

# What's Out There<sup>®</sup> Denver





Photo by Brian Thomson



### The Cultural Landscape Foundation

Established in 1998, The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF) is a 501(c)(3) organization that educates and engages the public in order to make our shared landscape legacy visible, identify its value, and empower its stewards. The organization’s vision is that the public values and supports culturally significant landscapes and the safeguarding of this heritage for future generations. TCLF provides people with the tools to see, understand, and value landscape architecture, its practitioners, and our cultural landscape legacy in the way many people have learned to do with buildings and their designers. Through its website, lectures, outreach and publishing, TCLF broadens the support and understanding for cultural landscapes nationwide to help safeguard our priceless heritage for future generations.

learn more at [tclf.org](http://tclf.org)

Welcome to *What’s Out There® Denver*, organized by The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF) with support from national and local partners and presented through generous funding provided by the National Endowment for the Arts Art Works program.

This guidebook provides details about more than 30 examples of the significant legacy of parks, parkways, and public open spaces that make the Mile High City an unrivaled destination.

Leveraging its unique geographic position at the convergence of the American grasslands and the Rocky Mountains, Denver is an unparalleled setting for a diverse collection of designed landscapes. In 1894, the “Park and Boulevard System for Denver” plan by Edward Rollandet established a planning vision that was woven through neighborhoods, with parks and cultural institutions interconnected by a network of parkways. As part of that system, landscape architects George Kessler, Reinhard Schuetze, and S.R. DeBoer developed some 4,000 acres of parks and more than 30 miles of parkways. Building upon that framework, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.’s “Mountain Park Preliminary Plan,” developed between 1912 and 1914, identified more than 40,000 acres of rugged land for park development. This stretched Denver’s parks into the hinterland, and offered an opportunity for the nation’s premier landscape architects, Olmsted Brothers, to develop a coherent system in the nearby mountains.

Development of parks within and surrounding Denver continued until the 1940s, and began again in the 1960s and 1970s with urban renewal. Modernist and Postmodernist designs by Lawrence Halprin, Sat Nishita, Hanna/Olin, and I.M. Pei Associates aimed to transform and reclaim the city with a diversity of new public spaces. In 1986 Denver’s extensive network of parks and parkways were listed in the National

Register of Historic Places. This was complemented in 1990 with the listing of the Denver Mountain Parks, expanded in 1995. More recently, industrial spaces along the South Platte River are being developed as urban parks, catalyzing new investment in infrastructure. Today, in this semi-arid climate rich in natural, scenic, historic, and cultural values and a 200-mile-long backdrop of snow-capped mountains, Denver’s public parks total more than 6,000 acres.

This guidebook complements TCLF’s interactive, online *What’s Out There Denver* Guide ([tclf.org/denverguide](http://tclf.org/denverguide)). The Guide, one in a series of compendia of urban landscapes that reveal and interpret a city’s distinctive landscape legacy, includes overarching narratives, maps, and historic photographs.

*What’s Out There Denver* dovetails with TCLF’s Web-based *What’s Out There*, the nation’s most comprehensive searchable database of historic designed landscapes. The database currently features more than 1,800 sites, 10,000 images, and 900 designer profiles. *What’s Out There* is optimized for iPhones and similar handheld devices, and includes *What’s Nearby*, a GPS-enabled function that locates all landscapes in the database within a 25-mile radius of any given location.

On behalf of The Cultural Landscape Foundation, I appreciate your interest in *What’s Out There Denver* and I hope you will enjoy experiencing the Mile High City’s unique and unparalleled landscape legacy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, belonging to Charles A. Birnbaum.

**Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA, FAAR**  
**PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER, THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE FOUNDATION**







# Babi Yar Memorial Park

Photo by Brian Thomson



Completed in 1982, this 27-acre memorial park was designed by Lawrence Halprin and Satoru Nishita to commemorate the victims of the 1941-1943 Nazi massacre of Ukrainian Jews and others in Kiev. The memorial is laid out around a centralized pathway configured as a Star of David, with three distinct architectural features – an amphitheater, a grove, and a ravine. The park is entered through a narrow passage between two inscribed, rough-hewn, black granite monoliths. A path ascends a berm planted with cottonwood and willow, before descending into a bowl-shaped amphitheater known as People's Place, which has a circular platform at its center. The Grove of Remembrance consists of 100 lindens planted in a grid, representing the 200,000 people killed at Babi Yar. In the center of the grove, water flows from an irregularly-shaped, black granite disc. A ravine, reminiscent of the location where victims were buried in Kiev, runs along the western edge of the site. It is crossed by a narrow bridge with high, black wooden walls, which evoke the train cars used by Nazis to transport prisoners. Each end of the bridge is flanked with granite monoliths, polished to highly reflective surfaces. The edges of the site are planted as a prairie, with native grasses, yucca, and prickly pear.

The park was renovated in 2011 by Mundus Bishop, including prairie restoration, new walls, gravel paving, and curbs. During this time stone terraces were added to People's Place and the Grove of Remembrance while a sculptural element was installed in the northern corner of the park.

## Landscape Style:

Modernist

## Landscape Type:

Commemorative Landscape

## Designed By:

Lawrence Halprin & Associates  
Lawrence Halprin  
Alan Gass  
Helen Ginsburg  
Satoru Nishita  
Mundus Bishop



Photo by Brian Thomson



# Civic Center Park

## Landscape Style:

Beaux-Arts / Neoclassical

## Landscape Type:

Institutional Grounds –  
Governmental Institution  
Plaza

## Designed By:

Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.  
Olmsted Brothers  
Edward H. Bennett  
S.R. DeBoer  
Reinhard Schuetze

This monumental civic space situated in central Denver was conceived by Mayor Robert Speer. He hired George Kessler in 1907, who proposed an extension to Denver's park and boulevard system, placing the park and plaza at its heart. That same year Frederick MacMonnies visited Denver to design his Pioneer Fountain, and proposed extending the State Capitol's existing grounds westward to create a 33-acre City Beautiful park. While working on Denver's Mountain Parks System in 1913, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and Alfred Brunner presented a park plan which was rejected. In 1917 Edward H. Bennett created the park's lasting master plan, incorporating elements from the MacMonnies and Olmsted-Brunner plans and implemented by S.R. DeBoer and Reinhard Schuetze.

Opened in 1919, Bennett's Beaux-Arts design was structured upon a cross axis. The east-west axis, four blocks long, connects the Colorado State Capitol with the City and County Building. The secondary, north-south axis terminates in apses that project into the street grid, forcing the realignment of Colfax and 14th avenues. On the southern terminus, an amphitheater with an Ionic-order colonnade is mirrored on the north by a colonnade and pond. The park is characterized by open swathes of lawn laced with symmetrical paved walks, formal flower beds, rows and informal clusters of trees, and numerous memorials. It is ringed with cultural and governmental institutions designed in neoclassical or more recent architectural styles. The City Beautiful core was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2012.



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Photo by Charles A. Birnbaum





# 16<sup>th</sup> Street Mall

**Landscape Style:**  
Postmodernist

**Landscape Type:**  
Pedestrian Mall

**Designed By:**  
Hanna/Olin  
I.M. Pei & Associates  
Laurie Olin

Designed by the architectural firm I.M. Pei & Partners in collaboration with landscape architects Hanna/Olin (now OLIN), the mall was developed to facilitate public transportation for both downtown and outlying areas, while consolidating and revitalizing the diverse urban core of the city. Since Denver’s earliest days, 16<sup>th</sup> Street was a hub for commercial development, and served as the main parade route for civic celebrations. In 1971 Downtown Denver Inc. (now Downtown Denver Partnership) proposed closing nine blocks to vehicular traffic, however the idea was met with resistance. Several years later the recommendation was revived and construction began in 1980. Opened two years later, it has become a major economic and cultural catalyst for the transformation of downtown Denver. The design for the 80-foot wide, mile-long mall incorporated custom paving, a centralized corridor of plantings, and street furniture. Lofts, restaurants, shops, and theaters line this dynamic space, which includes a gracious 22-foot-wide, tree-lined promenade flanked on both sides by subtly depressed transit lanes and widened sidewalks.

