeley historically uses parks as a showcase for innovative thinking and a stepping stone for long term civic engagement.** Change in Berkeley has happened best when working to achieve something positive and progressive, such as building the Adventure Playground or opening Strawberry Creek. A vision for a reunited park and playfield system where Berkeley's ever more diverse residents go to be active and healthy should be a catalyst for community action.

Within the context of their park history, the argument might be made that Willard Park was one of the most important park developments in Berkeley during the nearly seven decades of Post World War II era park and recreation development.

In scale and scope in Berkeley Willard Park essentially has only three local counterparts: first, the extensive conversion of Berkeley's dump / landfill into what is now Chavez Park and the Berkeley portion of the McLaughlin Eastshore State Park; second, the development of People's Park; third, the development of Ohlone Park, atop the buried BART tracks, in an area that was originally slated for housing redevelopment.

It is interesting that among those examples, Willard Park is the only one that was intended by Berkeley officialdom as a public park / open space from the beginning. The Berkeley dump / landfill / waterfront was intended for development for industrial / housing purposes before the "Save the Bay" movement presented a new vision and changed city policy; "People's Park" did not arise from any governmental or institutional plans but, rather, from grassroots activism strongly opposed by most conventional authority; Ohlone Park was similarly created out of civic activism that changed city policy, in that instance, from plans for housing development to neighborhood park creation.

In contrast, Willard Park was intentionally planned from the beginning as a new city park, to be established on a site that required the demolition / removal of a large number of houses. It was part of an intentional Post-war municipal policy to provide sufficient and varied public open spaces for Berkeley's residents to use and recreate.

Willard Park is not necessarily important because of specific high profile events that happened there but is important because of its major contribution to that post-War park / recreation movement in Berkeley. In origin, size, and function it is part of a very limited set of park / open spaces. That is context in which its significance should be evaluated.

One important factor is extremely important in that consideration. In their 2008 analysis, Mazingo and McNally pointed out that Berkeley's parks have few architecturally dramatic features. We don't have ornate greenhouses or gazebos, grand monuments and fountains (with limited exceptions), spectacular or intricate park layouts, or dramatic plantings. Instead, as they wrote, ***"The essence of Berkeley parks is plain and simple. Their open format can be read as boring but is experienced as democratic."***

I ask my Landmarks Commission colleagues to keep that statement and historical fact in mind when analyzing Willard Park. We are not seeking to determine where the Park contains a spectacular, unique, designed architectural structure. We are seeking to determine if what is there is otherwise significant.

Second, Willard Park should be compared to other new and / or renovated parks in the Bay Area from the same era (Post War probably to the mid-1960s), to determine if it has regional significance. For example, did neighboring communities (Oakland, Richmond) create similar new parks in the same period and for the same general purpose?

Finally, beyond the region, how does Willard Park compare to state and national urban park movements in the same era, particularly those that re-purposed large parts of already developed urban areas for new park uses?

I have not done that research or analysis. And neither have the consultants. Their conclusion that Willard has no regional or national significance is simply an opinion that is not based on any discernible research or documented facts presented in the reports.

In this same context, the authors of the HRE and DPR note that People's Park was developed at the same time as Willard Park, but simply provide this information for background, rather than analysis.

However, there are interesting synergies and contrasts to be drawn between the two parks, which are of similar size and located only two blocks from each other. The two can be compared for the purpose of historical analysis and significance and they are closely tied together in history and intention.

Both were intended to serve as public open space in densely populated neighborhoods without existing parks. The design / evolution of both emphasized adaptable open space—informal plantings, large, irregular, lawns, integration of surviving trees from residential lots into new landscape—to create spaces suitable for many flexible purposes and users, rather than rigid predetermination of uses or expression of a single overriding design style or concept. Both were intentionally located in built up areas where existing buildings had been removed. The creation of both involved controversy, including opposition from residents who were displaced from housing slated for demolition.

