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David Myron Bentley

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SAVING PLACE
PRESERVING AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY CHARACTER

by

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THESIS

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SAVING PLACE

PRESERVING AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY CHARACTER

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SAVING PLACE
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Scenic Loop Playground, ca. 1928

By:

David Myron Bentley, M.S. in Historic Preservation

Supervisor: Christopher Long

Scenic Loop Playground was developed by E. N. Requa in 1928 on three hundred and twenty acres of land twenty two miles north of downtown San Antonio as a rural recreational resort within easy commuting distance to the city. The 'Playground' was intended as a family retreat from the undesirable consequences of modern urban life for an increasingly affluent middle class. Offering recreational opportunities in an area of natural scenic beauty, the Playground provided the new urban residents a means to reconnect with the rapidly disappearing American wilderness. To make the rural retreat affordable to larger segments of the population, natural features and recreational facilities were held in common ownership for use by the purchasers of private camp or lodge sites within the development. Located along narrow winding roadways following the hill country terrain, buildings and other embellishments were constructed of native materials, in a rustic style that blends with the natural surroundings. The vernacular design traditions underlying the development of this early 20th century resort are based upon principles derived from 19th century picturesque landscape design and its romantic view of man's relationship to nature.

This unique example of a rural retreat of the 1920's has been largely preserved by a relatively remote physical location well outside of the city center. As San Antonio grew northward, new development concentrated along the new outer loop highway 1604 and the major highways leading out from the city. The section of Scenic Loop Road, between highway 16 to Bandera and highway 290 to Fredricksburg (now Interstate 10 West), has retained much of the rural character that existed at the time the Playground was

developed. Recent residential developments and proposed commercial projects near the neighboring historic town of Helotes, located at the intersection of the Bandera Highway and Scenic Loop Road, are for the first time threatening to encroach on the wilderness character of the community and its surroundings. If the historic appearance of the Scenic Loop Playground and its purpose as a rural retreat is to be maintained into the future, new strategies will be required to preserve its unique characteristics from incompatible modern development.

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Introduction: Preserving the Wilderness

I boarded with Mr. Hutchings' family, but occupied a cabin that I built for myself near the Hutchings' winter home. This cabin, I think, was the handsomest building in the Valley, and the most useful and convenient for a mountaineer. From the Yosemite Creek, near where it first gathers its beaten waters at the foot of the fall, I dug a small ditch and brought a stream into the cabin, entering at one end and flowing out the other with just current enough to allow it to sing and warble in low, sweet tones, delightful at night while I lay in bed. The floor was made of rough slabs, nicely joined and embedded in the ground. In the spring, the common pteris ferns pushed up between the joints of the slabs, two of which, growing slender like climbing ferns on account of the subdued light, I trained on threads up the sides and over my window in front of my writing desk in an ornamental arch. Dainty little tree frogs occasionally climbed the ferns and made fine music in the night, and common frogs came in with the stream and helped to sing with the hylas (tree toads) and the warbling, tinkling water. My bed was suspended from the rafters and lined with libocedrus plumes, altogether forming a delightful home in the glorious valley at a cost of only three or four dollars, and I was loathe to leave it.¹

Excerpt from a letter by John Muir describing his life in the Yosemite Valley through the winter of 1869-70.

Throughout human history, mankind has sought to peacefully coexist with the natural world. Life in a garden, where all human needs are met, requiring neither toil nor struggle, is synonymous descriptions of paradise. Yet the progress of civilization is largely in the opposite direction, subduing and rebuilding the natural world in its own image. Wild nature has been engaged as an integral part of architecture through symbolic representation in the secured and private surroundings of the garden. Privileged classes have maintained rural retreats since antiquity as a means of escape from civilization and the chaotic condition of urbanity. The discovery of America by the Europeans represented a chance for a new beginning in what appeared to be an untouched wilderness. For many who had been disenfranchised in the old world, the vast wilderness of the American continent provided a promised land of great opportunity through the abundance of nature.

But the American wilderness could not resist the push of civilization empowered by the tools of the industrial revolution. Mechanized production and transportation quickly subdued and urbanized the wilderness. By the early 19th century, nostalgia for a return to a life in harmony with nature sparked philosophical debates among Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, and the other Transcendentalists. Thomas Cole and the artists of the 'Hudson River School' sought subjects in the glories of the nature to communicate the sublime characteristics of the remaining wilderness, and to educate an increasingly urban population on its value. By the late 19th century, efforts by men like Frederick Law Olmsted and John Muir, were already being made to set aside wild lands, to keep them

free of incompatible development, and to preserve their splendor for future generations. The resultant National Park system was the first organized attempt by a government to preserve the wilderness on a grand scale, and has become a model for similar efforts worldwide. States and local municipalities followed the lead of the National Parks by preserving smaller wilderness areas closer to the cities, providing a greater degree of access to nature for a larger segment of the population.