Originally designed as an inviting pedestrian thoroughfare, the mall connected two of the city’s most prominent Modernist designs, Zeckendorf Plaza and Skyline Park. Today, of these landmarks, only the mall remains. Of the country’s 200 original transit malls, the 16<sup>th</sup> Street Mall is one of only 30 remaining. The 16<sup>th</sup> Street Mall received a Professional Award in the Design Category from the American Society of Landscape Architects in 1985.



Photo courtesy Downtown Denver Partnership



Photo courtesy OLIN



Photo courtesy Downtown Denver Partnership

# City of Cuernavaca Park

Following suggestions made by the South Platte River Commission in 1995 that identified development opportunities along the urban waterway, this public park was constructed five years later on formerly industrial land near downtown Denver. Built on steep, rocky slopes on both sides of the river, City of Cuernavaca Park was designed by StudioINSITE and Civitas and funded by a Legacy Grant from Great Outdoors Colorado. Named for one of Denver’s ten “sister cities,” Cuernavaca, Mexico lies at the same elevation as Denver.

With picnic pavilions and a large expanse of open lawn, the north side of the park is utilized for active recreational activities. On the south bank of the river abutting the former industrial corridor along the east side of the park, undulating topography, naturalistic masses of vegetation, and a rock sculpture characterize the site. An ovoid circuit for bicycle and pedestrian use, the primary connecting feature of the park, spans both sides of the river and is lined with trees. Pedestrian bridges along the track recall nineteenth century railroad trestle bridges. The eighteen-mile-long South Platte River trail connecting the towns of Thornton and Englewood passes through the park along the south bank of the river. The southernmost extent of the site is traversed by two motorway bridges and the eastern side is flanked by a railroad and a former industrial zone, which has been revitalized with residential construction.

**Landscape Style:**  
Postmodernist

**Landscape Type:**  
Public Park – Neighborhood Park  
Waterfront Development

**Designed By:**  
StudioINSITE  
Civitas



# Commons Park

**Landscape Type:**  
Public Park – Neighborhood Park  
Waterfront Development

**Designed By:**  
Civitas  
Design Workshop  
Jones and Jones Architects and  
Landscape Architects

This twenty-acre park lies north of the confluence of Cherry Creek and the Platte River, a landscape significant as a historic gathering place for Native Americans and the location where gold was discovered in 1858. Over a century later, industrial remnants occupied the vacated brownfield owned by Burlington Northern Railroad. In 1991 Trillium Corporation purchased the land, engaging Design Workshop to develop a revitalization plan for the Central Platte River Metropolitan District. The corporation sold a portion of that property to the City of Denver for use as a park. Civitas with Jones and Jones Architects and Landscape Architects restored 40 percent of it as riparian habitat and designed the remainder as parkland with shade structures, seating areas, and recreational fields while Design Workshop developed pedestrian connections into the park.

The park attracts users from the South Platte River Trail stretching over seventeen miles to the north and south. The parcel comprises three distinct areas: a tree-lined promenade lined with benches flanks Little Raven Street where plazas denote entry points; wetlands with cottonwood and willow on the river accommodate stormwater; and centrally located lawn areas bounded by interconnected curvilinear pathways. A 40-foot-diameter black marble stone compass orients visitors while a serpentine stone sculpture overlooks the terraced retaining wall and pavilion to the southwest, providing sweeping views of downtown skyscrapers and the restored riverbanks. Two pedestrian bridges, Millennium Bridge and the Platte River Bridge, foster connections across the South Platte.



# Confluence Park

Situated at the confluence of Cherry Creek and the South Platte River, this site marks the location where gold was discovered in 1858 leading to the founding of Denver. Though early plans for the layout of the city proposed a park for that location, one was never built. By the end of the nineteenth century the confluence was flanked by warehouses, was traversed by Speer Boulevard, and was the convergence point for a number of railroads. In the early part of the twentieth century, the site served as dumping grounds and was the location of an electric substation. In 1965 a massive flood scoured the river banks, washing away much of the industrial infrastructure.

Galvanized by Senator Joe Shoemaker with the establishment of his Greenway Foundation in 1974, community groups and the City of Denver began to reclaim the once-blighted area. Over the subsequent twenty years, the substation was removed, the confluence was dredged, and an urban whitewater park was designed by Architerra Group. Industrial remains were buried and capped by lawn, creating an amphitheater overlooking the waterways. From Shoemaker Plaza at grade level, the whitewater below is accessed via arcing ramps passing through native grasses and groves of cottonwood and willow. As recommended in a 2012 master plan developed by Wenk Associates, the site is being expanded to include residential, retail, and recreational venues.

**Landscape Style:**  
Postmodernist

**Landscape Type:**  
Public Park – Neighborhood Park  
Waterfront Development

**Designed By:**  
Architerra Group  
Wenk Associates





# Curtis Park Historic District

**Landscape Type:**  
Suburb

**Related Landscape:**  
Mestizo-Curtis Park

Among the earliest in Denver, this neighborhood northeast of downtown was developed between 1885 and 1890, offering relief from the industrializing city center. In 1871 the suburb was connected to downtown with the opening of a horse-drawn streetcar line. From the downtown retail shops at 16th Street to its terminus in Curtis Park at 27th Street, this line followed the dirt path that would become Champa Street. The community experienced an influx of diverse residents, ranging from elite businessmen to school teachers and blacksmiths. As a result, the architectural styles of the residences lining Champa, Curtis, California, and Stout Streets varied widely, from Victorian mansions to one-story cottages.

With the Silver Crash of 1893, many of Curtis Park's residents suffered economic hardship. As the elite moved away, their ornate and expansive homes were transformed into boarding houses. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, African Americans moved into the neighborhood, joined by immigrants from Mexico and Japan. Many historic homes were replaced with low-income housing in the 1940s and 1950s. Despite the changes, the district was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1975, with its boundaries expanded in 1983. Today, generous setbacks, mature trees, and a diverse mix of architectural styles characterize the neighborhood, which is benefiting from reinvestment. Throughout Curtis Park, the neighborhood of more than 500 historic dwellings is complemented by contemporary multi-family units, churches, restaurants, and commercial development.



All photos on this page by Brian Neman

# Mestizo-Curtis Park

This nine-acre park, the oldest in the city, is named for Samuel Curtis, one of Denver's founding fathers. In 1868 Francis Case and Frederick Ebert donated a lot on Curtis Street for park use in the Curtis Park suburb. In 1874, cottonwoods were planted and an enclosing fence was erected. In 1905 a playground was built, and in 1914 a comfort station constructed. A year later, two additional blocks on the opposite side of Curtis Street were added to the park, separated from one another by 31<sup>st</sup> Street. Play facilities were relocated to the northern block and augmented with a bathhouse and tennis court, while the southern block remained open. Earlier, in 1913, Olmsted Brothers developed a planting plan for the original parcel. By 1935, a modified version of this plan was realized, comprising a cross-axial network of red sandstone walks, open lawns, and garden beds. In 1936 a pool was built in the playground block. In the 1950s, walks, gardens, and several trees in the original parcel were removed, and replaced by an open lawn. Tennis courts were added to the playground section and 31<sup>st</sup> Street was closed, uniting the newer parcels.