These are the similarities. The difference is also quite striking. People's Park was created by community activism on a space which was then (and is to this day) designated by its owner for another use. In contrast, Willard Park was created as part of a decades old parks and recreation plan for Berkeley. Wallace Johnson, Berkeley's Mayor during the late 1960s, emphasized that difference. During the People's Park struggle he repeatedly expressed the view that if the South Campus area needed a park, but the City was already developing an officially planned one two blocks from People's Park. In essence, Willard Park's development was hastened as the officially sanctioned alternative to the unsanctioned People's Park, each park—official, and rebel—serving roughly the same neighborhood and potential users.

In addition to analysis of the architecture of the clubhouse, the clubhouse needs to be analyzed in the context of the entire park. Many public park spaces both historic and new are notable for their built features.

Willard Park was planned in a different way. The open space—particularly the informal / flexible open space such as the lawn—was and is the primary feature of Willard Park. Remember those terms from earlier—*“plain and simple”* and a format *“experienced as democratic.”*

When initially developed Willard Park intentionally contained only a single enclosed structure—the clubhouse—far smaller and less visually conspicuous than even the most modest two bedroom, one-story, Berkeley bungalow home.

The club house was located (intentionally?) at the extreme perimeter of the park, unlike other Berkeley parks (San Pablo Park, Live Oak Park) where club house / recreation buildings were constructed well within the large park spaces and are prominent and large buildings.

The Willard club house appears to have been designed to be low and inconspicuous, set back into a corner of the park and not even occupying all of the land area in that corner.

In addition, large formal recreational facilities built in the same era as Willard Park and part of the original concept, including the Willard Junior High School gymnasium, the defunct Willard Pool complex, and the Willard School athletic fields, were intentionally placed away from the large, informal, unstructured open spaces of the park rather than incorporated with the open space. This was, and is, quite different from similar local parks of the era.

Design features of the club house emphasized and deferred to the open space primacy of the park. These included the rock piles that flanked the building, and the publicly accessible, open air, roof deck that reincorporated the full footprint of the building into the “open space” of the park. The building also originally appears to have functioned as an art form or piece of landscape art. Note this picture from 1980 included in the HRE. The building reads as much as a landform as it does as architecture.



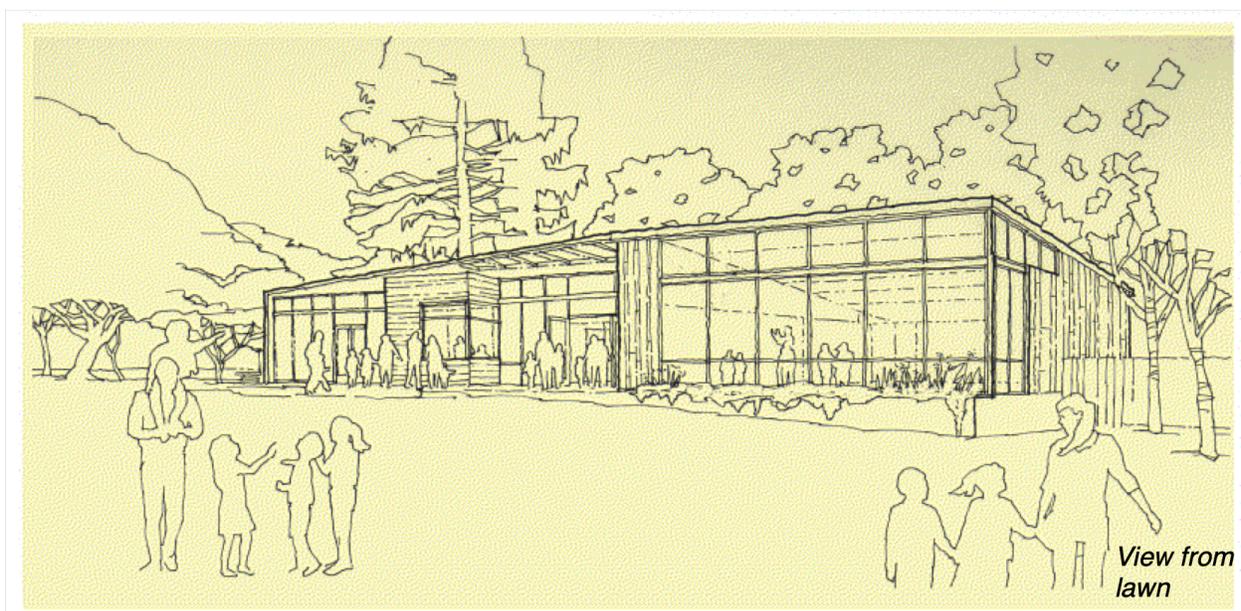
In essence, the Willard clubhouse appears, from its context and design, to have been designed to serve certain minimal purposes for roofed, indoor, facilities in what was planned to be primarily an open space park, not a park of buildings and other built structures mixed with public open spaces.