This paper describes an alternative to wilderness preservation provided by the public park model. Contemporary with the development of the Texas State Park system, the Scenic Loop Playground was a private development, conveniently located near the City of San Antonio, to serve the recreational needs of a growing middle class. The unfortunate economic coincidences of the onset of the great Depression and the following war, slowed its rate of growth, and prevented other similar developments from succeeding. The Scenic Loop Playground remains a unique example of wilderness preservation that may be applied to new private development in retaining the rural character of areas outside the city as an alternative to continued suburban sprawl.

¹ Freudenheim, Leslie M., *Building with Nature, Inspiration for the Arts and Crafts Home*, Layton, Utah: Gibbs Smith, Publisher, 2005.

Part I: E. N. Requa and his Playground

The cover of Dedication Number, Part III of the *San Antonio Express* on October 29, 1929 featured photographs illustrating the phenomenal change that had occurred in the downtown area in the ten years from 1919 and to 1929 (see Figure 1). The article within described the rapid rate of new construction, totaling over \$130,000,000 since the end of the First World War. In the year 1929 alone, new construction was predicted to top \$14,000,000. Over one million square feet of office space had been added in five years, with over \$20,000,000 in new one and two family residences, and another \$3,000,000 in apartments completed in the preceding three years.

Since 1890, San Antonio had had the largest urban population of any settlement in Texas. The 1910 U.S census listed the population of the city at 96,614, identifying the soon-to-be-emerging metropolis as one of sixteen places under 100,000 in population that had grown by over 100 percent in the preceding decade. By 1920, the population nearly doubled again to 161,379 and was estimated to reach 265,000 by 1930. The rapid growth of the metropolis was indicative of national trends. In 1910, only about 30 percent of the American population was identified as living within forty four metropolitan centers with a center city population of over 100,000, including their surrounding suburbs. By 1920, over two-thirds of the nation's population lived in one of fifty-eight metropolitan areas over 100,000 people, including over half of the increase in total population since 1910².



Figure 1: Downtown San Antonio-1919 & 1929

Congestion due to increasing population densities and other negative impacts of industrialization, which had surfaced in some of the larger cities by the middle of the 19th century, continued to worsen under the rapid pace of urbanization. Increasingly, affluent residents began to abandon the central city for new suburban development following available transportation routes into rural areas around the perimeter. The rapid rate of change within the urban environment produced a sense of rural nostalgia and longing for the perceived constancy of the wilderness which had defined the American identity since its founding.

The most significant influence on urban residents and their relationship with the remaining American wilderness was the rise of the automobile. From less than three thousand vehicles in 1899, automobile ownership within the United States increased to over 3.5 million vehicles by 1916. Following the establishment of The Texas Highway Department in 1917, the first state-wide registration recorded 194,720 motor vehicles³. In 1919, only 1,758 of these were registered in Bexar County, or one vehicle for every ninety-two residents. With improvements in manufacturing methods of mass production pioneered by Henry Ford, the prices of automobiles continued to decline, becoming accessible to ever larger segments of the population. By 1929, 70,833 motor vehicles were registered in Bexar County, with an estimated 52,000 of those within the city of San Antonio, or one for every five citizens, similar to average ownership rates in the country as a whole.⁴

Touring the Scenic Loop

As automobile ownership grew so did the demand for good roads for touring the scenic rural landscape outside the cities. Automobile clubs, 'Good Roads Associations', and other private organizations lobbied for governmental support to create a rural highway system across the country. The Federal Aid to Highways Act of 1916 authorized 75 million dollars to be distributed to state highway authorities over five years, requiring the establishment of state agencies, like the Texas Highway Department, with responsibility for road maintenance within its jurisdiction.

