

**NOMINATION OF FRICK PARK  
TO BE DESIGNATED AS A HISTORIC SITE  
CITY COUNCIL REPORT**



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**FRICK PARK - HISTORIC NOMINATION STAFF REPORT**

**Name of Property** ..... Frick Park  
**Address of Property** ..... 2005 Beechwood Boulevard  
**Property Owner** ..... City of Pittsburgh  
**Nominated by:**..... Councilperson Barb Warwick  
**Date Received:**..... August 29, 2023  
**Parcel No.:** ..... 127-H-100-01  
**Ward:**..... 14th  
**Zoning Classification:**..... P  
**Neighborhoods**.....Swisshelm Park, Squirrel Hill South, Regent Square, Point  
**Council District:**..... 5 - Warwick

**FORMAL ACTION REQUIRED BY THE HISTORIC REVIEW COMMISSION:**

1. Act on the Preliminary Determination of Eligibility for Historic Designation (4 October 2023)
2. Conduct a public hearing for the Historic Designation (1 November 2023)
3. Review the Report prepared by staff for the property in question, and make a recommendation to the City Council on the Historic Designation (1 November 2023)

**FORMAL ACTION REQUIRED BY THE PLANNING COMMISSION:**

4. Conduct a public hearing for the Historic Designation (28 November 2023)
5. Review the recommendations of the Historic Review Commission and make a recommendation to the City Council on the Historic Designation (28 November 2023)

**FORMAL ACTION REQUIRED BY THE CITY COUNCIL:**

6. Conduct a public hearing within 120 days of 28 December 2023 (27 March 2024).
7. Review the recommendations of the Historic Review Commission and the City Planning Commission and take action on the Historic Designation.

## FACTS

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1. On 29 August 2023 the staff of the Historic Review Commission received an application for the nomination of Frick Park to be designated as a City Historic Site.
2. **Description of Frick Park** (*as extracted from the nomination form*)

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

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

Trails ranging from 1/2 to 2 miles in length, from flat to steep, extend and loop through this landscape of wetlands and woodlands. The trails cross Nine Mile Run and other, smaller streams that meander through the park on simple footbridges. Trails are paved in asphalt, gravel, crushed stone, or earth, depending on location and use. Some sections close to the Nine Mile Run stream bed are boardwalks, and wooden steps ascend some of the steeper hills. Vehicular access, active use areas, recreational facilities, and architectural gateways are focused along the park's perimeter, where it abuts adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Park signage is rustic except for that incorporated into the five stone entrance structures designed for four park gateways by John Russell Pope (described below). Four of these ca. 1935 structures are shelters or gatehouses; one is a cairn. The park contains five additional buildings: the Biddle Building (ca. 1930), the Frick Park Lawn Bowling Club (1940), two buildings in the English Lane complex (1959), and the Frick Environmental Center (2016). A steel arch bridge carrying

Forbes Avenue over Fern Hollow is located within the boundaries of the park. The park also contains miscellaneous uncounted small structures and furnishings, such as simple picnic shelters, picnic tables, utilitarian restroom buildings, benches, bulletin boards, fencing, stairs, footbridges, interpretive signage, and trash receptacles.

**3. History of Frick Park** *(as extracted from the nomination form)*

After Henry Clay Frick died in 1919, the first decade and a half after the execution of his will was marked by legal proceedings to transfer the land to the City and preliminary forays into park planning and construction. Park trustees soon began adding to the original park area. In 1924, Pittsburgh City Council voted to accept a deed for 189 acres, increasing the park to 340 acres, and authorized the engagement of a landscape architect, the Boston firm of Lowell and Vinal, to undertake master planning for the organization and linkage of park land. On June 25, 1927, the park officially opened to the public, though the first trail had not yet been constructed. The most visible legacy of the park's earliest era was the construction of four park gateways, announced in 1931 and built by 1935 with \$70,000 in Works Progress Administration funds. They are: an arched gateway at Homewood Avenue and Reynolds St., paired gate houses at Beechwood Blvd., a small stone shelter on Forbes Ave., and a stone cairn at the juncture of Beechwood Blvd. and Forbes Ave. The structures were designed by the famed New York architect John Russell Pope (1874-1937), whose involvement in Frick Park in the early 1930s can probably be explained by the fact that he was simultaneously renovating the Frick residence on Fifth Avenue in New York City into a museum to house the Frick family art collection. Despite the Great Depression, income from the park's endowment also allowed its trustees to continue to assemble hundreds more acres to be added to its area during the 1930s. Most of this land lay south of the original bequest, extending to the upper reaches of the Nine Mile Run basin.

