

Resolution No.: 17-1028
Introduced: March 25, 2014
Adopted: March 25, 2014

**COUNTY COUNCIL FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND
SITTING AS THE DISTRICT COUNCIL FOR THAT PORTION
OF THE MARYLAND-WASHINGTON REGIONAL DISTRICT
WITHIN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

By: District Council

SUBJECT: Approval of Planning Board Draft Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) Park Resources

1. On January 8, 2014, the Montgomery County Planning Board transmitted the Planning Board Draft Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: M-NCPPC Park Resources (hereafter referred to as the Amendment) to the Council.
2. The attached Planning Board recommended amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation would designate 7 historic resources that are currently owned or operated by the Parks Department:

Wheaton Youth Center	11711 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring	#31/48
Stubbs Barn, Wheaton Regional Park	2000 Shorefield Road, Wheaton	#31/3-2
Rock Creek Recreation Center	7901 Meadowbrook Lane, Chevy Chase	#36/90
Pinecrest Recreation Center	301 St. Lawrence Drive, Silver Spring	#32/31
Ken-Gar Palisades Recreation Center	4140 Wexford Drive, Kensington	#31/49
Veirs Mill Recreation Center	4425 Garrett Park Road, Wheaton	#31/50
Norbeck Rosenwald School	4101 Muncaster Mill Road, Rockville	#23/113-2
3. The County Executive did not submit any comments on the Amendment.
4. On February 25, 2014, the Council held a public hearing on the Amendment. The Amendment was referred to the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee for review and recommendation.
5. On March 24, 2014, the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee held a worksession to review the issues raised in connection with the Amendment.

6. On March 25, 2014, the County Council reviewed the Amendment and the recommendations of the Planning, Housing, and Economic Development Committee to designate all resources recommended by the Planning Board, with the exception of the Wheaton Youth Center.

Action

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland, sitting as the District Council for that portion of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery County, Maryland, approves the following resolution:

The Planning Board Draft Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: M-NCPPC Park Resources is approved with revisions. Council's revisions are identified below. Some entire pages are deleted, and those deletions are so indicated by page number. Deletions to the text of the Plan on a retained page are indicated by [brackets], additions by underscoring.

Page 1 (cover): **[Planning Board Draft January 2014] March 2014**

Pages 2-28 (all footers): M-NCPPC Park Resources [Planning Board Draft]

Page 2: **[Planning Board Draft] M-NCPPC Park Resources
An Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation in Montgomery County**

A B S T R A C T

This document contains the text and supporting graphics for the [Planning Board Draft] Amendment to the Master Plan for Historic Preservation: M-NCPPC Park Resources. [If adopted by the County Council and approved by the M-NCPPC, this] This document amends the Master Plan for Historic Preservation in Montgomery County, Maryland (1979), as amended; the Master Plan for the Communities of Kensington-Wheaton (1989), as amended; the North and West Silver Spring Master Plan (2000), as amended; the Four Corners Master Plan (1996), as amended; the Olney Master Plan (2005), as amended; The General Plan (on Wedges and Corridors) for the Physical Development of the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties (1964), as amended; and the Revised Master Plan of Highways for the Maryland-Washington Regional District in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties Maryland (1955), as amended.

This amendment [considers] considered the historic designation of eight M-NCPPC park-related resources—located in Planning Area 23 (Olney), Planning Area 31 (Kensington-Wheaton), and Planning Area 32 (Kemp Mill-Four Corners)—that [have been] were nominated for addition to the Locational Atlas and Index of Historic Sites in Montgomery County Maryland and designation on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation.

Page 3: **[Planning Board Draft January 2014] March 2014**

Page 8: The Amendment

Resources [Recommended for Master Plan Designation] Designated in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation

[Wheaton Youth Center, 11711 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, #31/48]

* * *

[Resource] Resources Considered but Not [Recommended for Master Plan Designation] Designated in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation

Wheaton Youth Center, 11711 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, #31/48

Stubbs House, 2000 Shorefield Road, Wheaton Regional Park, #31/3-1

Maps

Resource Locations

[Wheaton Youth Center Proposed Environmental Setting]

Page 9: **The Amendment**

This Amendment [considers] considered the designation of eight potential historic resources that are owned or maintained by M-NCPPC. The Amendment [recommends designation of 7] designates 6 historic sites on the Master Plan for Historic Preservation and does not [recommend designation of one] designate 2 nominated [resource] resources. [If] Resources designated on the Master Plan[, a resource would be] are protected by the County’s Historic Preservation Ordinance, Chapter 24A of the Montgomery County Code. [If listed in the Locational Atlas, the resource would be protected under one provision of the Ordinance, being Chapter 24A-10, the Moratorium on Demolition and Substantial Alteration.]

Individual Sites [Recommended for Master Plan Designation] Designated in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation

- [Wheaton Youth Center, 11711 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, #31/48]
- Stubbs Barn, 2000 Shorefield Road, Wheaton Regional Park, #31/3-2
- Rock Creek Recreation Center, 7901 Meadowbrook Lane, Chevy Chase, #36/90
- Pinecrest Recreation Center, 301 St. Lawrence Drive, Silver Spring, #32/31
- Ken-Gar Palisades Recreation Center, 4140 Wexford Drive, Kensington, #31/49
- Veirs Mill Recreation Center, 4425 Garrett Park Road, Wheaton, #31/50
- Norbeck Rosenwald School, 4101 Muncaster Mill Road, Rockville, #23/113-2

[Resource] Resources Considered but Not [Recommended for Master Plan Designation] Designated in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation

- Wheaton Youth Center, 11711 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, #31/48
- Stubbs House, 2000 Shorefield Road, Wheaton Regional Park, #31/3-1

Pages 10-13: Delete all pages.

Pages 19, 21, 23, 25, and 27: amend the last sentence on each page as follows:

Site changes, [that are considered normal park operations including] such as the installation of playground equipment, may be done through staff-level review and do not require a Historic Area Work Permit. Such changes would have no material effect on the historic resource.

Page 28: **[Resource] Resources Considered but Not [Recommended for Master Plan Designation] Designated in the Master Plan for Historic Preservation**

Wheaton Youth Center (1963), 11711 Georgia Avenue, Silver Spring, #31/48

Editor’s note - Add a small map and picture and the following text:

The Wheaton Youth Center is an example of modern design executed for a simple and relatively inexpensive community building. The Wheaton Youth Center won an award from the American Institute of Architect’s Potomac Valley Chapter and was featured in the first edition of the AIA’s Guide to the Architecture of Washington D.C. (1965). The signature design feature is the double-curved form of the vaulted roof of the main auditorium block, which becomes a motif for the complex, echoed in the roofs of activity wing and entrance pavilion, as well as interior stage wall.

The resource represents the work of Keyes, Lethbridge & Condon, an architectural firm recognized for setting high standards for modern architecture in the Washington, D.C. region. The principal architect was Arthur Keyes.


The Wheaton Youth Center has historic significance for representing the youth culture of the post-war era. In 1956, the Commission embarked on a new initiative to build a series of youth centers to meet the needs of teenagers. From 1965 to 1970, the facility was a major local music venue, reaching a regional audience in the days before the large-scale concert venue.

A newly combined library and recreation center requires increased open space. The Council found that the public interest is best served by not designating the resource.