The park's condition declined in the following decades, and play equipment was downsized. The pool and playground were upgraded in the 1980s, and a mural by Emanuel Martinez was installed. In 2005 the closing of Curtis Street between 31<sup>st</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> Streets finally unified all the parcels. The park is a contributing property of the Curtis Park Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1975.

**Landscape Type:**  
Public Park – Neighborhood Park

**Related Landscape:**  
Curtis Park Historic District





# Denver Botanic Gardens

The Colorado Forestry and Horticulture Association formed the Denver Botanic Gardens in 1951, hiring S. R. DeBoer to draft a fifteen-year master plan. Originally located on 100 acres in City Park, by late 1958 the gardens were moved to a more protected, fenced property on York Street between 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Streets on top of an old cemetery. Planting on the new site started in 1959, the same year the adjacent Waring York Street Mansion was donated, which today houses the Garden’s administrative headquarters. Garrett Eckbo, in collaboration with Eckbo, Dean, Austin and Williams, developed the master plan in 1969.

The Denver Botanic Gardens were among the first to practice water conservation, biological pest management, and the cultivation of native plant species. The rectilinear 23-acre site is parsed into 43 unique gardens connected by wide, straight paths. Narrower meandering paths wind through the distinct gardens, which include a Japanese Garden (designed by Koichi Kawana with head gardener Kai Kawahara), a South African garden, rose and lilac gardens, and numerous spaces dedicated to diverse native ecologies and cultures of Colorado. There is also an orangery and a large lawn amphitheater formed by tilting planes of close-cropped grass. A signature feature of the gardens is the modernist Boettcher Memorial Tropical Conservancy designed by Denver architects Victor Hornbein and Ed White, Jr., and opened in 1966. Its Plexiglas and arcing, interlaced concrete dome houses tropical and subtropical plants. The Waring House and the Boettcher Conservancy were declared Denver Landmarks in 1973.

**Landscape Style:**  
Modernist  
Japanese  
Naturalistic or Cohesive

**Landscape Type:**  
Botanical Garden

**Designed By:**  
S.R. DeBoer  
Garrett Eckbo  
Eckbo, Dean, Austin and Williams  
Koichi Kawana

**Related Landscape:**  
Mestizo-Curtis Park



Photo by Brian Thomson



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# Denver Park and Parkways System

**Landscape Style:**  
Beaux-Arts / Neoclassical  
Picturesque

**Landscape Type:**  
Public Park – Park System  
Parkway

**Designed By:**  
Reinhard Schuetze  
George E. Kessler  
S.R. DeBoer  
Olmsted Brothers  
Charles Mulford Robinson  
Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.

**Related Landscapes:**  
Alamo Placita Park  
Berkeley Lake Park  
Cheesman Park  
Cheesman Park Esplanade  
City Park  
City Park Esplanade  
Downing Street Parkway  
Hungarian Freedom Park  
Inspiration Point Park  
South Marion Street Parkway  
Speer Boulevard  
Washington Park

Begun in the late 1860’s, this diverse network encompasses 4,000 acres of parks and over 30 miles of urban parkways. Made possible by irrigation via the 27-mile long City Ditch completed in 1867, Denver was made hospitable with street trees, public parks, and a network of boulevards that frame the city and connect its neighborhoods. Though not the first master plan for the city, the City Beautiful design developed in 1907 by Charles Mulford Robinson and George Kessler was the earliest implemented plan. With an emphasis on vistas of the surrounding mountains and civic structures, their plan overlaid parkways upon the existing street grid while preserving and enhancing open space through the construction of parks. Over the years, landscape architects including Reinhard Schuetze, S.R. DeBoer, and Olmsted Brothers developed the plan. From 1904-1912 Denver’s mayor Robert Speer was crucial in creating a civic identity for Denver by convincing landowners, businessmen, and citizens that parks and parkways would enhance property value and strengthen the city.

Ranging in size from three to 300 acres, the parks comprise Picturesque and Beaux-Arts styles while providing formal gardens, recreational fields, and access to a diversity of water features. Parkway and boulevards—lined with both native and exotic trees and shrubs—were constructed to follow Denver’s topography and natural water courses. Comprising fifteen parks and sixteen parkways, the Denver Park and Parkway System were among the earliest comprehensive systems listed on the National Register of Historic Places when it was designated in 1986.



Photo by Annie Poland



Photo by Barrett Doherty





# Alamo Placita Park

## Landscape Style:

Beaux-Arts / Neoclassical  
Italianate

## Landscape Type:

Public Park – Neighborhood Park

## Designed By:

S.R. DeBoer

Opened in 1892 as Arlington Park, development of this parcel north of Cherry Creek stalled a year later with the Silver Crash and subsequent recession. In 1898 a waterslide, bicycle track, and railway were installed with the opening of Chutes Park, which was destroyed in 1901 by a fire. Four years later the park reopened as the privately held Arlington Park, which was acquired by the City in 1912 and designed in 1927 by S.R. DeBoer. By 1930 the 4.6-acre park had been renamed Alamo Placita, which translates to “Little Place of Cottonwoods.”

Situated north of Speer Boulevard, the rectilinear park is bisected by East 3rd Avenue. The southern section, visible from Speer Boulevard, consists of a sunken Italianate flower garden accessed by sandstone steps. Symmetrical parterres of annual and perennial flower beds radiate from a centrally located mass of juniper. The corners of the garden are punctuated with specimen juniper, encircled by a walkway, and bordered by dense plantings of spruce and pine. An axial walk extends the processional formality of the southern section into the less formal, recreational segment north of 3rd Avenue. Basketball courts and a playground flank the walk, which terminates at a paved plaza with benches and a sundial encircled by a grove of cottonwood. Beyond this section, an expanse of open lawn is surrounded by a forest of flowering shrubs, maple, pine, and spruce. Alamo Placita Park provides framed vistas of Hungarian Freedom Park to the south, also designed by DeBoer. The park is a contributing feature of the Denver Park and Parkway System listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1986.



Photo by Sara Morse



Photo by Sara Morse



Photo by Brian Thomson

# Hungarian Freedom Park

First appearing on cartographer Edward Rollandet's map of Denver produced in 1889 as an integral part of an expansive park along Cherry Creek, this three-acre triangular parcel on the south side of Speer Boulevard was formerly connected to Alamo Placita Park to the north. Collectively known as Arlington Park and built on a city dump, the property was acquired in 1912 and developed in 1925 by S.R. DeBoer. Bordered on two sides by residential neighborhoods, the hypotenuse of the triangle is formed by Speer Boulevard, which separates this section from Alamo Placita Park. The northwest section of the park is open and planted with turf while the southeast is enclosed by DeBoer's dense plantings of pine, spruce, and fir. Honey locust and hawthorn create a transition from the coniferous segment to the most open part of the park.

In 1968 the park was renamed to commemorate the 1956 revolt of Hungarians against Soviet oppression. Two years later a memorial designed by Zoltán Popovits was erected in the park's western section. The memorial depicts a bronze figure emerging from a curtain set atop an inscribed concrete stele set into a pad ornamented with metal candle holders. In 1976 a Baroque, two-tiered fountain with lion heads designed in 1932 by Maurice Bardin was placed in the park. Across Speer Boulevard, the formal parterre gardens of Alamo Placita Park are visible. Taken together, these two parks successfully convey DeBoer's design intent. In 1986 Hungarian Freedom Park was listed in the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing feature of the Denver Park and Parkway System.