Perhaps the most important development of the past 50 years has been the addition of 106 acres of the Nine Mile Run stream valley to the park in 1996, realizing the 1910 vision of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. (see below) and increasing the park's acreage to 644. Slag dumped by the Duquesne Slag Products Company from 1923 to 1970 had accumulated to 17 million cubic yards in a steeply-sided heap 120 feet high. In 1996, the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh acquired 238 acres and began environmental remediation and redevelopment of 132 of them into a master-planned residential development known as Summerset at Frick Park. It deeded the remaining 106 acres to the City of Pittsburgh for an extension of Frick Park. New trails now follow the restored stream almost to its outlet at the Monongahela River.

**4. Significance of Frick Park** *(as extracted from the nomination form)*

The *Pittsburgh Code of Ordinances, Title 11, Historic Preservation, Chapter 1: Historic Structures, Districts, Sites and Objects* lists ten criteria, at least one of which must be met for Historic Designation. The nominator is of the opinion that the Frick Park meets several of the criteria as follows.

**5) Its exemplification of important planning and urban design techniques distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design or detail**

As a carefully-designed sequence of scenic landscapes, Frick Park holds significance within landscape architecture. Dating from the early-to-mid 20th century, its design is neither wholly romantic nor modern, but on the interior of the park, cultivates a sense of not having been designed at all. At the park's edges, where it touches adjacent residential neighborhoods, it provides sensitively-designed vehicular access, recreational facilities, and sometimes formal gateways leading through interim meadowlands to a scenic experience of native Pennsylvania woodlands and wetlands. The treatment of its perimeter, interior, and transitional zones is unique among Pittsburgh's designed landscapes and reflects early 20th century concerns about the separation of disparate uses and users, in particular pedestrians and automobiles. It is largely attributable to the landscape architecture firm of Innocenti and Webel, who assumed the park's planning and design

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in 1935 and remained involved until 1957. Significant contributions were also made by Ralph Griswold during the 1930s and 40s and by Simonds and Simonds in the 1960s.

Frick Park was not the first Pittsburgh park to be designed by landscape architects. In 1867, the City of Allegheny hired the New York firm of Mitchell and Grant to design the transformation of Allegheny Commons, a former public grazing land which had become a disused dumping ground, into an elegant public park. Mitchell and Grant's work was typical of post-Civil War landscape design and well-suited to its site, which was surrounded by established city blocks and narrow on three sides. Formal promenades, punctuated by sites for fountains or commemorative sculpture, in these narrow areas opened up into a pastoral, picturesque "pleasure ground" of lawn studded with specimen trees. A carriage drive allowed those who could afford such conveyance to ride through the landscape at a stately pace. The site also contained pre-existing intrusive uses: a penitentiary and a railroad. These Mitchell and Grant dealt with as best they could, mainly through camouflage. Allegheny Commons' original design included copses of trees and an ornamental lake—later adapted for swimming, skating, and boating—but unlike the larger parks of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it did not include forests, streams, or wilderness areas.

Allegheny's and Pittsburgh's later Victorian parks—Highland, Schenley, and Riverview, all established ca. 1890—have more in common with Frick Park in terms of their expansive size, rugged terrain, and scenic views. These parks' locations on the outskirts of developed urban areas made such broad expanses and varieties of terrain possible. Pittsburgh's late Victorian parks were not designed by landscape architects, but by city engineers, starting with Edward Bigelow in the 1890s (the City of Pittsburgh would not have a professional landscape architect on staff until Ralph Griswold in 1934). Bigelow and his successors generally followed the model of the romantic landscape parks of Frederick Law Olmsted, heavily influenced by New York's Central and Prospect Parks and adapted to the rugged topography of western Pennsylvania.<sup>4</sup> City civil engineers and horticulturalists cultivated park land and vegetation for romantic visual effect, including dramatic stonework, overlooks and vistas, open fields alternating with woods and groves of trees, fountains, and lakes. They designed curvilinear roads to wind through this landscape, leading to and around the uplands and plateaus upon which attractions were sited. In keeping with late Victorian and Progressive-era ideals about parks, many such attractions filled the interiors of Highland, Schenley, and Riverview Parks, with buildings and structures ranging in style from rustic—such as an early picnic shelter in Allegheny Commons (no longer standing)—to elaborate, such as the Schenley Park Casino (burned 1896) and Phipps Conservatory. Often, buildings associated with previous land uses were incorporated and repurposed in the parks, such as a farmhouse in Highland Park and a chapel in Riverview. Landscapes themselves also included formal elements, such as the Highland Avenue entrance gardens at Highland Park.