All pages - General instructions:

The text, maps, and tables are to be revised, as necessary, to achieve clarity and consistency, to update factual information, and to convey the actions of the District Council.

This is a correct copy of Council action.


Linda M. Lauer, Clerk of the Council

7. Description

Inventory No. 36-90

Condition

excellent deteriorated
 good ruins
 fair altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

SUMMARY

The Rock Creek Recreation Center, more recently known as the Meadowbrook Recreation Center, is located along Rock Creek in the Meadowbrook Local Park. This rustic lodge was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1940, replacing a mid-1930s open-air rustic shelter that burned down. It is one of the earliest known buildings of its type in the county, constructed specifically for recreational use, and provides a tangible example of the early infrastructure of the Montgomery County Parks system. The building still functions as a recreation center.

SITE

The Meadowbrook Recreation Building is located in Meadowbrook Local Park, off of Beach Drive, south of East-West Highway. The 44.763-acre park has also been known as “Candy Cane City,” a name derived from an adjacent playground equipment once adorned with red and white stripes. The recreation center is a one-story, cruciform structure built in the tradition of the National Park Service’s early rustic “parkitecture” style. It sits on a small knoll with steps leading up to the entries, and in one area, a handicapped accessible ramp provides entry into the building.

EXTERIOR

Spanning over 4,476 square feet, the Meadowbrook Recreation Building consists of three distinct sections, all completed at approximately the same time. The gable-fronted main block is constructed of smooth ashlar masonry with a poured concrete foundation. There are two frame wings. The main and south sections have gabled roofs with asbestos shingles. The north section has a gabled seamed metal roof. The exterior’s east and west facades are two bays wide by three-bays long, each separated by a large stone chimney.

The main (east) façade, which is approximately 33 feet wide, is constructed of multi-colored granite and mica schist, with rock-faced stone arranged in a random pattern. The stones are laid with irregular coursing, with deep incised rake joints. The one-story, two-bay wide façade has two entry points, separated by a seven-foot wide granite-mica schist chimney. Both entryways are original to the façade, and measure 3 feet x 6 feet x 8 feet. Two half-glazed, wood doors are flanked by sidelights.

The west façade of the main building historically matched the east façade, with its two entryways separated by the prominent stone chimney. For safety reasons, however, Park officials sealed the areas where the original rear doors were, exchanging them for two modern sliding-glass windows. These windows were replaced in July 2010 to provide more historically accurate design. The new wooden windows are energy efficient, true divided light 2/4 triple casement windows. These windows sit on dressed stone sills.

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. 36-90

Name Rock Creek Recreation Center
Continuation Sheet

Number 7 Page 1

The ghosts of the original door locations can still be seen in the space, both on the exterior and on the interior of the building. The two doors originally opened onto a slate patio that provided views of the surrounding park. The patio still remains outside of the windows.

The north side of the Meadowbrook Recreation Building features a wood-frame, four-bay section that was originally living quarters for Park staff. The gabled, seamed metal roof extends outward to provide shelter around the section, and is supported by a colonnaded rustic portico. The covered walkway measures ten-feet wide, and is surrounded by a double-rail wood fence. The space measures 27.3-feet wide by 38.4-feet long. Two ventilation shafts are placed over the gabled end of the addition, while a furnace flue sits on the opposite end.

The south side of the building features an attached pavilion constructed of heavy framed wooden timbers. Twelve wooden pillars support the gabled roof, and the framing members are bolted and/or pegged, contributing to the rustic appearance of the building. The roof has an open king post truss system. The flagstone patio measures 38 feet long by 27.6 feet wide, and has provided protection for picnic tables since its construction.

INTERIOR

The interior is divided into a large, open meeting space, flanked by smaller rooms that were originally living quarters and now accommodate storage space, a modern kitchen and restrooms.

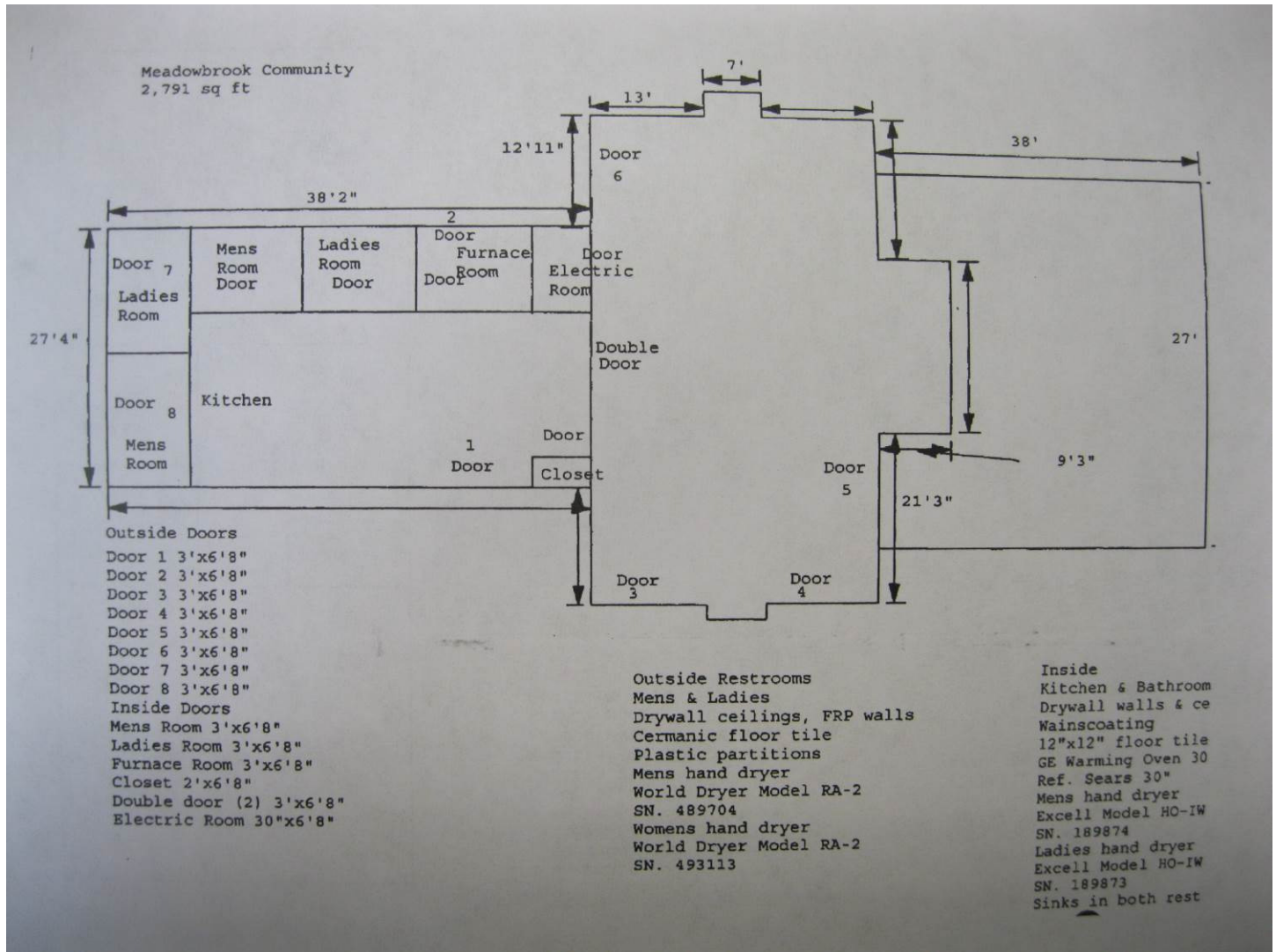
The interior design of the meeting room mirrors the rustic “natural” feel that the exterior evokes. This is best characterized by the two stone fireplaces in the meeting room in the main block. The fireplaces are capped by stone keystone lintels, with varnished wood mantels supported by blocks of stone. The ceiling has a King’s post open truss system, adding to the rustic nature of the building. The floor has a center oak strip floor, with a perimeter of flagstone. The stone walls are exposed on a majority of the interior walls; where the stone is not exposed there are white-painted plaster walls with bead-board wainscoting.

Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No. 36-90

Name Rock Creek Recreation Center
Continuation Sheet

Number 7 Page 2



Facilities Management Floor Plan of Meadowbrook, 2002. Courtesy: M-NCPPC

8. Significance

Inventory No. 36-90

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

Specific dates

Architect/Builder Howard and Katherine Cutler for M-NCPPC and National Park Service/Civilian Conservation Corps

Construction dates c1940

Evaluation for:

National Register

Maryland Register

not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

SUMMARY

Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC) was founded in 1927 as a stream-valley park system protecting the headwaters of the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers. In addition, the Commission's charge was to oversee subdivision review and the creation and maintenance of a recreational park system. Along the stream valleys and, later, in the neighborhood and regional parks, the Commission augmented the natural landscape with the construction of buildings to house indoor recreation activities, such as parties, club meetings, scouts, daycare, and summer camps.

As M-NCPPC approaches its 100th anniversary and out of a mission to provide cultural resource stewardship, the Montgomery County Department of Parks has identified park recreation buildings worthy of preservation. Currently, there are 30 buildings that serve or have operated as recreation buildings (now termed park activity buildings) throughout the 35,000 acre park system.¹ Originally, there were at least 41 of these community facilities. Some of these structures were "purpose-built," while others were converted to recreational use. In order to show a history of the evolution of park activity buildings over the lifetime of the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (1927 to present), the Department of Parks' Cultural Resources Stewardship Section proposes to preserve at least one building from each of the five respective park community/recreation building eras.²

***Era I: The Origins of the M-NCPPC Park System: 1927-1940**

***Era II: The World War II-Era Buildings: 1941-1946**

***Era III: Conversion of World War II Federal Surplus Buildings: 1953-1956**

¹ 2007 M-NCPPC *Catalog of Recreation and Ancillary Buildings* defines recreation buildings as "operated for the benefit of the general public, rented by the hour with Fees set by the Park Commission, reserved through Park Permits, and maintained by the Department of Parks Central Maintenance Divisions."

² In addition to recognizing the recreation buildings still standing, it is worth identifying the (at least) eleven structures that have since been demolished or transferred to the Montgomery County Recreation Department: Cabin John Recreation Center (off MacArthur Blvd.), Garrett Park Estates Community Building, Jesup-Blair Cabin, Kensington Park Community Building (off Frederick Ave.), Long Branch Recreation Center, Randolph Hills Recreation Center, Rosemary Hills Recreation Center, Scotland Community Building, Sligo Avenue Recreation Center, Sligo Cabin, and Wheaton Woods Recreation Center.

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Name : Rock Creek Recreation Building
Continuation Sheet

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***Era IV: Purpose-Built Community Recreation Centers during Cold War Suburbanization: 1950-1990**
***Era V: Repurposing Structures to Become Activity Buildings, 1937-1968**

Five recreation buildings are being nominated to the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*. Each is the best representative of each of the different eras. Rock Creek Recreation Center was selected to represent Era I.³

The Rock Creek Recreation Building in Chevy Chase, Maryland is one of the earliest known buildings of its type in the county, constructed specifically for recreational use and to welcome local residents into a public, pastoral setting. By using natural building materials, recreational facilities could more easily blend into the surrounding landscape. This “parkitecture,” modeled after the rustic structures built by the National Park Service (NPS) during the Great Depression, continued to influence M-NCPPC park design into the 1950s. This building provides a tangible example of the early infrastructure of the Montgomery County Parks system, and continues to function in its original role. It also retains strong integrity. Therefore, the Meadowbrook Recreation Building meets the following criteria of the Montgomery County Historic Preservation Ordinance, Section 24A-3:

- 1(a) has character, interest, or value as part of the development, heritage, or cultural characteristics of the County, State, or Nation;
- 1(d) exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political, or historic heritage of the County and its communities;
- 2(a) embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction;

NARRATIVE HISTORY

Prior to World War II, the rustic style structures found through the National Park Service (NPS) served as a model for the few recreational facilities built for or by the Montgomery County Park system. By using natural materials, these facilities could more easily blend into the surrounding landscape. The labor and funds to construct these typically masonry and wood facilities were supplied by relief agencies such as the Works Progress Administration and the Civil Works Administration during the New Deal years of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. This rustic style, also known as “parkitecture,” continued to influence park design well into the 1950s. A prime example is the Rock Creek Recreation Building.

Era I: The Origins of the M-NCPPC Park System: 1927-1940

Representative Buildings: “Parkitecture”

- Kensington Cabin (1934)
Address: Kensington Cabin Local Park, 10000 Kensington Parkway, Kensington
- Rock Creek Recreation Center/Candy Cane City/Meadowbrook Recreation
Building/Meadowbrook Local Park (ca. 1940)

³ For further information on the various design periods, see MIHP nomination forms for Pinecrest, Ken-Gar, Veirs Mill, and Norbeck.

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Name : Rock Creek Recreation Building
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Address: Meadowbrook Local Park, 7901 Meadowbrook Lane, Chevy Chase

Candidate(s) for Preservation:

- Kensington Cabin: designated on the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*⁴
- Meadowbrook Recreation Building: eligible for the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation*

Rock Creek Recreation Center was constructed in 1940, but plans for a field shelter for Rock Creek Stream Valley Park (specifically in Unit 1) began in the late 1920s. In a May 3, 1929 *Maryland News* article, a proposed Recreation Center located close to the District of Columbia line was announced to the public. The new facility would be accessible to local citizens via the new Bethesda-Silver Spring Highway constructed between 1929 and 1932 and today named the East-West Highway. By September 1933, Irving Root, the first director of M-NCPPC, and agency landscape architect William R. Hall had produced the *Development Plan for Rock Creek Park, Unit One*, which identified the presence of a cross-shaped building that served as a comfort station with restrooms in the exact location where Meadowbrook sits today. Further clarification was offered in a 1934 *Washington Post* article: “a large field house of rustic design” was to be constructed in the first unit of Rock Creek, in the Chevy Chase vicinity and later “[c]abins of similar construction are now being built in Sligo Parkway, the Kensington playground and the new Jesup Blair Park in Silver Spring, which will be formally dedicated September 15.” Rock Creek was “the first of a series of recreation plans in the Montgomery County (Md.) park system...”⁵

The log structures mentioned in this article were initiated by the M-NCPPC with assistance by the Civil Works Administration (CWA) in 1933. In November of that year, at the same time the Commission requested assistance from the CWA to build log shelter cabins at Kensington, Jesup Blair and Sligo, it also submitted an application (Montgomery County Project No. 1) to the same agency to construct a similar facility at Rock Creek Park. The material list for the cabin planned for Rock Creek mirrored that produced for Sligo Creek and Jesup Blair. Project No. 1 included numerous improvements in the existing stream valley parks and started on November 19, 1933 and was quickly completed by March 31, 1934 when the CWA was terminated. When officials submitted final paperwork of finished projects, the proposed log shelter cabin at Rock Creek was not mentioned.