## Landscape Style:

Picturesque

## Landscape Type:

Public Park – Neighborhood Park  
Commemorative Landscape

## Designed By:

S.R. DeBoer



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# Cheesman Park

The land that is now the 80-acre Cheesman Park—and the grounds of the Denver Botanic Gardens, and Congress Park further east—was Prospect Hill Cemetery until 1898 when it was converted and named Congress Park. Landscape architect Reinhard Schuetze designed the park to include graceful loops of carriageways, an open lawn surrounded by a forest, and a Neoclassical pavilion—all to capitalize on views of the Rocky Mountains to the west. Upon Schuetze's death in 1909, S.R. DeBoer completed the park, adhering to Schuetze's plan. In 1910 the park was named for Walter Cheesman, who was instrumental in establishing the city's railway and water systems.

Oak, maple, hackberry, Kentucky coffeetree, fir, pine, and spruce buffer the park from the dense residential neighborhood that surrounds it. A centralized lawn on undulating topography is encircled by a drive that connects to several neighborhood streets. One of these, Franklin Street providing access to the northwestern edge of the park, was planted with a double allée of lindens. In 1910 George Kessler developed the grounds of Cheesman Pavilion, which was designed by architects Marean & Norton and occupies a prominent, elevated knoll on the east part of the park. To the west of the pavilion, three pools, two grand stairways, and a terraced lawn are juxtaposed with the informality of the open lawn beyond. On the other three sides of the pavilion, Italianate gardens are accessed by an interconnected network of walks and complemented by informal groves of trees. The park was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1986 as part of the Denver Park and Parkway System.

**Landscape Style:**

Picturesque  
Italianate

**Landscape Type:**

Public Park – Neighborhood Park

**Designed By:**

Reinhard Schuetze  
George E. Kessler  
S.R. DeBoer



Photo by Brian Thomson



Photo by Brian Thomson





# Cheesman Park Esplanade

## Landscape Style:

Beaux-Arts / Neoclassical  
Picturesque

## Landscape Type:

Public Park – Neighborhood Park  
Boulevard

## Designed By:

S.R. DeBoer  
Olmsted Brothers

Serving as a grand processional to Cheesman Park, this elegantly composed one-block-long promenade was designed in 1912 by landscape architect S.R. DeBoer, with guidance in 1914 from Olmsted Brothers. At nearly four acres and providing access to Cheesman Park from the Country Club neighborhood to the south, the rectangular park was commonly referred to as “Little Cheesman.”

The central organizing feature of the Esplanade is a north-south linear path lined with hawthorns, neatly framing views of the neoclassical Cheesman Pavilion. On axis with the path, an open lawn accommodates active and passive recreation. Symmetrical, cross-axial terraces on the north and south extremes of the park serve as formal platforms for viewing the pastoral landscape. With openings that frame significant views, linear plantings of blue spruce and Douglas fir enclose the terraces, counterbalanced by masses of flowering shrubs that serve to enclose the lawn. Rows of elm border the park along the east and west perimeter streets. Cheesman Park Esplanade is a contributing feature to the Denver Park and Parkway System listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1986.



All photos on this page by Annie Roland

# City Park Esplanade

Extending from Colfax Avenue into Denver’s largest park, this quarter-mile-long promenade exemplifies the French principles of framed views, formal plantings, forced perspective, and cross-axial design. Attributed to Reinhard Schuetze and George Kessler, the esplanade was designed in 1905 and planted in 1907, though not fully completed until 1918. The north-south axis leading into the park was lined on each side by a single row of hawthorn bordered by a single row of elms, providing a sense of enclosure and creating a visual screen for the adjacent East High School. Paralleled by dirt roads, the central axis was bisected by a footpath lined with 70 lamps and planted with flower beds and terraced lawns to reinforce the alignment at a pedestrian scale. A roundabout just beyond 17<sup>th</sup> Avenue served as a transition from the formal axis to the park’s more pastoral qualities.

In 1914 Olmsted Brothers recommended closing the extension north of the roundabout and revised the planting plan to replace the central walk with lawn, opening vistas across the park. Three years later, architect Edward Bennett designed the Sullivan Gate at the esplanade’s southern terminus. The ceremonial gateway comprised two 40-foot-tall columns flanking a basin and fountain (designed by Leo Lentelli) with terracotta dolphins, lizards, and frogs. In the roundabout on the north end of the esplanade, the Thatcher Fountain, consisting of a 34-foot-tall bronze figure sculpted by Leonardo Taft, was surrounded by crabapple and juniper. City Park Esplanade is a contributing feature of the Denver Park and Parkway System listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986.

## Landscape Style:

Beaux-Arts / Neoclassical  
Picturesque

## Landscape Type:

Public Park – Neighborhood Park

## Designed By:

Reinhard Schuetze  
George E. Kessler  
S.R. DeBoer  
Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.  
Edward H. Bennett

## Related Institutions:

Works Progress Administration



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# City Park

**Landscape Style:**  
Beaux-Arts / Neoclassical  
Picturesque

**Landscape Type:**  
Public Park – Neighborhood Park

**Designed By:**  
Reinhard Schuetze  
George E. Kessler  
S.R. DeBoer  
Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.  
Charles Mulford Robinson  
Edward H. Bennett

**Related Institutions:**  
Works Progress Administration

Preserving open space and framing views of the surrounding Rockies, this 330-acre park was among the first in the city. Constructed on gently rolling plains and irrigated by the City Ditch, the park was laid out in 1882 by civic engineer Henry Meryweather and redesigned by George Kessler and Reinhard Schuetze at the turn of the century. Designed for active pursuits with the inclusion of playfields and the 80-acre Denver Zoo established in 1896, the northern section served as a plant nursery for the Denver Park and Parkway System. With an extensive network of meandering paths and roads, the western segment includes groves of trees, naturalistic meadows, and various structures—including one built by the Works Progress Administration. The center of the park includes two constructed lakes with historic fountains, multi-use pavilions, and islands. East of the lakes at a higher elevation, the Denver Museum of Natural History was established in 1901 on a hill providing scenic vistas.

Between 1900 and 1950, S.R DeBoer worked with numerous collaborators including Olmsted Brothers to develop Kessler’s design. In the first three decades a number of commemorative park entrances, fountains, and memorials were installed, such as the City Park Esplanade. Thematic gardens in the southeast section of the park include a labyrinthine collection of juniper and the nearby Box Canyon and Waterway, both designed by DeBoer in the 1950s. In 1986 City Park was included in the National Register of Historic Places listing of the Denver Park and Parkway System.



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Photo by Barrett Doherty





# Colorado State Capitol

Photo by Barrett Doherty



Surrounding the massive Capitol constructed between 1890 and 1908, Reinhard Schuetze set the precedent for subsequent development of Denver's Civic Center Park with his design in 1895. Situated on a terraced rise and encircled by a loop road, the Capitol faces west to overlook the city and the distant Rocky Mountains. The interior of the loop road, planted with evergreen shrubs, softens the transition to the granite statehouse while the exterior is sectioned into quadrants of densely planted coniferous and deciduous trees. The symmetrical Beaux-Arts plan extends axial views and pedestrian circulation patterns westerly down a sloping lawn to the Civic Center below. Organizing the east-west axis of the grounds, grand stairs composed of the same granite as the statehouse lead to the Capitol's portico. A sequential series of panoramic viewing points, sweeping promenades, sandstone stairs, and paved plazas provide access to a terraced lawn, punctuated by oak, walnut, linden, and spruce. The entire complex is framed by a double allée of elm, which create a park-like environment while mitigating noise and views of traffic on surrounding streets.

In 1909 two Civil War cannons were installed on the west lawn flanking the Colorado Soldiers Monument, sited in the center of the axial walkway. Ninety years later, these were relocated to a central paved plaza and two symmetrical, arced walkways were installed, thus dividing the lawn into triangular segments. Over the years, a number of other monuments have been added to the grounds. In 2005 Phillip Flores provided an updated master plan for the Capitol which, as part of the Civic Center, was listed as a National Historic Landmark in 2012.