In that respect, a small, low, building integrated with the landscape is not the same as an insignificant building. Limited size and a retiring / background visual character can be positive features of significance for buildings in a public open space.

The Willard clubhouse and its relationship to the surrounding park and neighborhood is expressive of what landscape architect and theorist Galen Cranz (another notable Berkeley designer) called the fourth era or movement of public park design in the United States:

“In the mid-1960s there was a new attitude that recreation is potentially everywhere - in the street or on the rooftop or on a crosswalk or at a waterfront or an abandoned railway site or a plaza or a park - and that you could think of integrating all those spaces into a network. I call this fourth model The Open Space System, because of this ideology - that all open space has potential recreational value, depending on the twist that you give it. A more artistic, participatory sensibility was born in this period so you get hip programming in parks, like controversial rock concerts.” Source: <https://www.pps.org/article/futureparks>

(In contrast to the original clubhouse design, it’s worth observing that the current design for the new park clubhouse—six or seven times larger than the existing one—is more of a ‘look at me!’ Glassy Modernist structure with a rectilinear form and its highest structural elements and large window walls fronting directly onto the park lawn. The conceptual design, shown below, was provided in public presentations. Because of increased construction costs it has since been value-engineered into a smaller structure, but seems to retain the same architectural style.)



There is another aspect of the original / existing Willard clubhouse that bears analysis. The original organic form of the building—based significantly on informal amalgamations of boulders that partially obscured and softened the rectilinear built structure, making it more of a rocky mound than a built box—has an interesting relationship to higher profile park projects of the same era, including Lawrence Halprin’s celebrated Levi Plaza in San Francisco that is a construct of huge rock forms designed to recall a natural landscape.

The form of the Willard clubhouse, with its landforms of rocks, projecting rough timber pergola, and minimization of formal architectural styles, also relates to what was sometimes called ‘Hippie Modernism’ design of the era, such as the 1960s conversion of a now-demolished old brick garage nearby on Telegraph Avenue at Blake Street, into a counterculture shopping and dining arcade called “The Village”. (Also nearby, in the Willard neighborhood in that same era, was the home of architect and design visionary Christopher Alexander who involved his students in building an organic “Hobbit House” cottage in his backyard.)

In 2017, the Berkeley Art Museum hosted an exhibit, “Hippie Modernism: The Struggle for Utopia”, that delineated this type of design development and its place in American design and cultural history. The catalogue for the exhibit explains in part:

*“In the art, architecture, and design of the counterculture one can see early stirrings of the tech revolution and ecological consciousness, as well as powerful expressions of the desire for peace and social justice. Hippie Modernism shows us how the counterculture, once dismissed as a social and aesthetic anomaly, introduced ideas and techniques that have profoundly shaped contemporary life. The BAMPFA presentation highlights **the key role the Bay Area—and especially Berkeley—played in the art, architecture, and design of the counterculture movement.** Creative innovators in Bay Area communities sought to create radical change—technological, political, and ecological—on the streets, in the classroom, and in government policy. Among the central themes of the exhibition is the desire to expand consciousness and achieve greater awareness of the holistic relationship of self, world, and cosmos.”*

Emphasis added. Source: <https://bampfa.org/program/hippie-modernism-struggle-utopia>

It is worth considering from a historic significance standpoint whether—and if so, how—the Willard clubhouse is a surviving artifact of that movement, along with the overall original character of Willard Park?