Frick Park's design sought to maintain and enhance a passive, immersive woodland experience on the interior while acknowledging the desire of park users for recreational opportunities by siting facilities—chiefly ball courts, playgrounds, and two lawn bowling courts—at the park's periphery, where it abutted adjacent residential neighborhoods. Its designers took a similar approach to sequestering motorized vehicles, which had not existed when Pittsburgh's previous parks were designed and so posed a new challenge for Frick Park's landscape architects. Evidence of their intent is found in the earliest designs for the park. Though the written materials of Lowell and Vinal and of Blum, Weldin, and Company, do not survive, some clues are found in news accounts proximate to the park's opening in 1927. On July 9 of that year, the Pittsburgh Chamber

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of Commerce published an article noting that the first planned trail—spanning two and a half miles through Fern Hollow from the Bowling Green to Beechwood Boulevard—was soon to be constructed, along with two children’s playgrounds, shelter houses, picnic tables, and locker rooms. The article further notes that while park entrances would be conveniently accessible by streetcar, many park visitors were anticipated to arrive by automobile, so that convenient access for motorists would be provided.

In 1929, Frick Park Supervisor Harvey Crass elaborated on the accommodation of motor vehicles and recreational uses in Frick Park, characterizing playgrounds as a “side issue” to the park plan. He told the Pittsburgh Press, We want to keep the park just as natural and as wild as we possibly can.... It is planned for nature lovers, for people who love to ramble around in picturesque outdoors. So it is not our plan to make many automobile roads through the park. We will build only the necessary ones to bring people into the park interior. Aside from that, all other paths will be five-foot trails. This was carried out. Only one lane, an extension of Lancaster Avenue in Regent Square, penetrates Frick Park to access an interior parking area and trailheads.

The Frick Park gatehouses were another early indication of the park’s designers’ approach to connecting its landscape to visitors and to the residential neighborhoods at its edges. While hardly grandiose, their design is refined, with rooflines conveying an architectural relationship to Clayton, the Fricks’ Chateausque Pittsburgh home. The stone gatehouses helped establish an urbane identity and sophisticated design vocabulary for Frick Park in its earliest era. For example, Innocenti and Webel’s formal strengths can be seen in the Clayton Hill entrance to the park, with its axial symmetry between the elegant, Pope-designed gatehouses at Beechwood Boulevard and a fountain placed by Innocenti and Webel at the far end of a double allee of trees. Yet in most of the park, Innocenti and Webel successfully sustained a ruggedly scenic vision. They designed Frick Park’s trails to draw visitors to the interior of the park, and there to foster urban dwellers’ bond with nature by leading them through a picturesque, apparently unspoiled woodland interspersed with wetlands, meadows, and pastoral lawns shaded by scattered trees.

Actually, centuries of human use had already profoundly altered the natural landscape. Frick Park was assembled from a mosaic of tracts that had served as farms, forests, Native American hunting trails, Civil War fortifications, a golf course, and a grist mill. The essence of Innocenti and Webel’s design was to combine these various lands into a coherent whole that effectively recreated the experience of an untouched, scenic forest.<sup>8</sup> This approach is perhaps most vividly illustrated by the deliberate reversal of the groomed country club property to meadow and woodland. Innocenti and Webel directed the demolition of the club house, re-grading of the golf course, elimination (or conversion to foot trails) of the bridle paths, and the removal of clay from the tennis courts to the park’s Braddock Avenue edge, where new courts were constructed upland from passive use areas.

During the first and most productive ten years of their association with Frick Park, Innocenti and Webel worked in unique partnership with Ralph Griswold (1894-1981), an accomplished landscape architect in his own right. As the superintendent of the Pittsburgh Bureau of Parks from 1934-1945 and the first professional landscape architect hired by the city, Griswold was a strong advocate for the city park system. Though his specific contributions to Frick Park are not attributed, he headed the city’s parks agency during Frick Park’s most active years of development, and his expertise almost certainly helped guide the park from a patchwork of miscellaneous parcels to coherent public landscape. Griswold’s understanding of both landscape

design and, from the civil service side, efficient management, would have helped Innocenti and Webel and the Frick trustees to make sustainable decisions for the park's future. Timing suggests that Griswold was responsible for securing the WPA funding that supported the construction of the park's first structures, the stone gatehouses and cairn designed by John Russell Pope. He may also have been influential in the decision to restrict active recreation, automobile access, and parking to the park's edges. The protection of pedestrians and pedestrianized experiences—such as parks—from the noise, pollution, and dangers of motor vehicles was a significant concern in the 1920s and 30s. In these decades, automobile ownership became more affordable and prevalent, and professionals concerned with the built environment faced new problems of integrating demands for motorcar movement, storage, and maintenance into their designs. Griswold's work as landscape architect for Chatham Village, a park-like planned residential community in the Mt. Washington neighborhood of Pittsburgh, in the early 1930s familiarized him with the challenge of separating a tranquil landscape and its users from vehicular roads and parking. It is not far-fetched to suppose that the solution on Mt. Washington—restricting commercial businesses and automobiles to perimeter roadways and preserving the interiors of blocks for a landscape designed for pedestrians—may have informed the similar treatment of the issue at Frick Park.