G. A McNaughton described for *Texas Good Roads Magazine* a touring trip he took with D. E. Colp in the winter of 1916 down 628 miles of the cross national Meridian Road, from where it entered Texas at the Red River, to Laredo on the Rio Grande. He described the route:

There are bustling cities, the vigorous villages, the rich ranches, the fine farms; occasionally some stretches of wilderness, where the hand of human has not reached--miles and miles; then there are the hills and the dales--the picture places of Nature's art galleries; the hill country and the prairie land; the gushing springs and spouting wells; the rippling streams and broad deep rivers; the green-mantled sward and the flower-begirt countryside.⁵

He described tourist attractions along the route. Under San Antonio, with the title 'South's Show City Simply

Sumptuous', he enumerated the points of interest for fellow travelers, including a tour around the Scenic Loop:

...after a visit to the Alamo, and a trip about the winding San Antonio (Saint Anthony) river, Breckenridge Park, etc., you will want to make a thousand side trips—to the Missions, over the Scenic Loop, and so forth; and if you will ever get away from this enchanting city, you will have to use far greater will power than the average, and just crank up your car and 'git'.⁶

The route of the Scenic Loop is described in the *Goodrich Route Book of Texas*, copyrighted 1915-16, published by the Goodrich National Touring Bureau for the B. F. Goodrich Rubber Company. This early automobile tour guide includes various automobile routes across the State, with outline maps of each section keyed to guide markers along the roadways (see Figure 2). Recreational Loop drives are included for all three of the largest cities in the State, San Antonio, Dallas, and Houston. San Antonio's Scenic Loop is described as Route 10 (see Figure 3). A city map of San Antonio included in the guide indicates the beginning of the Scenic Loop off Culebra Road near West End Lake, now known as Woodlawn Lake, returning to town along the road to Fredricksburg (see Figure 4). North and south loop roads out from the city are also indicated on the map, though their routes are not described in the guidebook.

By 1929, Bexar County had the largest mileage of improved roads of any county in the country with 1600 total miles of which 1100 were improved and 475 of rock asphalt.⁷