This is particularly worthwhile to consider since the DPR form says of Osborne and Stewart, *“the firm was extremely well-known in the Berkely (sic) architecture scene as well as the cultural and social developments of 1960s San Francisco.”*

Exactly. If the firm was prominent and immersed in *“cultural and social developments of 1960s San Francisco”*, an era of almost unequalled creative, cultural, and political ferment and turmoil in the Bay Area, then the built work of the firm can validly be evaluated in terms of how it might relate to that cultural era.

In addition, beyond the original design, other, later, parts of Willard Park also exhibit the tendency to be organic and community driven, including the mosaic “Potter’s Wall” art and seating structure along Derby Street, and the 1980s/90s community based redesign of the northeast entrance to the park that features a masonry plaza around a stone well (symbolic of Derby Creek’s buried presence in the landscape) as well as low key stone walls and pathways blending into a redwood grove and the informal park lawn.

But instead of conducting this analysis the DPR form simply concludes *“Willard Park and its components—including the clubhouse and other built features—do not appear to meet the criteria for landmark listing at the federal, state, or local level, either as individual resources, a historic district or a cultural landscape.”*

This is simply a stated conclusion without foundation or evidence.

There is literally no analysis or documentation given in the DPR form for how this conclusion was reached, particularly in regard to potential cultural landscape character.

The documentation in the DPR form and HRE is simply a partial account of how the park was planned and created, and some events that happened there.

There is no comparison provided of the park to other parks of its era, of the architects and their work to other architects and architecture of the era, or the history of the park to the history of other public open spaces created in the era.

That’s the sort of information the LPC needs to intelligently discuss potential significance. We are not given that information.

This leads to the conclusion of my memo. When we are given a potential significance referral for a building proposed for demolition, we make a determination of whether the structure merits further study and/or initiation for potential Landmark or Structure of Merit status. That will be a focus of the LPC deliberation on November 3.

We also consider whether we wish to make recommendations to the Zoning Adjustments Board for mitigations or other considerations to incorporate in project approval, whether or not the structure to be demolished has been formally deemed “historic”.

I would like to suggest the LPC consider making the following recommendations to the ZAB specific to the Willard Park clubhouse project:

- (1) Salvage of the brass Frances Willard memorial plaque currently attached to the building (shown below) and placement of it either on the new building, or elsewhere in the park;**
- (2) Photo documentation of the existing building and its context in the park, with copies of the photographs deposited in local historical / architectural repositories;**
- (3) Design the new clubhouse to serve in the same way as the existing club house as a low-key, perimeter and peripheral, built structure of the park, secondary to the open space, rather than a visually dominant building in the park (this recommendation does not presuppose or mandate any specific architectural 'style');**
- (4) Additionally, reflect the placement of the clubhouse to avoid intrusion of the new clubhouse building and its supporting spaces / structures into the large, informal, multi-purpose lawn area that is physically and conceptually "central" to the character of Willard Park;**
- (5) Design the new clubhouse to reflect the original in being a low-key "good neighbor", both in physical form and in function, to adjacent residential structures and their residents;**
- (6) The HRE report suggests "*special consideration in local planning could take the form of creating interpretive panels to document and share Willard Park's history with the public. Such interpretive information could include the pre-park history...as well as the park's role in Berkeley's counter-culture movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s.*" (page 33). Recommend that the LPC endorse this suggestion, and request that interpretive panels be incorporated in park renovations. The interpretive panels should also incorporate information on more recent park design history and use beyond the '60s/'70s.**