In the early 1960s, the respected modern firm of Simonds and Simonds left a limited but significant mark on Frick Park with one of its most popular features, the Blue Slide Playground at the park's Riverview entrance. The location of the playground at the neighborhood edge of the park was consistent with the precedent established by Griswold and Innocenti and Webel. Beyond its location, the playground is notable for its sensitive, tiered design, such that it is highly visible from the adjacent neighborhood but lies over a ridge and out of sight of the Riverview Trail on the park's interior. The playground is among Simonds and Simonds' significant contributions to public landscape design in Pittsburgh during the Modern era, including Mellon Square downtown and a redesign (only partially implemented) of Allegheny Commons Park on the North Side in 1966.

**7) Its association with important cultural or social aspects or events in the history of the City of Pittsburgh, the State of Pennsylvania, the Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States.**

The significant planning and design of Frick Park took place through the cooperative efforts of the Pittsburgh Bureau of Parks, the Frick Park trustees, and the landscape architects they hired from the 1930s through the 1960s. This collaboration distinguished the establishment, planning and development of Frick Park from that of the city's previous parks.

In particular, the role of philanthropy in Frick Park was unprecedented. It began with Helen Clay Frick, Henry Clay Frick's daughter, who urged her father's bequest. A number of Helen's personal experiences had acquainted her with the idea of transforming private land into public asset through philanthropy. When she was thirteen, Theodore Roosevelt—known as the "conservation president" for setting aside millions of acres of land as protected park, forest, and nature preserve—visited Clayton and dined with the Frick family. Helen also would have been familiar with heiress Mary Schenley's gift of Schenley Park to the City of Pittsburgh when Helen was a baby, and her own father's donation of a city block—also known as Frick Park—with lawns, play areas, and a water fountain to the nearby town of Homestead, where the Homestead Works of Carnegie Steel was located. Her upbringing in a wealthy family and her education,

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which included courses at the New York School of Philanthropy, also prepared her for charitable giving.

Although other Pittsburgh parks were also the products and/or recipients of philanthropy—such as Schenley Park, which was donated by Mary Schenley after Bigelow’s persuasion and features Phipps Conservatory, which itself was given by Henry Phipps—the structure of Frick’s bequest, which consisted of not only land but of an endowment to be managed by appointed trustees, ensured the gift’s lasting value and its ties in perpetuity to the guidance and support of the Frick family and trusted advisors. Only in Frick Park did philanthropy guide the ongoing planning and development of the public landscape from its donation to the City to its maturity. Frick Park’s unique circumstances set it on a course different from those of earlier parks administered by city engineers, even those which were or contained gifts. Managed by public servants, shaped by landscape architects, and guided, augmented, and protected by the Frick family and trustees, Frick Park represents an early and important example of public-private collaboration to develop a major public landscape in Pittsburgh.

The last of Pittsburgh’s large city parks and the only one entirely developed in the 20th century, Frick Park reflected different goals and values than earlier Victorian and Progressive era parks. Passive recreation and nature appreciation have been key experiences provided to users of Frick Park since its early development in the 1930s.

**10) Its unique location and distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City of Pittsburgh.**

As Pittsburgh’s largest park, Frick Park remains highly visible within the city landscape. Situated north of Penn-Lincoln Parkway (U.S. I-376) and mostly south of Braddock Avenue, the park is visible to traffic on both of these major roads, which numbers among tens of thousands of people every day. Frick Park also occupies a unique and distinctive geographic location as a large forest landscape within the bounds of a city known for its industrialization.

Likewise, the park’s 644 acres of mostly wooded land continue to evoke the feeling of a natural and rustic landscape where visitors can relax away from the urban environment. Frick Park is highly visible to residents of the nearest neighborhoods, as well as parkgoers hailing from other areas of the city and further away, who frequently use the park and its distinct peripheral features, such as the Riverview Hill and Braddock Avenue playgrounds. Frick Park continues to be a valuable civic asset for communion with nature and respite from urban life.



### **3. Integrity**

Frick Park retains integrity of location, design, workmanship, and materials. Its location includes the original 151 acres bequeathed by Henry Clay Frick in 1919 and subsequent lands added by the Frick trustees during the 1920s, 30s, and 40s; the only changes to the park’s boundaries have been its incremental enlargement after 1927.