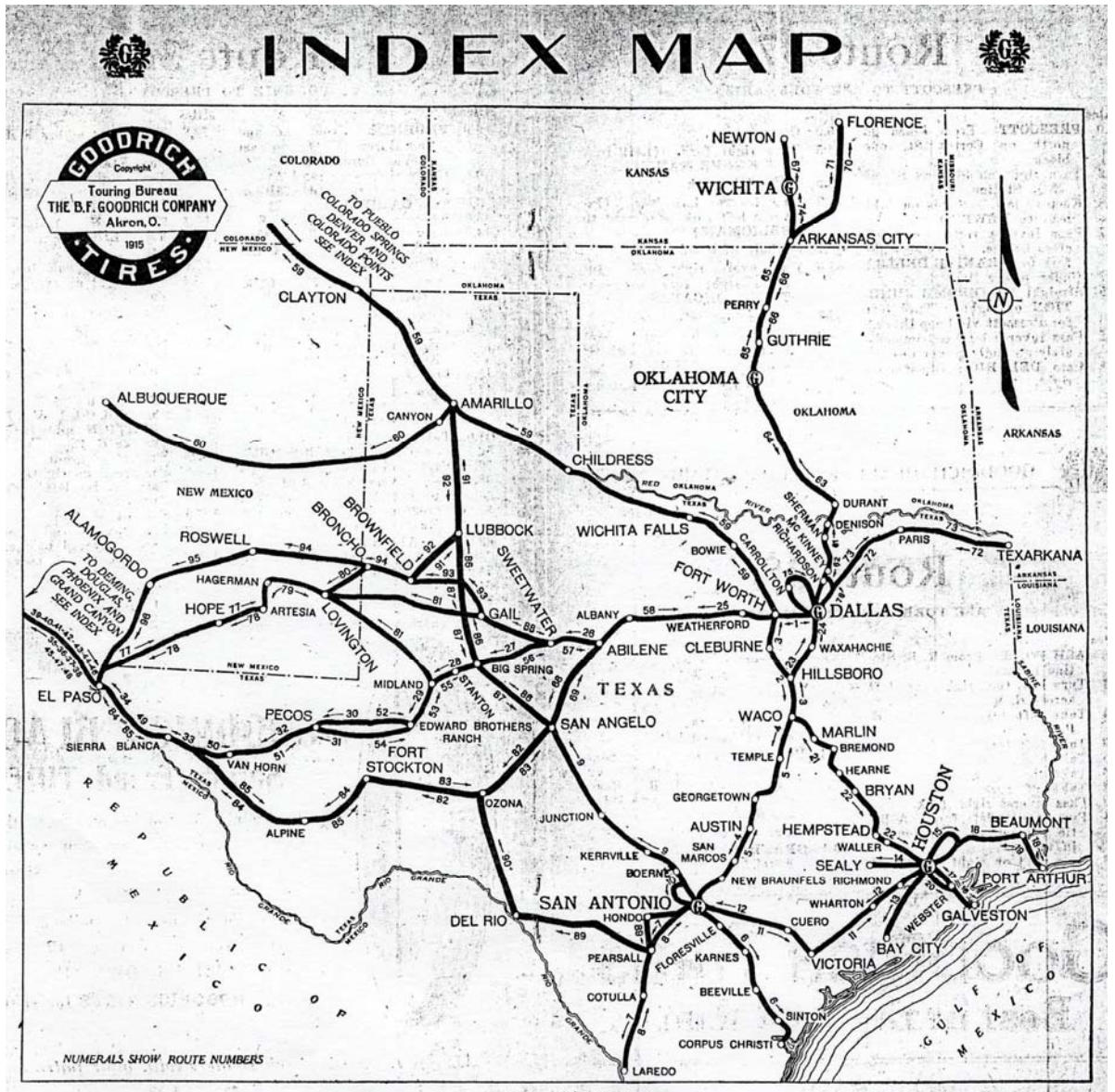


Figure 2: Goodrich Route Map for Texas, 1915-16

Route 10

SCENIC LOOP OUT OF SAN ANTONIO.

Miles		Miles	
0.0	SAN ANTONIO. From Court House go North on Main Avenue 2 blocks.	15.0	☉ Forks, keep right on stone road.
0.2	Turn left (west) on Houston Street.	17.6	HELOTES. P. O. on right, country store. Straight ahead about 200 feet to creek bottom, then turn right ☉ following road along creek through canyon to Boerne road. Very easy to follow.
0.6	Turn right (north) on Medina St. at I. & G. N. Sta.	24.2	☉ 3-corners; bear right (southeast) on Boerne Road.
0.8	Turn left (west) on Morales St.	27.3	☉ Turn right (south) at R. R. along R. R.
1.1	Turn right (north) on San Marcos St.	27.4	LEON SPRINGS. ☉ Straight ahead along R. R. on new stone road.
1.4	Turn left (west) on Lopez St.	29.1	VIVA. Flag Sta. ☉. Straight ahead along R. R.
1.5	Turn right (north) on Colorado St.	31.4	Jog right away from R. R.
1.7	Turn left (west) on Castro St.	31.8	☉ Cross R. R. ☉.
1.9	☉ Cross R. R. ☉.	40.0	Pass stone road on right.
2.4	Cross trolley track.	41.7	☉ Cross R. R. ☉.
2.8	Turn right (north) on Zarzamora St.	44.7	Bear left (east) on Laurel St.
3.0	Turn left (west) on Culebra St.	44.8	Cross San Pedro Creek.
3.2	Cross bridge.	45.0	Turn right (south) on San Pedro Avenue.
3.6	☉ Turn right (north) with travel. (Road straight goes to Medina Dam & St. Louis College.)	45.6	Bear right on Main Avenue.
3.8	Curve left with road. West End Lake on right.	45.9	Pass Goodrich-Diamond Building on right.
4.1	Pass school house on right.	46.3	SAN ANTONIO. Court House. Call at Goodrich Building.
4.6	☉ Turn right (northwest) on Bandera Road at Marshall School. Follow stone road over rolling country.		
12.1	☉ Avoid left hand road.		

Figure 3: The Route of the Scenic Loop



Figure 4: City Map of San Antonio, 1913

A map of the Scenic Loop was published in the *San Antonio Express* on July 20, 1930 announcing the paving of a new section of Babcock Road to create two 'short scenic loops' (see Figure 5). Highways to Bandera and Fredricksburg beyond the Scenic Loop are indicated as being unpaved at the time. Announcements for the Scenic Loop Playground advertised an easy ride out from the city by automobile on all paved highways either by the Bandera or Fredricksburg Roads and one and one-fourth miles of frontage along the paved highway that was a part of the Scenic Loop.