**Landscape Style:**  
Beaux-Arts / Neoclassical

**Landscape Type:**  
Institutional Grounds —  
Governmental Institution

**Designed By:**  
Reinhard Schuetze  
Philip Flores





# Downing Street Parkway

**Landscape Style:**  
Picturesque

**Landscape Type:**  
Parkway

**Designed By:**  
Olmsted Brothers

Stretching between East 3rd Avenue and East Bayaud Street, this 0.4-mile-long parkway is bounded on the east by the Denver Country Club and on the west by single-family homes and the Country Club Garden Apartments. Planning for the parkway began in 1909, although its creation had been discussed by Mayor Richard Sopris and civic leader Jacob Downing in the 1880s. In 1912 the Board of Public Works commenced development of the South Denver Improvement District, which would create linkages—such as this one—between Cheesman and Washington Parks and the Cherry Creek and Speer Boulevard corridors.

In 1913 Olmsted Brothers designed a planting plan for Downing Street Parkway, as well as several others within the District. A year later, the parkway was planted with informal groupings of pine, with fir, red cedar, golden willow, and hawthorn used sparingly as accents. Rhythmic plantings of mature elm and linden along the parkway are interspersed by cottonwood, relics of the City Ditch that once flowed nearby. Between East Bayaud and East 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue, a wide, landscaped median separates the north and southbound lanes. After crossing Cherry Creek at East 1<sup>st</sup>, northbound traffic remains on Downing Street Parkway and southbound traffic is diverted to Corona Street. An expanded planting area to the east of this section creates a screen between the neighborhoods on either side. Downing Street Parkway is a contributing feature of the Denver Park and Parkway System listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1986.



# South Marion Street Parkway

Stretching four blocks between Alameda and Virginia Avenues, this linear parkway passes through a residential neighborhood before it terminates at the north edge of Washington Park. Appearing as a component of George Kessler's 1907 plan for the Denver Park and Parkway System, the land was acquired in 1909 and the parkway was largely completed four years later. With the City Ditch providing the parkway's central organizing feature, the median was planted with flowering shrubs and vines to soften the concrete-lined canal. Landscape architect S. R. DeBoer bordered the parkway with an allée of deciduous trees: Elms lined the parkway at its northernmost extent where it connected with Speer Boulevard, red oak and honey locust paralleled the central segment, and sycamore trees were planted to create a dramatic formal entrance to Washington Park.

City Ditch was filled in the early part of the twentieth century but, today, occasional remnant cottonwoods indicate its historic alignment. Hawthorn, crabapple, and golden rain tree were added to the median as part of DeBoer's Flower Trail in 1913. The east side of the half-mile-long parkway is abutted by single-family homes, condominiums, and an elementary school while the west side is planted with a wide expanse of turf, flowering shrubs, and a naturalistic coniferous forest of pine, spruce and fir. South Marion Street Parkway was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986 as a contributing feature of the Denver Park and Parkway System.

**Landscape Style:**  
Picturesque

**Landscape Type:**  
Parkway

**Designed By:**  
George E. Kessler  
Charles Mulford Robinson  
S.R. DeBoer





# Speer Boulevard

## Landscape Style:

Picturesque

Beaux-Arts / Neoclassical

## Landscape Type:

Parkway

Public Park – Park System

## Designed By:

Reinhard Schuetze

Charles Mulford Robinson

George E. Kessler

Olmsted Brothers

S.R. DeBoer

Tracing the course of Cherry Creek and running diagonal to the urban grid, this one-mile section of the boulevard between West Colfax Avenue and Downing Street was completed in stages between 1906 and 1918. Laid out as part of his plan for Denver's parkway system, George Kessler called for the removal of shanties and industrial ruins along the creek and the stabilization of its embankment. Framing views of the Rocky Mountains, the boulevard included many features to enhance the pedestrian experience, including a planted median between the creek and sidewalk, regularly-spaced lampposts, and spillways into the creek manifesting in summertime waterfalls and winter ice skating. In 1912 several small, triangular parks were designed at cross street intersections with Speer Boulevard. Landscape architect S.R. DeBoer, developed an extensive plant palette that simultaneously screened undesirable views and created a tree-lined drive. Elm, oak, and poplar were used for the canopy while the understory comprised juniper, spruce, and crabapple.

By the 1950s Speer Boulevard was widened to accommodate transportation needs. Traveling one-way on the north side of the creek and the opposite direction on the south, the formerly tree-lined drive was showing its age. In 1989 the boulevard's City Beautiful character was renewed with noise and traffic abatement strategies, new plantings, and the reintroduction of historic street furniture and lighting. Grade-separated paths were installed for bicyclists and pedestrians. The Denver Park and Parkway System, including Speer Boulevard, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986.



# Berkeley Lake Park

Located in northwest Denver and surrounding the 34-acre Berkeley Lake, this 83-acre rectangular park provides exceptional views of the Rocky Mountains. Utilizing the lake to irrigate alfalfa fields, John Walker settled the land in 1879 and eventually developed a race track, resort, and a dance hall. The City acquired the site in 1906 and a year later it was included on George Kessler's park system plan. By 1910 Denver's first public golf course was built to the north of the lake and a boat dock, pavilion, lawns, and groves of trees were developed on the south shore. A year later two cobblestone comfort stations were constructed and, by 1918, a Moorish-style bathhouse, an Italianate pumphouse, and the Cottage-style branch of the Denver Public Library were built. In the 1920s landscape architect John McCrary developed designs for the north part of the park between the lake and the golf course. In 1927 S.R. DeBoer redesigned the park's roads to discourage commuter traffic and developed a lily pond and additional plantings. Open lawns and meadows were interspersed throughout the park with mature specimens of cedar, pine, oak, and birch. A row of elm lined the park's south edge and cottonwood shaded the footpath on the lakeshore.

In the 1970s a recreational facility was built on the southwest corner of the park and Interstate 70 bisected the park just north of the lake. Berkeley Lake Park is a contributing feature of the Denver Park and Parkway System listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1986.

## Landscape Style:

Naturalistic or Cohesive

## Landscape Type:

Public Park – Neighborhood Park

Golf Course

## Designed By:

George E. Kessler

S.R. DeBoer

John McCrary



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# Inspiration Point Park

**Landscape Style:**  
Naturalistic or Cohesive

**Landscape Type:**  
Public Park – Neighborhood Park

**Designed By:**  
George E. Kessler  
Charles Mulford Robinson  
Henry Wright

Located seven miles northwest of downtown Denver, the idea for this park was introduced by Charles Mulford Robinson in 1906 as a vista point from which to view the growing city to the east and 200 miles of the Front Range to the west. A year later, in his plan for the Denver Park and Parkway System, George Kessler included the 25-acre park atop a bluff overlooking the Clear Creek Valley. Kessler, working with architect Henry Wright, completed the park in 1910.

Near the entrance to the park, a low, stone-walled picnic area is shaded by a naturalistic grove of linden, hackberry, honey locust, and silver maples. Formal flower beds arranged in a semi-circular pattern front the picnic area. Framing views and providing support for pathways along the perimeter, a 700-foot-long white concrete retaining wall spans the edge of the bluff. An allée of ponderosa pines parallels a linear path that extends from the picnic area to a cul-de-sac at the western limit of the park. Flanked on one side by a diversely-planted meadow and on the other by an expanse of lawn, the one-quarter-mile long path terminates at a gridded pattern of prairie plantings at the vista point for the Front Range. In 1941 the State Historical Society installed a large boulder bearing a plaque commemorating Louis Ralston who, in the 1850s, discovered gold in the creek below the bluff leading to the settlement of Colorado. Today the park is surrounded by residential neighborhoods and an industrial zone.