What the CWA was unable to do, M-NCPPC had to complete on its own. According to Irving Root, in a July 21, 1936 letter, “the Commission has completed a park shelter building to provide toilet facilities and a drinking fountain in lower Rock Creek Park.” A 1937 aerial of Chevy Chase confirms that such a structure had been erected on the site known as Meadowbrook (and also shows the Rock Creek Stables, an earlier park

⁴For further information on this structure, reference the research form for the *Master Plan for Historic Preservation* at <http://www.montgomeryplanning.org/historic/kensingtoncabin/>.

⁵ *Washington Post*, 7 September 1934.

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maintenance yard, and a nursery).⁶ The May 23-24, 1940, Minutes of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission (NCPPC; today known as National Capital Planning Commission) identify an “open-air shelter” at Meadowbrook, but such a description does not match the log cabins that were created at Kensington, Sligo, or Jesup Blair. Details about this open-air shelter remain unknown, as this structure was destroyed by fire in the Spring 1940.⁷

The same document notes that M-NCPPC proposed a replacement facility, a smaller building than what was suggested in the 1933 *General Development Plan for Rock Creek Park*. Even with less square footage, the “field house” was to include “quarters for a caretaker, toilets and...open at one end.”⁸ A May 1940 architectural drawing produced for M-NCPPC by Howard W. Cutler and his daughter Katherine, in conjunction with the NPS and NCPPC, shows the “Rock Creek Field House” as it looks today. The Cutlers were supervised by M-NCPPC Landscape Architect Raymond Van Schaak, who kept the project on budget at \$7,000.⁹

The employment of the Cutlers is curious for two reasons. First, M-NCPPC, at the time, relied typically on their own employees for new recreation center designs, and occasionally sought outside expertise from NCPPC.¹⁰ M-NCPPC Architect E. Hall, for example, designed the cabins at Kensington, Sligo, and Jesup Blair, while T. C. Jeffers developed the landscape plan for Meadowbrook Stables while employed by NCPPC. Second, the father-daughter team from Silver Spring was expert in academic architecture, with an extensive portfolio of public schools in lower Montgomery County.¹¹ A biography of Howard Cutler describes him as a “church architect, as an architect of business buildings, as a hospital architect, as an architect of fine residences, and as a school architect.”¹² From the mid-1920s until mid-1940, local schools carried the trademark styles of the Cutlers – Art

⁶ NCPPC Minutes, 23 April 1937. This letter, read by Irving Root, documents that M-NCPPC sought to acquire more land in the Meadowbrook area to create a “screen between the park and future real estate development nearby” and “a background for the horse show grounds.” Rock Creek Stables was built in 1934 by John Gheen, and according to a 16 September 1934 *Washington Post* article, by October of that year, the Commission was to break ground on “an office building, garages, a forge work shop and open sheds for the storage and maintenance of park equipment such as tables and benches.”

⁷ See Figure Six. It is believed the original structure at Meadowbrook may have followed the very plan for a “Park Shelter” designed by E. Mack Hallauer in November 1935.

⁸ NCPPC Minutes, 23-24 May 1940. A 1940 *Washington Post* article also identified plans for a recreation space to include a quarter mile cinder block track, a combined football and soccer field, a croquet court, three basketball courts, and four additional tennis courts, and picnic areas. At the time, the park only had a baseball diamond, four tennis courts, and playground equipment.

⁹ “Rock Creek To Have New Field House,” *Washington Post* 28 July 1940.

¹⁰ NCPPC architectural design and building locations had to be approved by the National Fine Arts Commission.

¹¹ The schools designed by the Cutlers in Montgomery County: Takoma Park-Silver Spring High School (Silver Spring Intermediate School), 1925 Demolished; Silver Spring Intermediate School Auditorium, 1928; Garrett Park School, 1927-8; Clara Barton School, 1928; Colesville Elementary School, 1929; Chevy Chase Elementary School, 1930; Park Street Elementary School, 1934-5; Damascus Elementary School, 1935; Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School, 1935; Montgomery Blair High School, 1935; Montgomery Hills Junior High School, 1936-7; Westbrook Elementary School, 1939; Lynnbrook Elementary School (East Bethesda), 1941 with Katherine Cutler.

¹² “Howard Wright Cutler: Distinguished American Architect,” 4; Montgomery County Historic Preservation Office Architect File on Howard Cutler.

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Name : Rock Creek Recreation Building
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Deco, Art Moderne, and Classical Revival. Katherine, the first licensed female architect in the State of Maryland, followed in her father's footsteps. Nowhere in their collective repertoire was there a recreation center in a rustic style.

The Cutlers may not have had to look far for guidance. Given the heavy hand NCPPC and the NPS had in the development of the Rock Creek Park extension into Montgomery County, they likely were encouraged to create a building consistent with those structures found on federal parks that utilized "parkitecture" – the blending of local natural materials into rustic architecture with the picturesque park landscape as the ideal setting. The concept was popularized by the NPS, resulting in a much duplicated branding effect. The 1935 book, *Park and Recreational Structures*, written by the NPS provides templates for administration and service facilities, recreational and cultural facilities, and overnight and organized camp facilities found in the NPS. Among floorplans is a shelter found at the Staunton River State Park, Scottsville, Virginia. This design – with two stone fireplaces, surrounding windows, enclosed ends, and crushed stone flooring – was representative of a type widely distributed throughout NPS park sites and closely resembles what stands at Meadowbrook.

The Cutlers might have also read publications of the National Recreation and Park Association of America. Their journal, *The Playground*, showcased design concepts for recreational facilities that were more than purely static structures planned for athletic pursuits, they were also multi-functional community centers open to the neighborhood, which were intended to become "the heart of the neighborhood life."¹³ NCPPC mimicked this objective in planning their neighborhood recreation centers: "in the minds of the commission it has been the hope as time goes on all community activities might be focused on the neighborhood recreation centers which would thus acquire a significance in each neighborhood comparable to the common, courthouse, and meeting house of colonial days."¹⁴

With the design approved by M-NCPPC, NCPPC, and the NPS, construction on the Meadowbrook Recreation Building began in late July 1940. The labor was supplied by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).¹⁵ Over the nine year span (1933-1942) the CCC operated, the agency had on average 21 camps in the State of Maryland.¹⁶ Although most of the 30,000 young men worked primarily in Western Maryland, camps were found in all stretches of the state including Commission-sponsored Camp SP-6-MD, also known as Rock Creek Park Extension, was established in Garrett Park where Company No. 356 was stationed.¹⁷ This company completed a host of major activities including "five multi-plate arch vehicle bridges, 313 rods of guard rails, 118 signs, clearing and cleaning over 45,000 square yards of Rock Creek, and crushing and quarrying over 35,000 tons of

¹³ National Recreation and Parks Association Archives. Deering Article, 665.

¹⁴ NCPPC Minutes, 28 October 1937. "Proposed Recreation System for the District of Columbia" (1930) : 32.