E. N. Requa, Pioneer Realtor

Edward Norris Requa was born December 24, 1869 on the edge of the frontier in Vernon County, Missouri. He grew up on his father's stock farm, one of the largest in the State, where he developed his lifelong love for the open country. He left home at the age of nineteen and headed West, pursuing a series of short term careers as a laborer hauling railroad ties over perilous mountain roads in Utah, as an attendant at the Provo City Asylum, as a street car conductor in Tacoma, Washington; ending up in San Francisco arranging for a shipment of bicycles and then booking a steerage passage to Honolulu to sell them. The bicycles proved popular among the Hawaiians and Edward made both money and influential friends. He persuaded his brother-in-law, George Westfall, a portrait painter from Chicago, to join him in Honolulu. Edward acted as business manager, convincing wealthy Chinese Hawaiians to have their life size portraits painted by Westfall. Business flourished and within two years the pair had saved enough to return to Chicago and open the Parisian Portrait Company, specializing

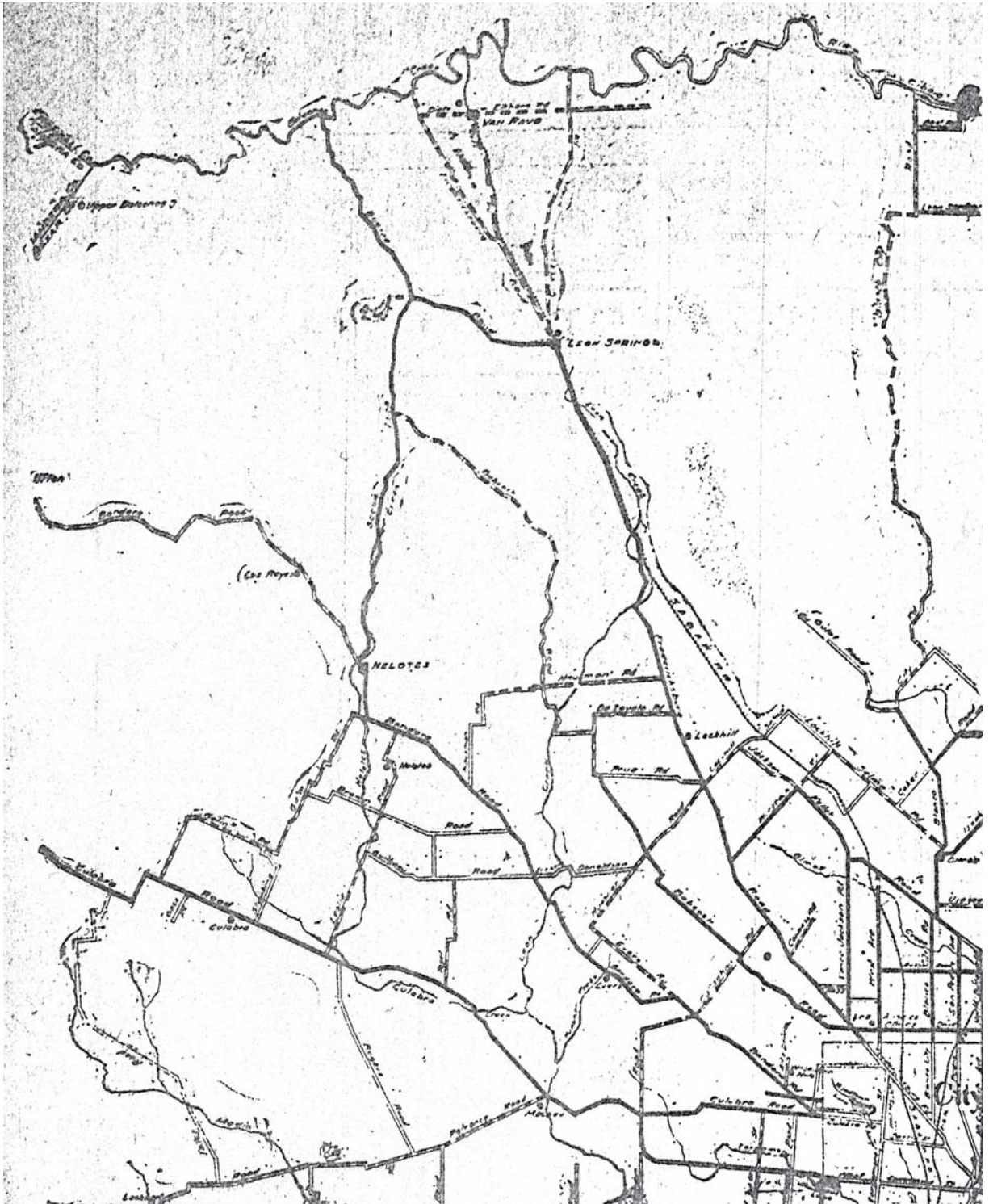


Figure 5: The Scenic Loop

in producing paintings from photographs. With seventy-five salesmen covering several States, business continued to prosper, but had begun to take a toll on Requa's health.