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Photo by Ann Komara





# Washington Park

Situated on the growing southern edge of the city, this 165-acre park was designed in 1899 by Reinhard Schuetze. Completed in 1904, the long, rectangular park is one of the largest of the fifteen parks that comprise Denver's Park and Parkway System. Schuetze's original plan, much of which remains intact today, was modeled after the work of French landscape architect Edouard Francois Andre and German landscape gardener Gustav Meyer. Schuetze laid out curving paths, expansive lawns edged by groves of mature shade trees, and introduced two lakes which were fed by the City Ditch and flanked by Russian willows.

Over the following decades, as land was acquired to complete the park's initial plan, several designers elaborated on Schuetze's design. In 1908 at the height of the City Beautiful era, George Kessler integrated new roads, pathways and planting schemes. In the 1910s Olmsted Brothers designed the undulating Evergreen Hill, the Lily Pond, the Boat House, a lawn bowling green with views toward Mt. Evans, and new pedestrian pathways and recreational areas. In subsequent years, S. R. DeBoer, Denver's chief landscape architect, managed the park, adding the Perennial Garden in 1918 and the Martha Washington Garden in 1926. In 1930 the Eugene Field House, a Victorian-style cottage, was relocated to the park and surrounded by evergreens, courtesy of Molly Brown, the Titanic survivor and local philanthropist. The park was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1986.

**Landscape Style:**

Picturesque  
Beaux-Arts / Neoclassical

**Landscape Type:**

Public Park – Neighborhood Park

**Designed By:**

Reinhard Schuetze  
S.R. DeBoer  
George E. Kessler  
Olmsted Brothers



Photo by Barrett Doherty



Photo by Brian Thomson



Photo by Brian Thomson





# Denver Mountain Park System

- Landscape Style:**  
Naturalistic or Cohesive

**Landscape Type:**  
Public Park – Park System  
Scenic Reservation  
Parkway

**Designed By:**  
Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.  
Olmsted Brothers  
S.R. DeBoer  
Burnham Hoyt

**Related Institutions:**  
Civilian Conservation Corps  
Works Progress Administration

**Related Landscapes:**  
Genesee Park  
Red Rocks Amphitheatre  
Red Rocks Park

Located across four counties on 14,000 acres, this system of parks and scenic drives within 62 miles of Denver comprises all of Colorado’s ecological zones. Between 1901 and 1912 the Board of Park Commissioners developed a plan to extend Denver’s Park and Parkway System into the surrounding mountains. In 1912 Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. provided recommendations that included the procurement of large parcels to protect scenery, the construction of an interconnecting system of roadways, and the development of facilities for active and passive uses. Two years later Olmsted provided a second report that detailed the acquisition of parcels ranging from a half-acre to several thousand, totaling 41,310 acres of rugged, forested land.

The first and largest parcel, Genesee Park, was acquired in 1912 and a year later Lariat Trail, the inaugural scenic drive, was completed. By 1918 the system consisted of ten distinct parcels comprising five square miles and included shelters, picnic areas, and pump houses. Ten years later the system had expanded to more remote locations and included golf courses, comfort stations, and the purchase of Red Rocks Park. Critical to its success was the implementation of design requirements for the construction of wide scenic roads. These were built with gentle grades that accommodated automobiles, allowing them to reach newly opened parks. Between 1936 and 1941 the Civilian Conservation Corps constructed roads, trails, structures, and Red Rocks Amphitheater. The Denver Mountain Parks System was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1990.



Photo by Barrett Doherty





# Genesee Park

Photo by Barrett Doherty



Located 20 miles from downtown Denver and comprising 2,413 acres of mountainous terrain reaching 8,284 feet above sea level, this was the first reserve in the Denver Mountain Parks System. Some 1,200 acres slated for lumber was set aside in 1913 and, one year later, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. recommended that the land be developed for recreation and to preserve views and wildlife habitat. That same year, a flagpole was erected atop the highest peak as part of a flag raising ceremony heralding the dedication of the park.

With Genesee Mountain to the south and Bald Mountain to the north, the park consists of two watersheds, numerous canyons and ridges, stands of ponderosa pine, spruce, and fir, and the scenic Genesee Mountain Road. Game preserves for buffalo, elk, and mountain sheep were established and, by 1917, a campground, picnic shelter, and the Chief Hosa Lodge accommodated park users. The latter two were “Rustic” structures designed by architect J.J. B. Benedict, complemented by his Genesee Shelter House built by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) between 1937 and 1941. The CCC also constructed a parking lot with landscaped medians, installed fire rings at the picnic area, and regraded sections of the Genesee Mountain Road. Adjacent land continued to be acquired until 1936 and a dirt road was constructed to provide access to Beaver Brook Trail. In 1972 the construction of I-70 bisected the park, though this was done in such a way that it minimized visual impacts and included an underpass for wildlife. Today, the park is the largest in the Denver Mountain Parks System and was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1990.