¹⁵ "Rock Creek to Have New Field House."

¹⁶ "The Civilian Conservation Corps in Maryland: Part II: A Maryland Perspective."

http://www.dnr.state.md.us/centennial/CCC_History_Part_II.asp.

¹⁷ In addition to Rock Creek, this camp completed work in Sligo Creek and parks in Bethesda and Kensington. Rock Creek Park Extension was the only CCC camp in the National Capital area *not* on federal land, hence it was identified as a "state park camp."

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Name : Rock Creek Recreation Building
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rock for road construction.”¹⁸ Enlistees also built a variety of Park visitor amenities, like recreational buildings (as is the case at Meadowbrook), cabins, trails, and campgrounds. Such tasks were completed under the nominal supervision of the NPS from April 16, 1938 to January 13, 1942.¹⁹ Because Meadowbrook was originally part of the Rock Creek Stream Valley Park, the NPS might have been involved because it “assumed responsibility for the technical supervision of the work programs” of the relief projects operating in state, county, and municipal parks.²⁰

Post-Construction History

If the objective was to make Meadowbrook the center of neighborhood life in Chevy Chase, then that goal was even more fully achieved in 1959 when this park became known as “Candy Cane City” after the installation of red and white striped play equipment, including the Jack and Jill Climbing Tower and two spring-mounted hobby horses.²¹ Although no longer in existence, this play equipment was a popular feature. These new pieces supplemented traditional equipment such as swings and see-saws. Meadowbrook was one of the first parks to have “brightly colored, modern units.”²² According to Former Parks Director Frank Rubini, Meadowbrook started a trend:

We came up with the idea of doing away with the old plumbers’ night mare of just plain galvanized pipe for the playground equipment, and we decided that why don’t we use our men in slack periods to paint and stripe our playground equipment where possible, red and white, blue and white, and other candy striped colors and from that point on we came up with Candy Cane City and we started to stripe our equipment and finally manufacturers began to paint all of their equipment. We found it increased its use tremendously and we did get complaints from mothers that their little children thought this was peppermint candy, the pipes were in and they were gnawing on it. Then we got word from various dentists, facetiously, that they were getting more business due to our painting these candy stripes so you can’t win no matter what you do. It was a lot of fun and you will note that it added color to the park and certainly has added a lot of play to the equipment.”²³

Oral histories reveal his assessment to be accurate. Several Chevy Chase residents lovingly remembered their time at Meadowbrook. Margot Anderson recalled, “I spent half my life at Candy Cane City [in Rock Creek Park]. You’d throw everyone in the car and take them – anyone who wanted to go went with you.”²⁴ Sheila Pitchford echoed the same thought, “I’ll tell you another thing that we did – talking about walking – is we spent

¹⁸IBID. A listing of work classification for this specific camp does not include categories 113: Comfort Stations or 712: Public Picnic Ground Development, which seems the appropriate code for the work completed at Meadowbrook.

¹⁹HABS No. DC-858, “Civilian Conservation Corps Activities in the National Capital Region,” 70; Charles Gerner, “Report of Civilian Conservation Corps Operations in the National Capital Parks, October 15, 1933-June 30, 1942” privately published (1950) : 85, 91. The NPS Regional Office No. 1 in Richmond, Virginia would have supervised work at Meadowbrook.

²⁰Email correspondence from Lisa Davidson, Ph.D., National Park Service, 8 August 2008.

²¹“Fun in Candyland,” *Washington Post* 25 August 1960.

²²M-NCPPC Archives, Saddlebrook.

²³Frank Rubini, “Park History and Anecdotes” (September 1977): 14.

²⁴Margot Anderson Oral History, 4 June 2008. 2009.1048.01 Chevy Chase Historical Society.

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a lot of our summers down at Candy Cane Lane....and it was a rec center run by the State of Maryland. It had tennis courts and you could learn tennis; we went swimming one day a week.”²⁵

By 1966, the new “Astro City” playground at Meadowbrook was on display for the Congress for Recreation and Parks. According to the *Evening Star* journalist Roberta Hornig, this equipment was “to keep children up with the space age. It takes them through journeys of the astronauts with walks, sliding boards, and climbs – if it doesn’t scare them off.”²⁶ Produced in Grinnell, Iowa, the Commission purchased a spaceship sliding board, a Sputnik pole with rings, a Telstar Whirl, Moon Creatures, and Sand Craters. Despite this new, updated space-age equipment, maps such as the *Federal Rock Creek Park*, published by NPS in 1972, continued to identify the children’s area next to the Recreation Center as “Candy Cane City.” The space age equipment has since been replaced.

The Rock Creek Community Building, as Meadowbrook was first called, was the model for at least three future planned facilities: at Lynnbrook, Capital View, and Wood Acres (never completed) by 1950. As a result, newly constructed facilities incorporated assembly rooms for meetings and parties, kitchens, bathrooms, fireplaces, and storage space.

Citizens who visit Meadowbrook today will find a structure with two fireplaces, a concession stand, a kitchen, rest rooms, and plenty of meeting space. The kitchen area encompassed the former staff apartment which was removed in 1997-1999. In close proximity to the building are picnic tables, drinking fountains, playground equipment, basketball courts, lighted tennis courts, and fields for football, baseball and softball – recreation amenities proposed in the original 1933 *General Development Plan*.

²⁵ Sheila Pitchford Oral History, 8 March 2005. 2007.58.11 Chevy Chase Historical Society.

²⁶ *Evening Sun* 11 October 1966. Montgomery County Historical Society.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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Chevy Chase Historical Society
M-NCPPC Archives, Saddlebrook. Collection includes M-NCPPC *Annual Reports*.
M-NCPPC Collection, Cartography Division, National Archives – College Park.
M-NCPPC Papers (Minutes/Proceedings), Maryland State Archives
Meadowbrook File, Parkside.
NCPPC Papers (Minutes), NCPPC Library.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 65.23 acres (Rock Creek Stream Valley Unit 1)
Acreage of historical setting 44.763 acres (Meadowbrook Local Park)
Quadrangle name Washington West Quadrangle scale: 1:24000

Verbal boundary description and justification

The historic environmental setting includes that part of the parcel associated with the recreation building and its functions in the Meadowbrook Local Park. The additional acreage in the parcel that is associated with Rock Creek Stream Valley Park (Unit 1 of the original park acquisition) does not function in association with the recreation building, and are therefore not part of the setting. It will exclude the M-NCPPC Meadowbrook Maintenance Yard (c1980s).

11. Form Prepared by

name/title	Jamie F. Kuhns, Senior Historian, Cultural Resources Stewardship Section		
organization	M-NCPPC, Montgomery Parks	date	15 August 2013
street & number	9500 Brunett Avenue	telephone	301-650-4362
city or town	Silver Spring	state	MD

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust
Maryland Department of Planning
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600

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Figure 1. USGS Washington West Quad. Courtesy: M-NCPPC.