He left his job and went hunting for the winter in Oklahoma and Kansas. Attracted to a piece of property in Caney, Kansas, owned by the father of an Indian hunting companion, Requa arranged to buy it, had a house built, and sold it at a quick profit. Inspired by the success of this first venture, he continued southward buying a piece of land along the edge of the bay in Corpus Christi, Texas, constructing a series of small cottages, and again selling out at a profit upon completion. Seeking a higher, drier climate, he headed west to New Mexico, where he bought up a large area in the Pecos Valley near Artesia, put in irrigation, and opened it to 'colonization'; bringing in prospects from Oklahoma several at a time, selling out the property over a period of ten years.

With the colonization project completed, E. N. Requa once again decided to relocate, this time to San Antonio, Texas, in the middle of the first decade after the turn of the twentieth century. He felt the city provided an ideal location to support his passion for developing and selling ranch property. He was attracted to the city by its favorable climate and close proximity to nature, allowing him the ability to pursue his favorite pastimes of hunting and fishing. He was a founding member of the San Antonio Real Estate Association in 1909 (see Figure 6), an organization that evolved into the San Antonio Board of Realtors⁸. He continued his interest in rural properties, serving on the Farm lands committee of the Board of Realtors in the 1930's.



Figure 6: E. N. Regua, Pioneer Realtor

Marketing the Playground

The public announcement of the development came on Sunday morning, July 15, 1928, in a full page pictorial on the front page of the Society and Fashions section of the *San Antonio Express*. Photographs of the natural amenities, including the five wading and swimming pools created behind the concrete spillway dams constructed across Helotes and Lee Creeks, accompanied the article describing the Scenic Loop Playground as the location for the Tenth annual Express Publishing Companies employee picnic on July 22. Commenting upon the choice of the location for the picnic, Frank Huntress, president and general manager of Express Publishing Company was quoted:

The Scenic Loop Playground has been selected for our annual picnic because it embodies all of the natural advantages in beautiful scenery, abundant shade, facilities for boating, bathing, and fishing, and in addition is easily accessible by automobile over a good road.⁹

The article went on to describe the outstanding natural characteristics of the recently purchased property being developed by E. N. Requa as a private recreational playground for businessmen and their families. Describing his approach in development of the property, E. N. Requa stated:

It is my intention to preserve the natural beauty of the landscape in its entirety and all improvements

made in conjunction with opening the tract as a public playground will be made in keeping with this aim.¹⁰

He announced his plan to open the Playground to the public in early Spring of 1929 following the improvements underway.

Requa would continue to gain publicity for his development through a series of real estate news articles appearing periodically in the *San Antonio Express*. The front page of the Real Estate Classified section on Sunday, March 3, 1929 featured a 3/4 page article advertising the new development. Photographs of picturesque roadways, still wading pools, and natural scenic beauty accompanied an Engineers Development Plan illustrating about 150 home sites of varying sizes laid out along the winding gravel drives constructed on the property (see Figure 7). Of the original 320 acre tract, more than a third was said to be set aside for public use by the residents, including nearly a mile of waterfront along the creeks and pools. Three community wells were planned. Two were already completed and supplying the development with drinking water. A baseball park and tennis courts were being laid out and a community store and office building, containing a community room with a fireplace, were under construction. After seventy five percent of the lots were sold, management of the public property was to be turned over to the property owners.

When the plans for Unit No. 1 of the development, consisting of about 200 acres on the eastern side of the Scenic Loop Road, were filed with Bexar County on May 10, 1929, a total of 614 lots, approximately 1/4 to 1/2 acre in size, were recorded (see Figure 8). The smaller lot sizes broadened the market for the development by allowing access