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

### **4. Photos**



*Photo 1. Tranquil Trail through Fern Hollow (facing south).*



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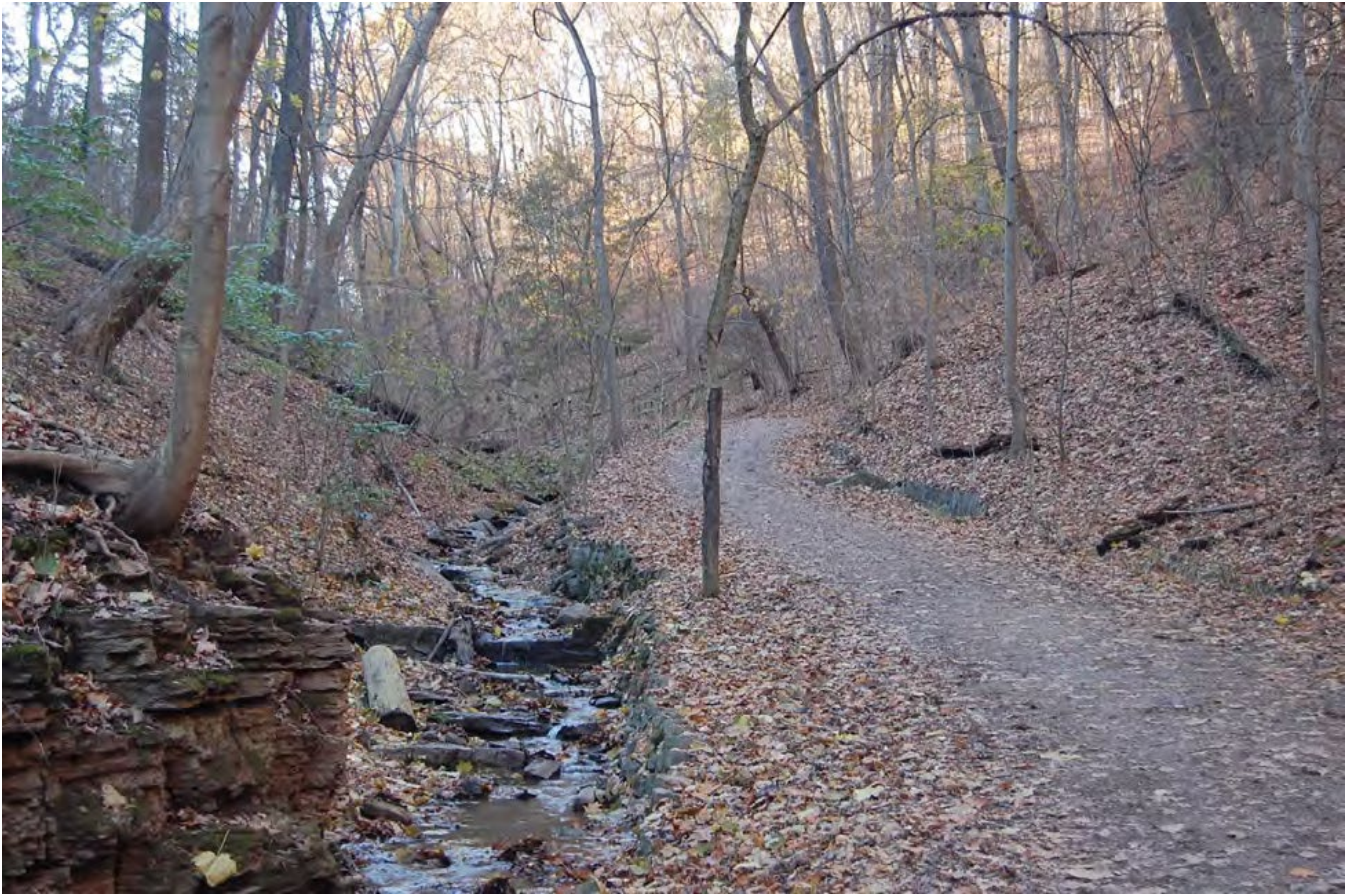


Photo 2. *Falls Ravine Trail (facing west).*

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*Photo 3. Reynolds Street Gatehouse (John Russell Pope, 1931) (facing southeast).*