**Landscape Style:**  
Naturalistic or Cohesive

**Landscape Type:**  
Public Park – Scenic Reservation

**Designed By:**  
Olmsted Brothers  
Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.

**Related Institutions:**  
Civilian Conservation Corps  
Works Progress Administration





# Red Rocks Park

**Landscape Style:**  
 Naturalistic or Cohesive

**Landscape Type:**  
 Public Park  
 Scenic Reservation

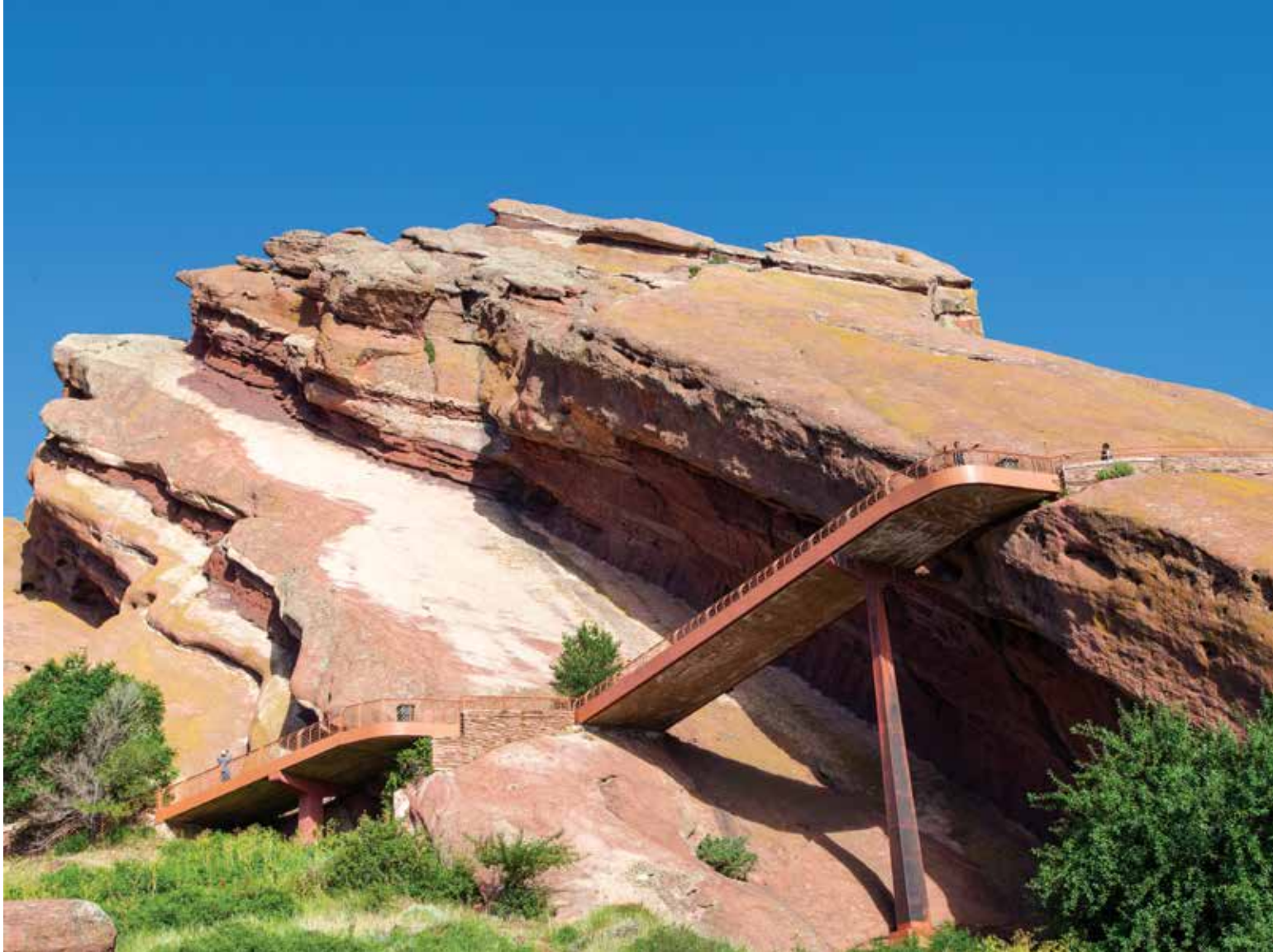
**Designed By:**  
 Burnham Hoyt

**Related Institutions:**  
 Civilian Conservation Corps  
 Works Progress Administration

Located fifteen miles west of downtown Denver on the eastern slope of the Front Range, Red Rocks Park includes a scenic drive, hiking trails, and an amphitheater. Formed by the erosion of the Rocky Mountains, the notable red color of the sandstone formations reveals its granite and gneiss composition. A favored campsite of the Ute Tribe, the formations were first known as the Garden of the Angels by the early settlers and later renamed the Garden of the Titans in 1906 when it was purchased by John Walker. In 1928 the City of Denver acquired the 640-acre property from Walker as part of the Denver Mountain Parks System. Construction of a five-mile-long scenic road began in 1929 and was completed in one year. Exploiting the site's natural acoustics, George Cranmer, Manager of Improvement and Parks for Denver, envisioned an amphitheater in the park and commissioned architect Burnham Hoyt to design the 10,000-seat venue. Between 1936 and 1941 the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) labored on the construction of the park. The Mount Morrison CCC Camp is still in use as the maintenance headquarters for the Denver Mountain Parks. The park design minimized the impact of infrastructure on the experience; parking lots were carefully sited and screened to be hidden from view. The amphitheater, retention walls, and stairs are constructed of native sandstone and colored concrete. The site was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1990 and, in 1999, the park was expanded to 868 acres. In 2015 Red Rocks Park and the Mount Morrison CCC Camp were granted National Historic Landmark status.



Photo by Barrett Doherty





# Red Rocks Amphitheatre

Red Rocks Amphitheatre, fifteen miles west of Denver, is a spectacular collaboration between man and nature, an entertainment venue created by the guiding vision of George Cranmer, Denver's Manager of Improvement and Parks. In the early 1900s John Brisben Walker had produced concerts on a temporary platform in this acoustically perfect environment, created by the dramatic natural geologic site originally known as the Garden of Angels. Facing eastward with panoramic views of Denver, two dramatic sandstone monoliths create a natural amphitheater. The southern monolith resembles a ship and is named Ship Rock, while Creation Rock stands on the opposite side of the amphitheater. With Cranmer's persuasion and Walker's original mission for the land, the City of Denver purchased the site in 1928 for \$54,133. With the participation of the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Work Projects Administration, both materials and labor were provided for the construction of the amphitheater, designed by Denver architect Burnham Hoyt. Construction took more than twelve years, and the amphitheater was dedicated on June 15, 1941. Since that time Red Rocks has hosted well-known performers from around the world. Red Rocks Park, which includes the amphitheater, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1990 and designated a National Historic Landmark in 2015.

**Landscape Style:**  
Naturalistic or Cohesive

**Landscape Type:**  
Amphitheater  
Depression Era Theater

**Designed By:**  
Burnham Hoyt

**Related Institutions:**  
Civilian Conservation Corps  
Works Progress Administration



Photo by Ted Booth



Photo by Ted Booth



# Fairmount Cemetery

**Landscape Style:**  
Picturesque  
Beaux-Arts / Neoclassical

**Landscape Type:**  
Cemetery – Rural Cemetery

**Designed By:**  
Reinhard Schuetze

Located seven miles southeast of downtown, this 385-acre parcel provided a park-like setting for passive recreation, memorialization, and burial. The Gate Lodge and the Little Ivy Chapel, both designed by architect Henry Ten Eyck Wendell, were in place when the cemetery opened in 1890. The grounds, originally 285 acres and designed by Reinhard Schuetze, were organized by an interlaced network of arcing carriage roads and pedestrian paths that capitalized on the site’s undulating topography to provide scenic vistas of the Rocky Mountains. This extensive network created numerous burial blocks of varying shape, characterized by expanses of lawn and dense plantings of trees and shrubs. Schuetze established a greenhouse and nursery to propagate stock that was eventually planted to create a diverse arboretum for the cemetery comprising oak, sycamore, maple, linden, elm, buckeye, Kentucky coffeetree, and several varieties of conifer. These trees were complemented with the planting of more than 60 varieties of roses. By 1893 the Fairmount Railroad was established to provide access to the grounds, encouraging leisure outings to the pastoral setting.

Over the years, additional crypts, mausoleums, and chapels were constructed—though the historic setting has been retained. Tree-lined drives, diverse monuments and memorials, and antique roses draw visitors to the cemetery, which includes more than 176,000 burials. Bordered on the south by the High Line Canal, Fairmount Cemetery provides habitat for wildlife including deer, foxes, coyote, and migratory birds.



All photos on this page by Stephen Johnson

# Riverside Cemetery

Founded by the Riverside Cemetery Association in 1876 in a tranquil location on the South Platte River, this cemetery downstream from Denver was a popular burial ground for wealthy families. In 1880 the Association expressed concerns about industrialization of the surrounding area. Even so, the mainline of the Burlington and Colorado Railroad was constructed adjacent to the site soon thereafter. Landscape engineer Harvey Lowrie was commissioned to lay out burial blocks, lots, and plots. Lowrie’s design for the rural cemetery featured curvilinear and axial gravel roads emanating from a centralized radius of concentric drives. Improvements to the prairie setting were initiated by the families of the buried, who ornamented their plots with monuments of carved stone and white bronze. The wide roads segmented the cemetery into numerous sections of various size and shape, with the orientation of grave markers determined by the shape of each section.

In 1900 the Riverside Cemetery Association and the Fairmount Cemetery Association (founded in 1890) formed a partnership, and in 1925, the cemeteries merged operations. Since then, Fairmount has owned and managed the 77-acre Riverside property, which comprises some 66,000 interments. Although drought and increased industrialization have impacted the cemetery, it remains a large, publicly accessible, open space with views of the Rocky Mountains. Because of its proximity to the river and a large wetland, the Colorado Division of Wildlife designated it an Urban Wildlife Watching Area. In 1994, Riverside Cemetery was listed on the Colorado State and National Registers of Historic Places.