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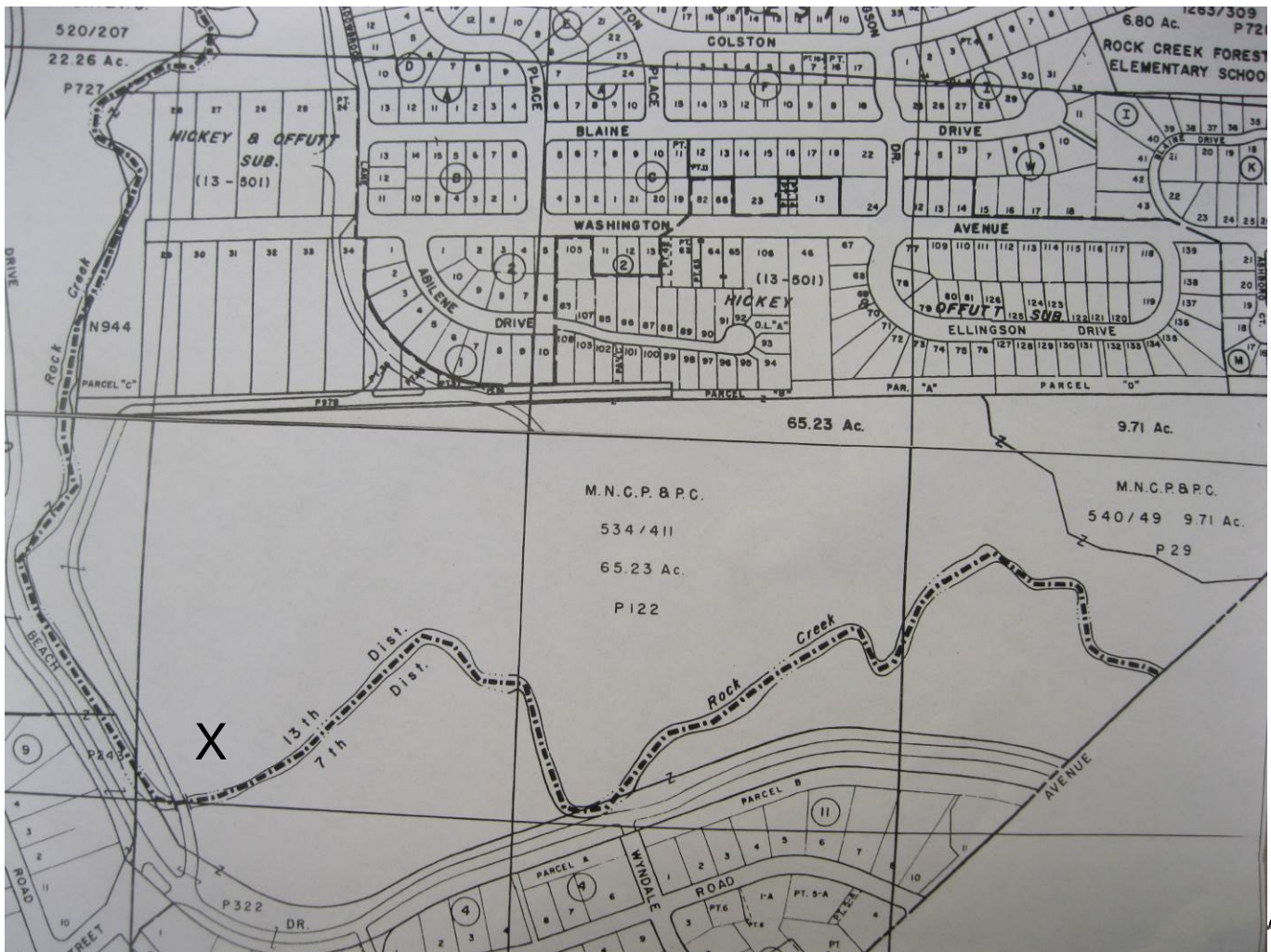


Figure 2. Tax Map: Property P122. Recreation Center site marked with X. Courtesy: M-NCPPC.

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Figure 3. Aerial view of Meadowbrook Recreation Building at Meadowbrook Local Park, 2008. Courtesy: M-NCPPC.

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Figure 4. Aerial View of Chevy Chase, 1937. The Meadowbrook vicinity that includes the Rock Creek Community Center and Stables is located just below the date mark seen in the photo. Courtesy: Chevy Chase Historical Society.

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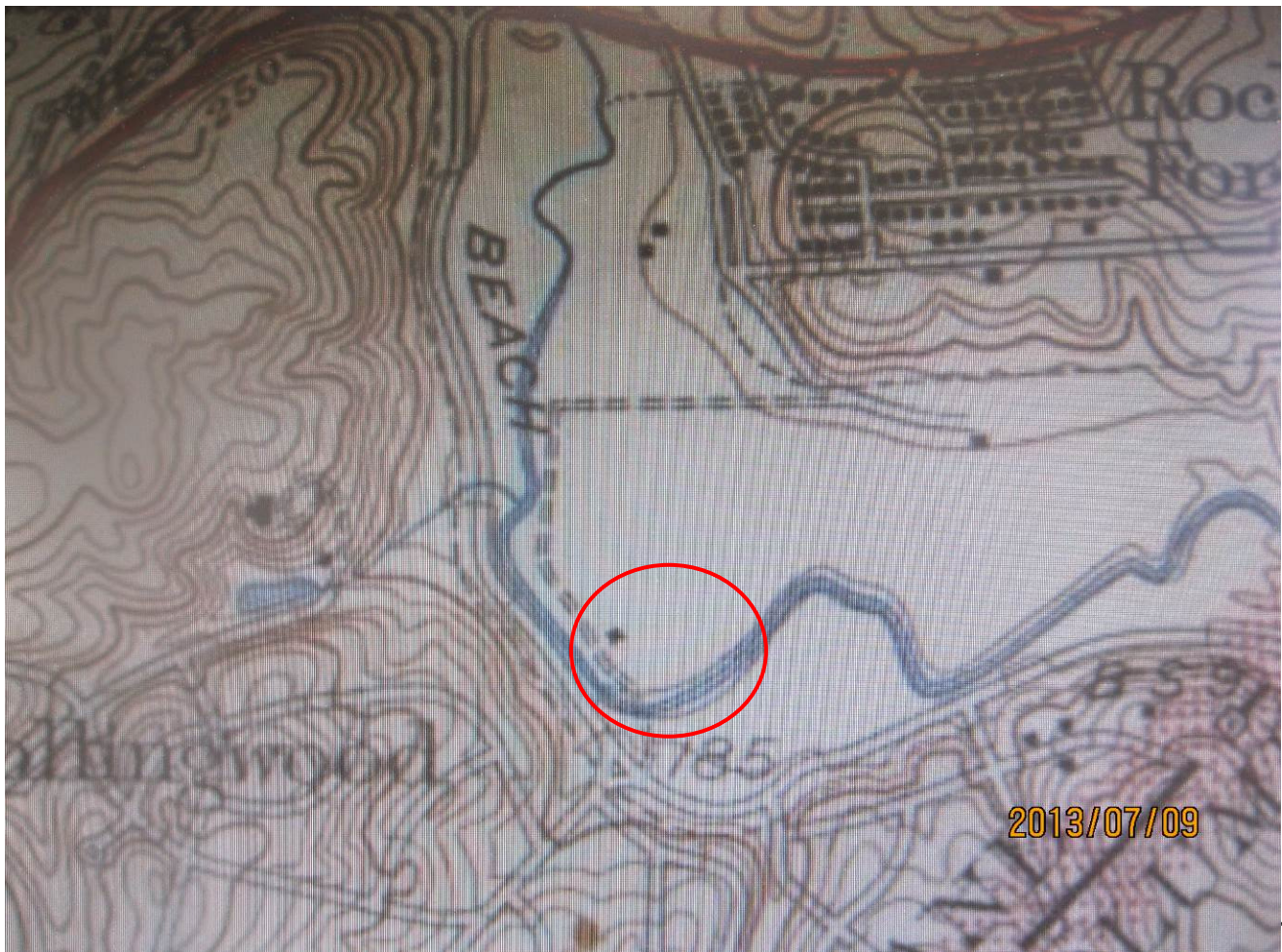


Figure 5. 1945 USGS Quad Map of Washington West. Rock Creek Recreation Center in circle. Courtesy: M-NCPPC.