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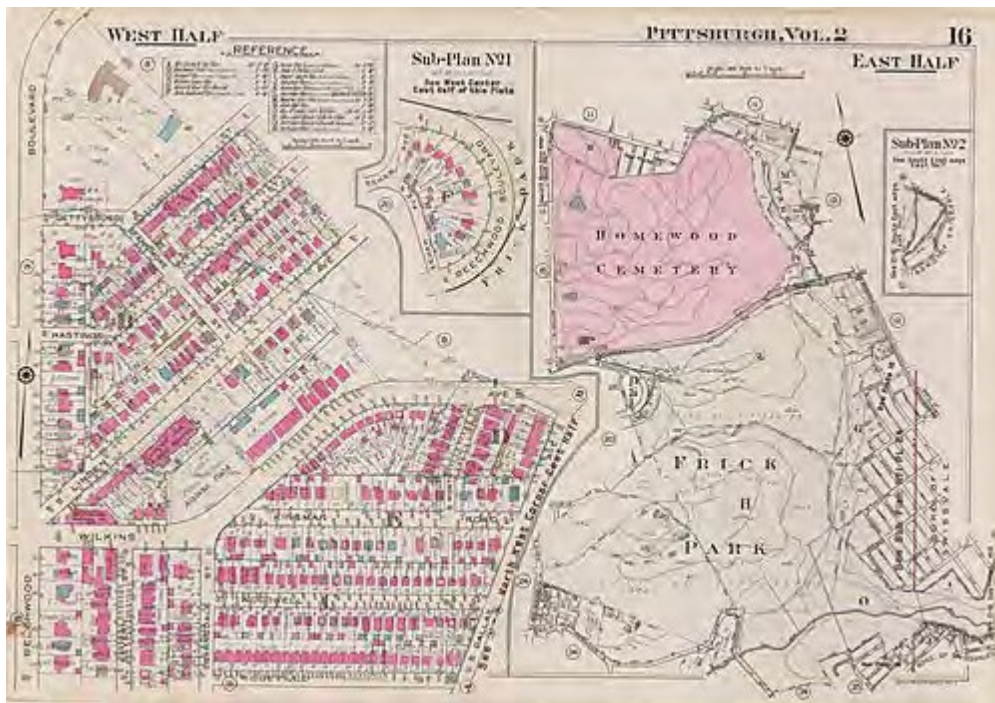
Photo 4. *Forbes Avenue gatehouse/shelter (John Russell Pope, 1931) at west end of Forbes Avenue Bridge (facing southeast).*





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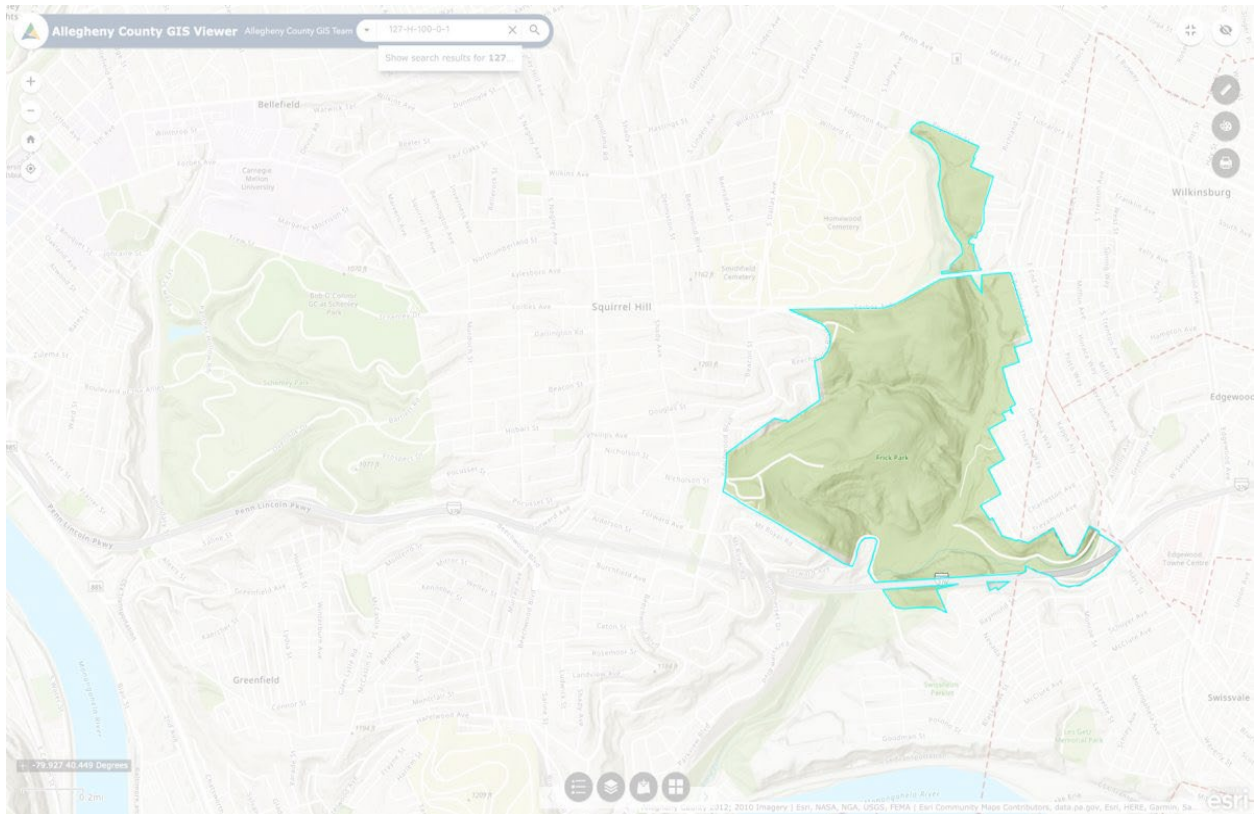
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*Point Breeze, Regent Square, Squirrel Hill South. Plate 16. 1939. G.M. Hopkins & Co. G.M. Hopkins Company Maps, University of Pittsburgh.*

