

## Martin Luther King, Jr. Park

### Unique Attributes

The park's first plan historically had a very formal design based on civic use as a parade ground. Later, the Olmsted Firm re-designed the park and included the 500-foot-diameter Humboldt Basin. The Water Plant Basin, the Fountain and the Humboldt Basin were the defining and unique Olmstedian features of MLK, Jr. Park. The central spine of water features and the procession/parade gave the park a strong geometry. The park, originally called the Parade, was located at a central point on the northern Olmsted Parkway system, linking Humboldt Parkway (now the Kensington Expressway), Fillmore Avenue, and Genesee Street, which connects the southeast corner of the park and is also part of

Joseph Ellicott's radial street design for the City of Buffalo.

### Key Missing or Lost Elements

- The three key Olmsted water features: the Humboldt Basin, the Water Plant Basin, and Fountain.
- Humboldt Parkway at the northwest entrance to the park.
- Woodland edge and planting plans.

(See Figures 59-63)

### Key Assumptions

- The Science Museum and the Science Magnet School are to stay in the current location, but should be limited within the existing building footprint.
- The Humboldt Basin, the Water Plant Basin, and the Fountain, should be restored.
- Recreational programming should be expanded to include locations outside the existing park boundary.



**Figure 59 - The historic Fountain was an important water feature in the park**



**Figure 60 - Basketball courts are now on the location of the historic Fountain**

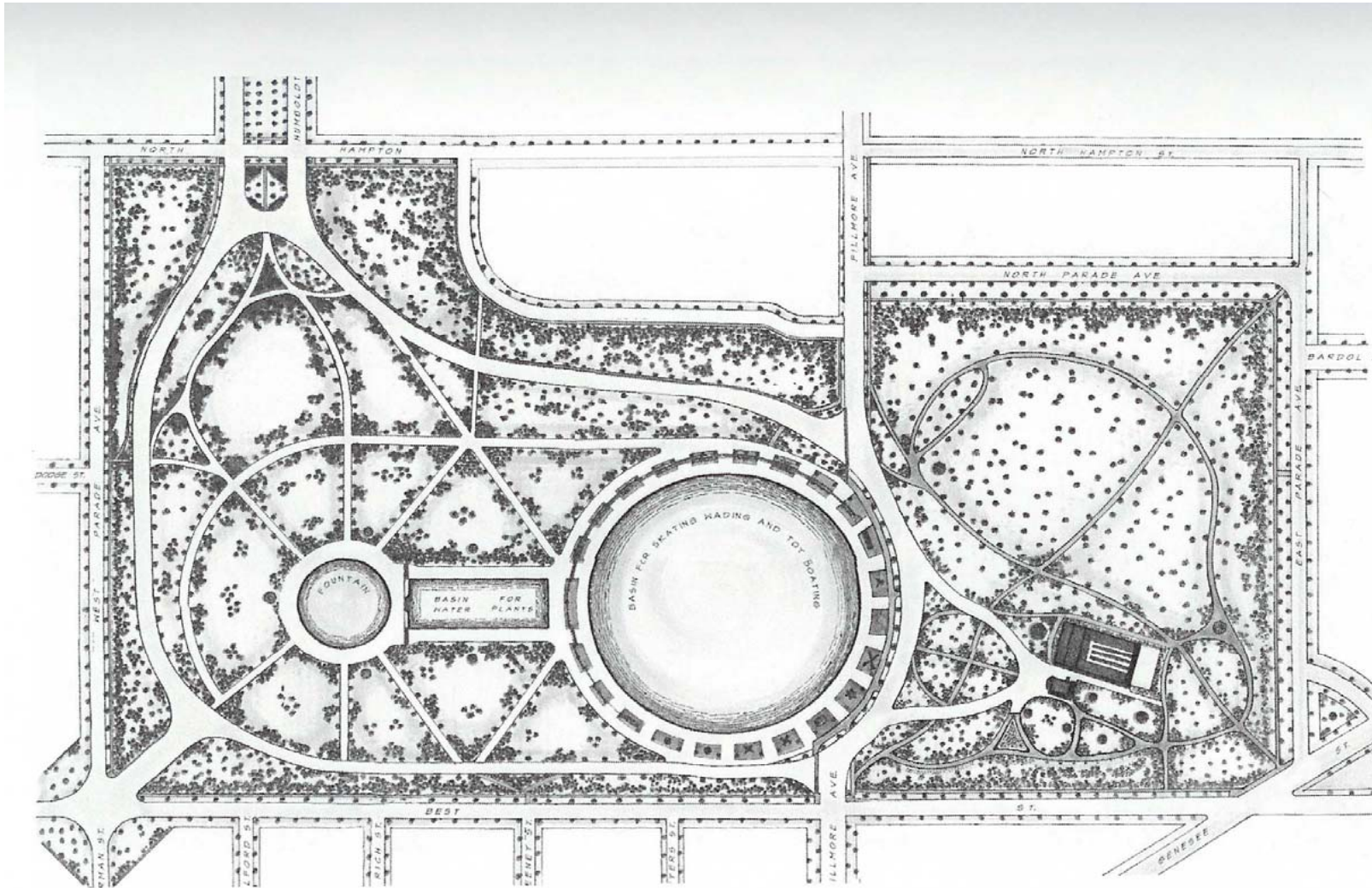


Figure 61 - 1906 Olmsted design for the Parade

- The MLK, Jr. Memorial should be relocated and redesigned to a more prominent location within the park.