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Figure 6. 1933 Development Plan Map of Rock Creek Stream Valley Park, Unit 1. Courtesy: National Archives, Cartography Division, College Park.

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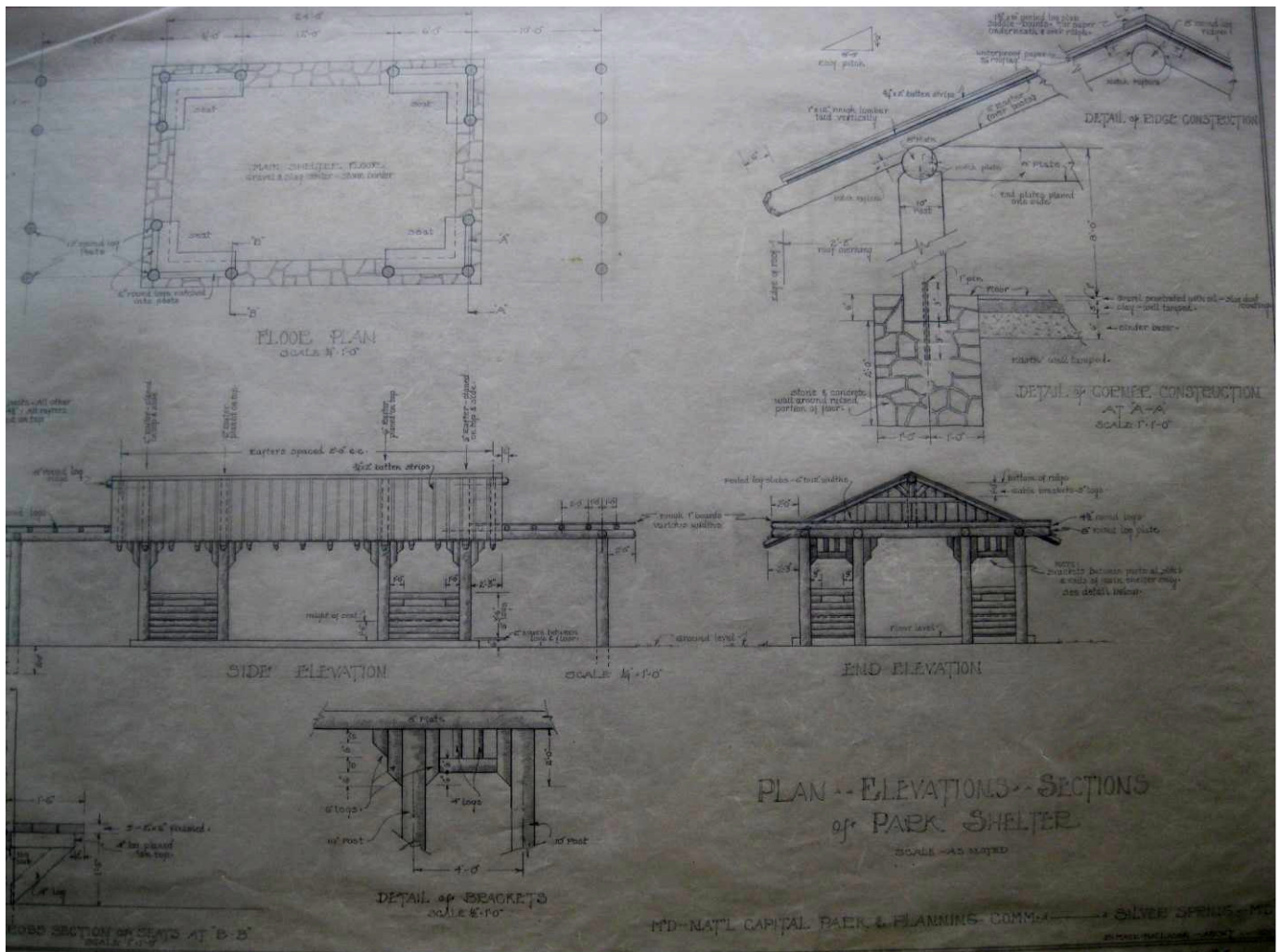


Figure 7. Original 1935 Drawing for an open-air "Park Shelter," which may have been the building constructed in the mid-1930s at Meadowbrook and which burned down in 1940. Courtesy: M-NCPPC.

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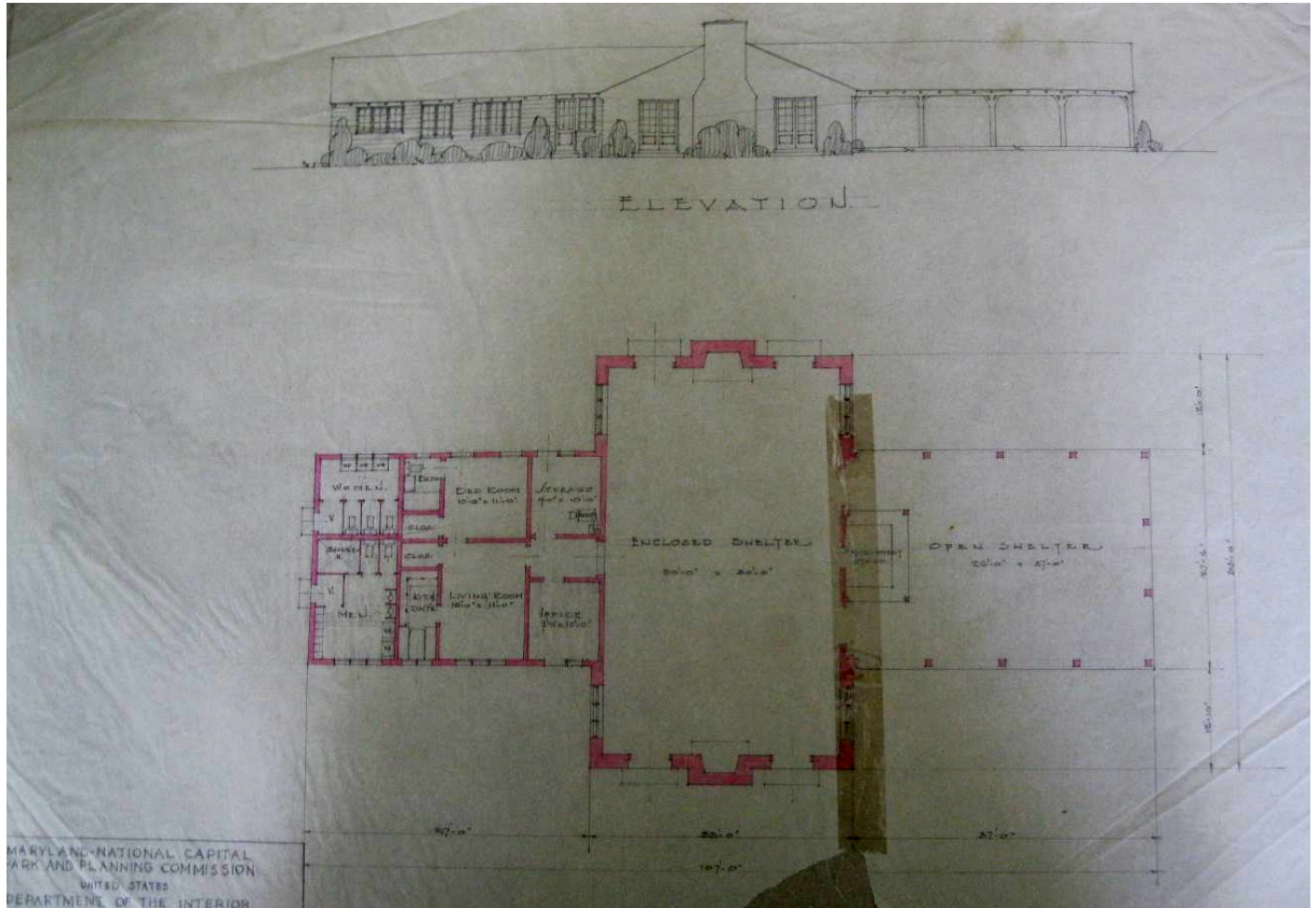