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Frick Park Parcel 127-H-100-01

**6. Recommendation of the City Planning Commission**

The Historic Review Commission held a public hearing regarding the designation of Frick Park. On November 1, 2023 the Commission voted to recommend to City Council that it designate Frick Park as historic.

The City Planning Commission held a public hearing regarding the designation Frick Park. On November 28, 2023 the Commission voted to recommend to City Council that it designate Frick Park as historic.

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**7. Meeting Minutes**

**HRC MINUTES – OCTOBER 4, 2023 – PRELIMINARY DETERMINATION HEARING**

Pittsburgh HRC –October 4, 2023

***Frick Park***  
***2005 Beechwood Boulevard***

***Historic Nomination***

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**Owner:**  
City of Pittsburgh

Ward: 14th

Lot and Block: 127-H-100, 127-B-1

**Nominator:**  
Matthew Falcone/Preservation  
Pittsburgh, Councilperson Barb  
Warwick, et al.

Neighborhood: Swisshelm Park,  
Squirrel Hill South, Regent Square,  
Point Breeze

Council District: 5<sup>th</sup>, 9th

Nominations Received: 8/29/23

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**National Register Status:**    **Listed:**    **X**    **Eligible:**

**Proposed Changes:** Determination of nomination viability.

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**Discussion:**

1. Ms. Quinn gives a short presentation on the property. She states that the nominator as well as staff found that the property is significant under **Criterion 5**, Its exemplification of important planning and urban design techniques distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design or detail, **Criterion 7**, association with important cultural or social aspects or events in the history of the City of Pittsburgh, the State of Pennsylvania, the Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States, and **Criterion 10**, unique location and distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City of Pittsburgh. She states that the property retains integrity and recommends that the Commission provides a positive recommendation to City Council.
  2. The Commission discusses the criteria for nomination.
  3. Ms. Loysen mentioned the golf course that was in the park previously. Ms. Quinn confirmed that it was there and the land has returned to its natural state. Mr. Hill notes the global recognition of the park as a result of Mac Miller’s music. It is currently the largest park in the city.
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Motion:

1. Mr. Hill moves to affirm the viability of the nomination based on **Criteria 5, 7, and 10.**
  2. Mr. Loysen seconds.
  3. Ms. Aguirre asks for a vote; all are in favor and motion carries.
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**HRC MINUTES – NOVEMBER 1, 2023 RECOMMENDATION**

Pittsburgh HRC –November 1, 2023

***Frick Park***  
***2005 Beechwood Boulevard***

***Historic Nomination***

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**Owner:**  
City of Pittsburgh

Ward: 14th

Lot and Block: 127-H-100, 127-B-1

**Nominator:**  
Matthew Falcone/Preservation  
Pittsburgh, Councilperson Barb  
Warwick, et al.

Neighborhood: Swisshelm Park,  
Squirrel Hill South, Regent Square,  
Point Breeze

Council District: 5<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>

Nominations Received: 8/29/23

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**National Register Status:**    **Listed:**    **X**    **Eligible:**

**Proposed Changes:** Recommendation to City Council.

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**Discussion:**

4. Ms. Quinn gives a on the property. She states that the nominator as well as staff found that the property is significant under **Criterion 5**, Its exemplification of important planning and urban design techniques distinguished by innovation, rarity, uniqueness, or overall quality of design or detail, **Criterion 7**, association with important cultural or social aspects or events in the history of the City of Pittsburgh, the State of Pennsylvania, the Mid-Atlantic region, or the United States, and **Criterion 10**, unique location and distinctive physical appearance or presence representing an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City of Pittsburgh. She states that Councilwoman Warwick is a nominator, and over 30 letters of support were received, so it has a large amount of support in the community. She recommends that the Commission provides a positive recommendation to City Council.
  5. Ms. Aguirre acknowledges the letters of support received and lists a number of the writers and quotes from the letters. She then asks for public comment. Christina Cerkovich and Geri Smith, representing Frick Park Friends, speak in support of the nomination.
  6. The Commission discusses the criteria for nomination. Mr. Falcone recognizes the many co-sponsors as evidence of the overwhelming community support for this nomination.
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Motion:

4. Mr. Hill moves to submit a positive recommendation of the nomination to City Council based on **Criteria 5, 7, and 10.**
  5. Mr. Loysen seconds.
  6. Ms. Aguirre asks for a vote; 5 are in favor, 1 abstains. Motion carries.
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**PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES – NOVEMBER 28, 2023 RECOMMENDATION**

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3. DCP-HN-2023-01071 – Frick Park Historic Nomination Swisshelm Park; Squirrel Hill South; Regent Square; Point Breeze

Ms Quinn presented the historic nomination. The Frick Park historic nomination located in the eastern portion of the city was originally founded in 1919 with the death of Henry Clay Frick. He bequeathed 151 acres of land as well as a home to the city. Since that time the city has purchased and amalgamated additional land to the park, currently totaling 644 acres. As requested from a previous meeting, Ms Quinn provided a map showing the city owned parcel to the north of Homewood Cemetery that is included within the historic nomination. Sometimes the cemetery shows up as park although, obviously, it is not. Several adjacent parcels owned by the URA to the south and east of this park are not included in the nomination. Frick Park is adjacent to four neighborhoods in the city of Pittsburgh, Swisshelm Park, Squirrel Hill South, Regent Square, and Point Breeze. Its earliest remaining legacy is the four gateways to the park which were built in 1935. Ms Quinn presented some views of the park including one of the gateways built in 1931. The nominator as well as the Historic Review Commission felt this property was significant under planning and design criteria five. The park represents a series of designed landscapes in the form playgrounds, and wooded areas that were developed as the park was added on to. The Historic Review Commission also felt this property was significant under criteria seven as part of the social history of the city of Pittsburgh. The city of Pittsburgh has a very deep history of philanthropy, and Frick Park was formed as part of that philanthropy. It is a good representation of how that history of philanthropy continues today with folks like the Parks Conservancy, etc., working with the city to manage Frick Park. Criteria 10 under visual landscape is the last criteria the Historic Review Commission felt was significant about this property.

Frick Park is one of those places where driving near it and through it, one is immediately taken back to an earlier time and century. Overall the property has what is known as integrity that conveys its original character. Its Integrity is through amalgamation in the design of the part that changed as pieces were added on, and that in itself is what makes it significant under the criteria five.

Chair Burton-Faulk asked for public testimony.

Ms McElhaney recognized Matthew Falcone, Head of Preservation Pittsburgh.

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Mr Falcone thanked Council person Warwick, the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, Upstream Pittsburgh, the North Point Breeze Community Organization, Frick Park Friends, and Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition who co-nominated the park. He understood the commission's purview is focused on the plan for the neighborhood and the park, and its historic designation would tie into that. There are so many different neighborhoods involved and connected to Frick Park. In the city's own cultural heritage plan that was adopted in 2012, it specifically called for the historic designation of all its regional parks, Frick Park, Highland Park, and Shenley Park. This is the first opportunity to work with so many different community groups to bring the city's own recommendation to fruition. Mr Falcone hoped the commission would consider that moving forward.

Chair Burton-Faulk recognized Christina Cerkevich, founding member of Frick Park Friends.

Ms Cerkevich stated she lived in Swiss Helm Park and I'm a founding member of the Frick Park Friends. They are a group of Frick Park's neighbors who came together to protect Frick Park.

Giving it a local historic designation will do this and is in line with the city's cultural heritage plan.



**NOMINATION OF FRICK PARK  
TO BE DESIGNATED AS A HISTORIC SITE  
CITY COUNCIL REPORT**

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Frick Park has been and will continue to be a place where members of the greater Pittsburgh community can come to interact with nature and each other. The protections provided by historic recognition and the centering of the park's histories will not only protect Frick Park now but will also help preserve it for the future and may even inspire the next generation's Henry Clay Frick or Rachel Carson. Ms Cerkevich expressed strong support for the historic nomination on behalf of the members of the Frick Park Friends, and asked that the commission recommend the historic recognition to the city council.

Ms McElhaney recognized Geri Smith, founding member of Frick Park Friends.

Ms Smith stated he lived right by Frick Park, supported everything that Ms Cerkevich stated, and also called out the large number of letters that were sent to the Historic Review Commission and the Planning Commission in support of making this a historic landmark.

Chair Burton-Faulk asked for comments or a motion.

**MOTION:**

That the Planning Commission of the City of Pittsburgh make a positive recommendation for nomination of Frick Park as a city designated historic property.

**MOVED BY:** Ms O'Neill

**SECONDED BY:** Ms Dick

**IN FAVOR:** Ms Blackwell, Ms Burton-Faulk, Ms Dick, Ms Ngami, Ms O'Neill, Ms Ruiz, Mr Quintanilla

**CARRIED**