**Suggested Areas of Focus**

- Restore the central east-west spine and water features.
- Redevelop plantings and restore the pathway system.
- Connect areas dissected by park roads by calming traffic, making them more pedestrian friendly, and creating visual links across the roads.
- Harmonize the southeast corner of the park, including the Greenhouse, the Shelter House, the MLK, Jr. Memorial, the gardens, and the service and maintenance areas.

**Preliminary Recommended Projects**

**Restore the Central Water Features in the Parade**

- Restore the Humboldt Basin.

- Restore the original Fountain.
- Restore the original Water Plant Basin.
- Identify potential recreational spaces within the community and relocate basketball courts to a new location.
- Renovate and enhance the Casino building.
- Consolidate and enhance the playgrounds on the south side of the park.

**Restore Historic Paths and Landscape Features**

- Restore path system throughout the park.
- Restore plantings throughout the park.

**Integrate Science Museum and School area into Historic Park**

- Interpret the remnant of the historic Olmsted landscape at the terminus of the former Humboldt Parkway.
- Redesign the Rose Garden.
- Widen sidewalks and add vegetative buffer to the



**Figure 62 – The Humboldt Basin was a highly active central water feature**



**Figure 63 – The existing Spray Pool at the center of the Humboldt Basin**



bridges that head across the Kensington Expressway.

- Redesign the school bus drop off area to articulate the park road.
- Transition the Shrub Garden along West Parade to a less formal woodland buffer.
- Rationalize parking for museum.

**Restore the Greenhouse and Lawn Area on the East Side of Fillmore Avenue**

- Restore the historic Greenhouse and renovate the Growing House removing the south and rear houses.
- Restore the loop drive by the Shelter House and Greenhouse.

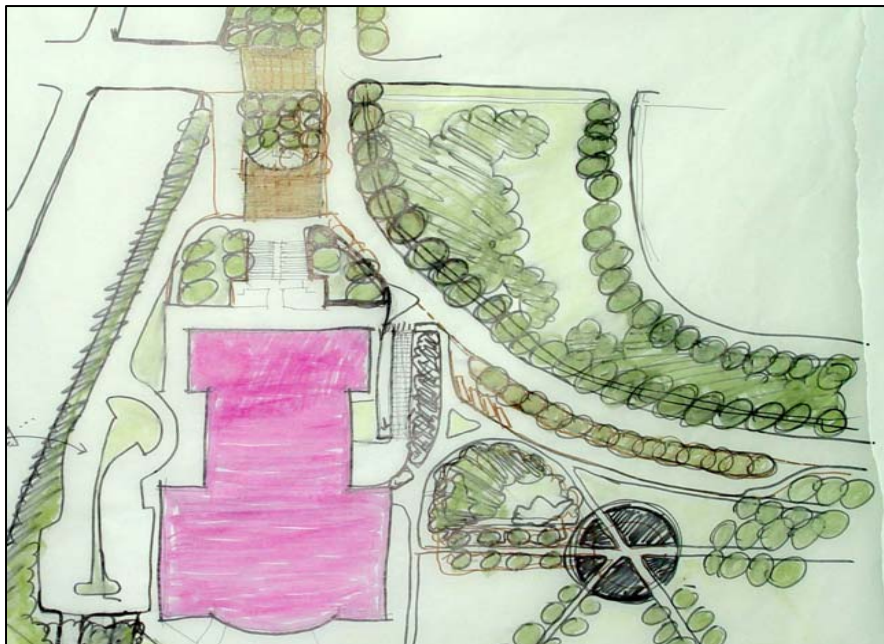


Figure 65 - A concept plan for the redesign of the Science Museum and School area

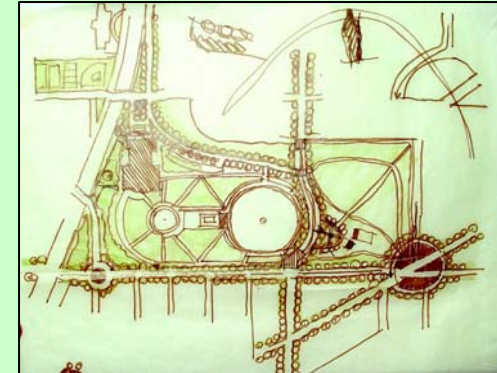


Figure 66 - Relining the streets and walkways with trees

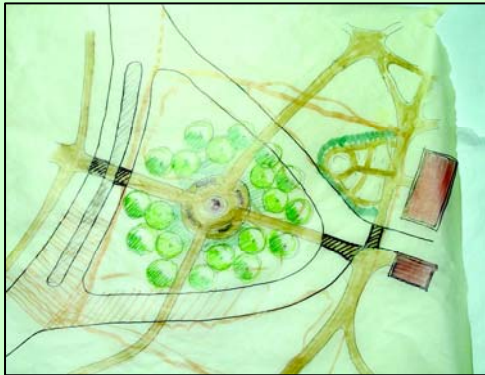


Figure 67 - Design for the proposed reconstruction of the Loop Drive

- Rehabilitate the Shelter House.
- Relocate and redesign the MLK Memorial within the park.
- Restore the Floral Displays near the Greenhouse.
- Restore the Picnic Grove and relocate tennis courts outside the park (contingent upon finding a suitable alternate location).
- Consolidate the park maintenance program adjacent to the Greenhouse.
- Redesign Best Street and Genesee Street park corner and intersection.
- Install traffic calming features on Fillmore Avenue throughout the park.

(See Figures 64-67)

**Improve Circulation and Calm Traffic**

- Open West Parade to two-way traffic.
- Redesign the South Ring Road as a pedestrian walkway and relocate parking from inside park to Best Street.
- Redesign the entrance at Best Street near the Kensington Expressway.