**Landscape Style:**  
Picturesque

**Landscape Type:**  
Cemetery – Rural Cemetery



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# Governor's Residence at the Boettcher Mansion

## Landscape Style:

Beaux-Arts / Neoclassical

## Landscape Type:

Institutional Grounds – Governmental  
Garden and Estate

## Designed By:

Jane Silverstein Ries  
Barbara Young

Situated atop Logan Hill, this stately late-Georgian Revival mansion and its one-acre grounds were initially the family home of Colorado railroad developer Walter Cheesman. Designed in 1908 by architects Willis Marean and Albert Norton a year after Cheesman's death, the 27-room red brick mansion eventually included a solarium, a rose garden with a central fountain, and a lily pool flanked by a pergola. In 1923 the property was sold to businessman Claude Boettcher who, along with his wife, resided there until death, he passing in 1957 and she a year later. Bequeathed to the Boettcher Foundation, the property was gifted to the State in 1959 and renovated for use as the Governor's Mansion.

Jane Silverstein Ries and Barbara Young were commissioned to design the mansion's gardens. Surrounded by a low, brick wall topped by a wrought iron fence draped with vines, the property is accessed through a formal front gate. Brick paths lined with evergreens, roses, and columbine access an ornate gazebo to the east of the mansion and the terraced, walled garden to the south. An Italianate balustrade encloses the upper terrace, framed in red sandstone and consisting of an elaborate fountain and rose garden. Stone benches encircle an alcove below, with a lion's head lavabo fed by the overflow from the fountain above. A semi-circular lawn is enclosed by a cascade fountain and native grass plantings. The structure was restored in the 1980s by architect Edward White, Jr. The Colorado Governor's Mansion was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1969.



All photos on this page by James Finnerty

# Northside Park

Situated on the location of an abandoned wastewater treatment facility, this thirteen-acre park was completed in 1999. The facility, constructed in 1937, was made obsolete with the opening in 1966 of a plant farther downstream. In 1995 landscape architects Wenk Associates worked with community members to transform the facility into a park. Leveraging axial relationships found among the ruins, and working to reduce the costs of demolition, the infrastructure was adapted to accommodate new uses. An adjacent concrete channel was removed, creating a natural edge along the park's western side. The South Platte River, flanked by the 30-mile-long Greenway Trail, forms the park's eastern edge.

A central axis connects the parcel's entrance at a parking area to the northeast with a secondary access point on the southwest. Two playfields are partially enclosed by the curving structures of former holding tanks. Groves of deciduous trees frame the northeastern entrance, and remnant walls are painted with graffiti murals, providing an ever-evolving display while recalling the counterculture evident at the site before its renewal. Other remnant features are reused as seating or repurposed for their sculptural interest. A plaza comprises a grid of gravel beds, intersecting concrete paths, and a bosque of trees. Undulating topography and vegetation patterns reveal and conceal the park's surrounding context, while quotations from area residents are engraved into sidewalks and ruins. The project received a Merit Award in Design from the American Society of Landscape Architects in 2001 for its innovative approach for a former industrial landscape.

## Landscape Style:

Postmodernist

## Landscape Type:

Public Park – Neighborhood Park

## Designed By:

Wenk Associates



All photos on this page by Brian Thomson





# Shop Creek

**Designed By:**  
Wenk Associates

Draining west into Cherry Creek Reservoir, the mile-long Shop Creek provides flood control and recreational opportunities in a woodland plains setting. In 1950 the 850-acre reservoir was impounded with the construction of a dam on Cherry Creek and, nine years later, the surrounding area was designated the Cherry Creek State Park, covering some 3,364 acres. As urbanization increased, the Shop Creek tributary became vulnerable to sedimentation and erosion. The degradation of the stream, combined with polluted runoff, contributed to the buildup of phosphorus and nitrogen in the reservoir. In the 1980s, Cherry Creek State Park, the City of Aurora, and the Urban Drainage and Flood Control District sought to remedy these problems while enhancing wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities.

Landscape architects at Wenk Associates and Muller Engineering designed an innovative solution that utilizes ecological design principles and a terraced profile to create a stormwater treatment strategy. Six crescent-shaped ponds slow water flow along the creek, which was realigned to replace the high-velocity channel with a serpentine meander. The shape of the ponds, reinforced by a soil and concrete blend, traps sediment and pollutants while wetlands populated with cattails, cottonwood, and willow remove pollutants through bioremediation before water reaches the lake. An interpretive trail parallels the creek, passing through woodlands and connecting to the Colorado Front Range Trail. The design transformed the barren canyon that once surrounded the creek into shaded habitat for wildlife. The project received a Merit Award in Design from the American Society of Landscape Architects in 1995.



Photo courtesy Wenk Associates



# Sloan's Lake Park

Located a short distance west of downtown Denver, this 290-acre park is the second largest in the city, although its namesake lake occupies 177 acres of the parcel. In the mid-nineteenth century, the area was little more than native prairie and a dirt road that connected Denver and Golden. Homesteader Thomas Sloan acquired the parcel in 1866 and began to improve it for agriculture. Sloan dug a well for irrigation, inadvertently tapping into an aquifer. Within days, his land was flooded by a large lake, often referred to as “Sloan’s Leak.” Sloan died in 1874, and the new owners developed the area for recreation, constructing the Manhattan Beach Amusement Park on the northwest shore. With a Ferris wheel, roller coasters, and a theater, the park was a popular destination until it burned in 1908. Attractions were reinstalled and the new Luna Park was in business until 1914, when it closed due to competition from the nearby Lakeside Amusement Park.

The area was made a public park in 1923, and portions of the lake were filled and stabilized for the construction of Sheridan Boulevard. Between 1931 and 1935, the Works Progress Administration constructed a channel between Sloan’s Lake and nearby Cooper Lake, essentially creating one body of water. Today, bounded by residential neighborhoods, the park consists of a narrow strip of lawn planted with mature canopy trees, buffering the lake from the flanking streets. A marina and recreational fields occupy the northern part of the park, a wetland has been improved to treat stormwater, and a 2.5-mile paved trail encircles the lake.

**Landscape Style:**  
Picturesque

**Landscape Type:**  
Public Park – Neighborhood Park

**Related Institutions:**  
Works Progress Administration





# University of Denver

## Landscape Style:

Beaux-Arts / Neoclassical  
Modernist

## Landscape Type:

Campus – Quadrangle Plan

## Designed By:

William Fisher  
Arthur Fisher  
Garrett Eckbo

Founded as the Colorado Seminary in 1864 in downtown Denver, this university (renamed in 1880) was relocated in 1884 to a more pastoral setting. Concerned with the noise and pollution surrounding the campus' original location, Elizabeth Iliff Warren funded the move. Potato farmer Rufus Clark donated 80 acres seven miles southeast of downtown, stipulating that the university construct its main building immediately and, within six months, lay out a town, and plant 1,000 trees within a year. Additional donations of 70 acres led to the founding of University Park Colony (now the University Park suburb) in 1886.

A master plan was laid out in 1910 by architect William Fisher. Comprising a compact organization of buildings, gardens, plazas, and lawns, the campus was united by cross-axial walks with groves of trees screening it from surrounding streets. By 1930, Fisher and his brother Arthur provided a renewed plan to accommodate the growing campus: Expanding north and south, the central core retained its axial relationships, although new construction diminished some original connections. Between 1953 and 1967, the campus grew to 125 acres under the direction of Chancellor Chester Alter. In 1964 a sandstone chapel (built in 1878) was moved from its downtown location and reconstructed within the campus' historic core. A year later, the area surrounding the chapel was designed by Garrett Eckbo as the Harper Humanities Garden. Today, the campus is integrated into the University Park neighborhood. With more than 2,200 trees, the Alter Arboretum, established in 1999, provides a diverse backdrop to the campus courtyards, lawns, and structures.



Photo by Barrett Doherty





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