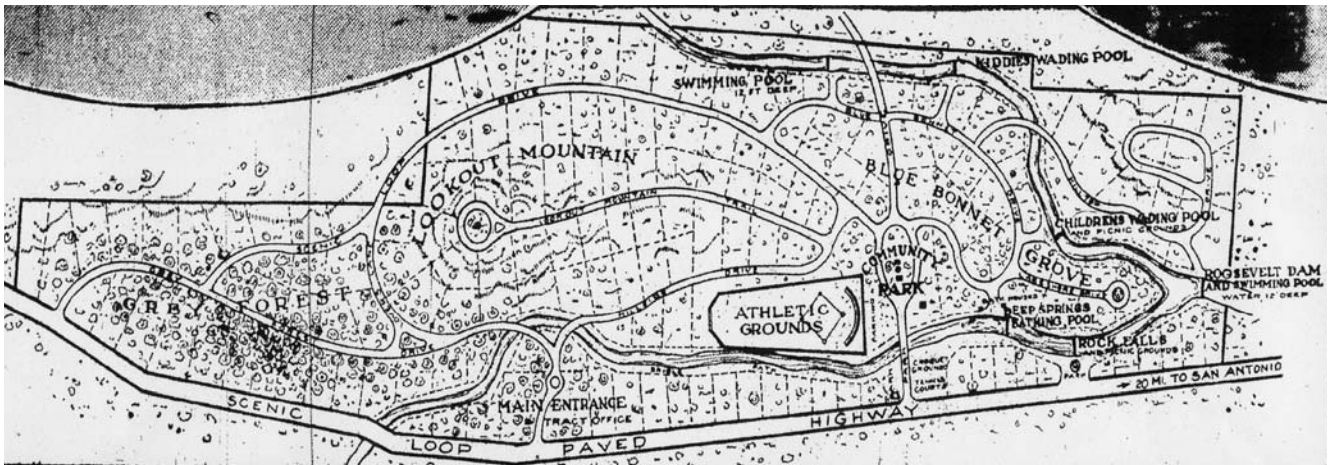


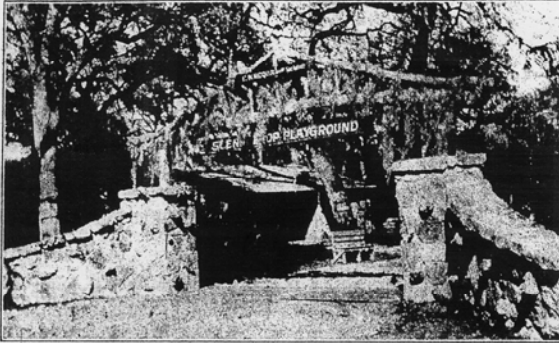
Figure 7: Engineer's Development Plan

to the public facilities with the purchase of a single lot for a camp site. Those intending to build a lodge would often purchase two or more adjoining lots to provide a site of suitable dimension.

The initial public offering for vacation home sites in the development was advertised in the *San Antonio Express* on April 7, 1929 (see Figure 9). A Mexican picnic supper for 500 had been held on April 1, cosponsored by Mr. and Mrs. E. N. Requa and Mr. and Mrs. Frank Huntress. Nearly 100 lots were reported purchased by 70 families within the first ten days after the public offering.¹¹ An article by V. F. Buchek entitled 'A Pleasant Ramble Through the Scenic Loop Playground' appeared in the Real Estate section of the *Express* on April 21, 1929 describing a trip by automobile out the Scenic Loop from the city and around the new development. Driving into the Playground, he described the gray forest, with 'stately oaks festooned with silvery gray Spanish moss gently waving in the mountain air' (See Figure 10). Arriving at the Deep Springs Bathing Pool (see Figure 11), Mr. Buchek described the scene:

...suddenly we beheld the most beautiful small spot we have ever seen--an ideal swimming pool--carved out of solid rock with perpendicular walls. It is the most inviting pool of water I have ever seen, so clear, so cool, and is also fed by many springs which flow about 500 gallons per minute, each bursting out of the side of the solid rock. On one side, two rock bathhouses, on the other, rock tables with rock seats for the benefit of the picnicker. Certainly no more inviting spot in all this big State.¹²

First Public Offering Scenic Loop Playground



Look for This Entrance on Scenic Loop Road

Sites for Week-End Homes You'll Want to Live in All Year Round

Scenic Loop Playgrounds embraces 320 acres of the most beautiful woodland within 50 miles of San Antonio yet it is only a 20-minute drive from the northwest limits of the city.

It has been developed with the single object of providing for San Antonio people a perfect location for week-end cottage sites, or summer and winter homes, a place where outdoor picnics may be had the year round with the privacy such discriminating people prefer, a close-in meeting place for clubs, bridge parties, dancing, an ideal place to entertain friends in small groups or in the largest parties.

20 Minutes From The City

Come out today or any day this week and see the first and finest residential district of its kind in Texas. It will be a show-place for San Antonio within the present year.

In the Heart of the Canyon, of the Helotes

The water front of Scenic Loop Playgrounds is one mile in length.