Figure 8. Original 1940 Architectural Drawing of the Rock Creek Field House by Howard W. Cutler and Katherine Cutler for M-NCPPC, NPS, and NCPPC. Courtesy: M-NCPPC.

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Figure 9. Rock Creek Recreation Center, c1940s. Courtesy: M-NCPPC.

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Figure 10. Rock Creek Recreation Center c1940s. The ford was constructed in 1933 to allow visitors to cross over Rock Creek to Beach Drive. Since then, the ford has been closed to vehicular traffic. Courtesy: M-NCPPC.

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Figure 11. Rock Creek Recreation Center in the distance, with the ford crossing adjacent Rock Creek and connecting to Beach Drive, c1940s. Courtesy: M-NCPPC.

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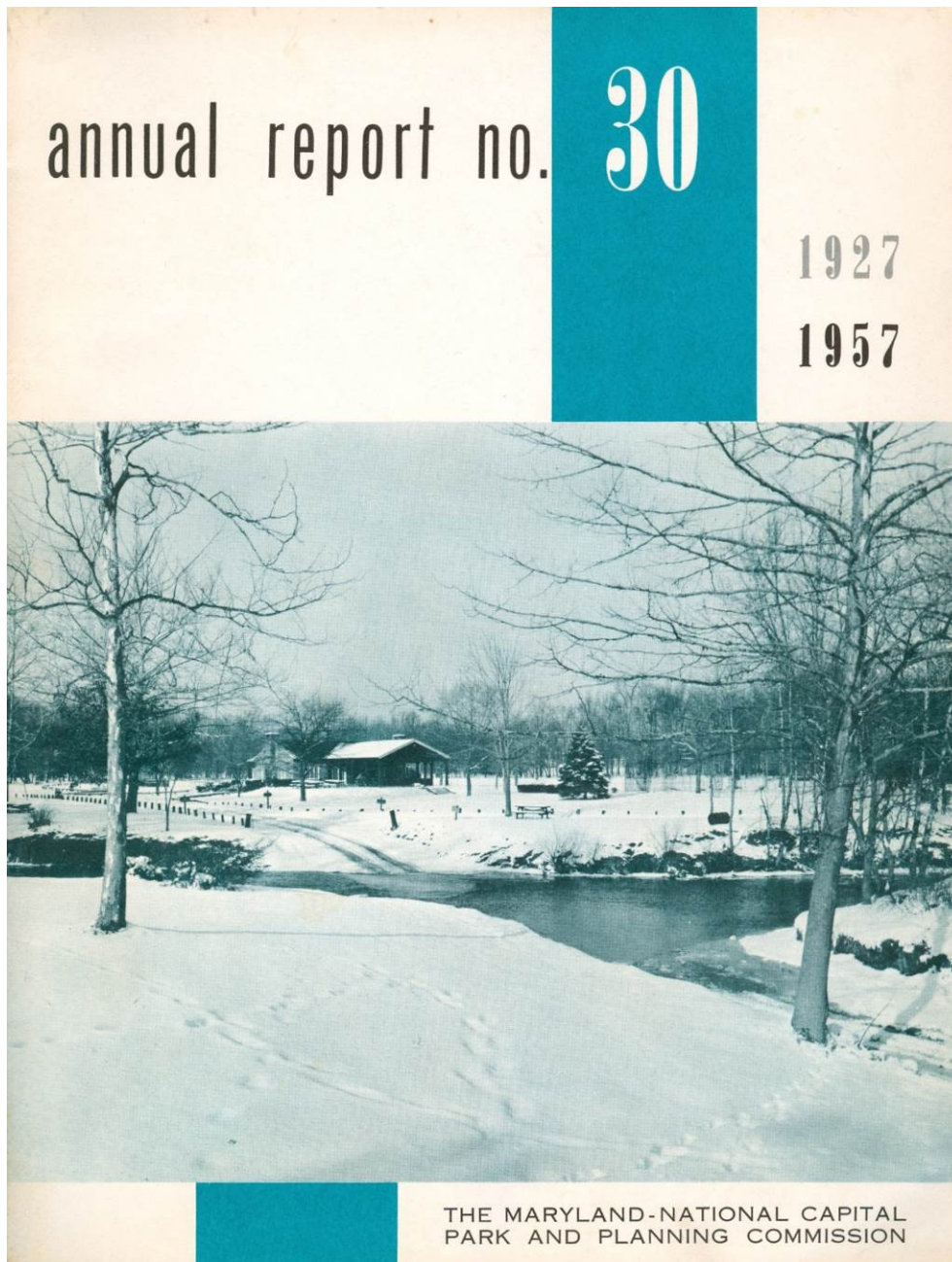


Figure 12. Rock Creek Recreation Center on the cover of M-NCPPC's *Annual Report, 1957*. Courtesy: M-NCPPC.

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Figure 13. Rock Creek Recreation Center on the cover of the 1954 M-NCPPC *Park Guide*. Courtesy: M-NCPPC

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Figure 14. View of Meadowbrook Recreation Building, east (front) façade.

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Figure 15. View of Meadowbrook Recreation Building, south elevation.

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Figure 16. View of Meadowbrook Recreation Building, southwest corner.

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Figure 17. View of Meadowbrook Recreation Building, west (rear) façade.

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Figure 18. View of Meadowbrook Recreation Building, northwest corner.

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Figure 19. View of Meadowbrook Recreation Building, from playground; north elevation.

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Figure 20. View of Meadowbrook Recreation Building, northeast corner.

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Figure 21. Detail of interior open space in the Meadowbrook Recreation Building.

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Figure 22. Detail of replacement casement windows, modeled after original windows seen in ca. 1940 photos.

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Figure 23. Detail of interior hearth, fireplace, and mantel, Meadowbrook Recreation Building.

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Figure 24. Detail of exposed, rough-hewn trusses at interior ceiling, Meadowbrook Recreation Building.