The paved highway (part of the Scenic Loop) on which Scenic Loop Playgrounds fronts, is one and one-fourth miles long.

The Playgrounds may be reached on all-paved highways either by the Bandera or the Fredericksburg roads.

The water supply is pure and abundant.

Electricity for light, power, refrigeration and cooking will be available.

Many of the homes now being built in Scenic Loop Playgrounds are of rock which is abundant and cheap.

The Playgrounds have swimming and wading pools for the kiddies, and arrangements are being made for a baseball diamond, tennis courts, and miles of walks and drives.

Visit the old Gray Forest with the most beautiful Spanish Moss you ever saw.

Climb Lookout Mountain and get a view of hills and canyons which is different every day in the year.

Bring the children along for an outing that will be a red-letter day in their lives.



An Enjoyable Picnic Party in Beautiful Scenic Loop Playground

Trees, Flowers, Vines, Water, Hills, Recreation

Scenic Loop Playgrounds is a Residential district of such evident values that homesites will be at a premium within 30 days. But it is not being offered for speculation. Its appeal is to buyers who have wanted something just like what it has to offer, who will buy to have something of their own they will want to keep. To avoid disappointment, pick the site you want this week.

HOW TO GO:

Go out West Woodlawn to Bandera Road, out Bandera Road to Helotes, turn to the right at the foot of the hill into the Scenic Loop Highway and about three miles further you will find the Scenic Loop Playground.

The Scenic Loop Playground

"Where Your Vacation Problem Is Solved Forever"

REQUA & HILDEBRAND, Exclusive Agents

JAMES A. DEW, Sales Director

316 North St. Mary's Street

Crockett 6180—Crockett 8520

Figure 9: First Public Offering



Figure 10: The Gray Forest

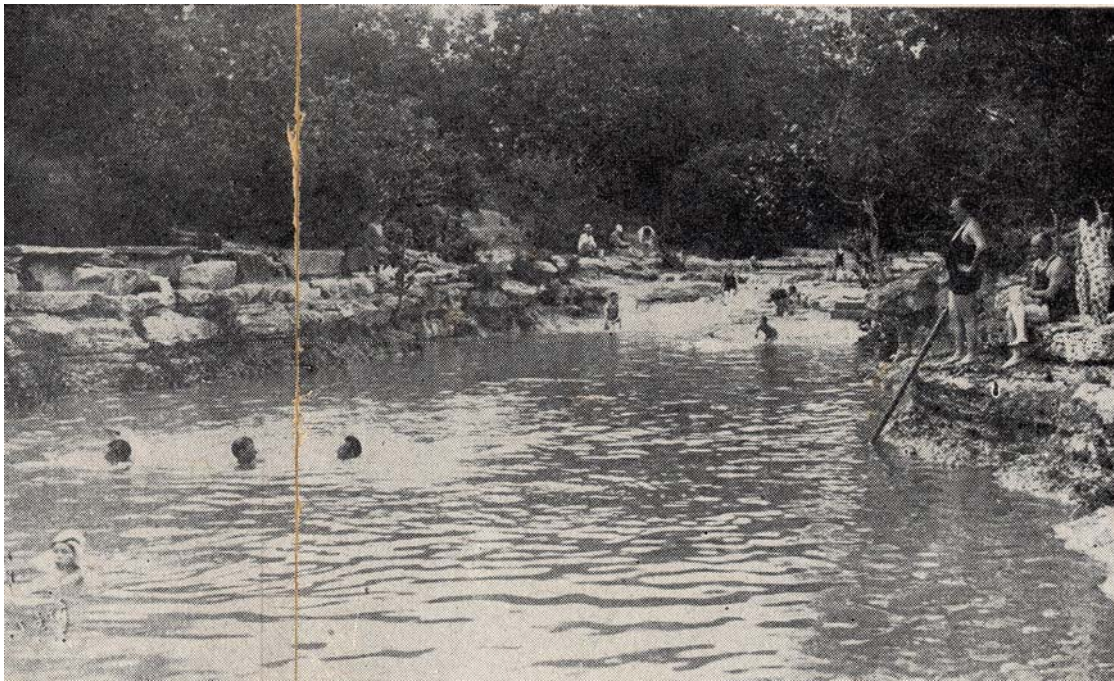


Figure 11: Deep Springs Bathing Pool

By the end of April, names of 75 families that had 'solved their vacation problem' were listed in an advertisement for the development, thirty percent of which were said to be building their homes.¹³ On June 9, an article in the *Express* announced the hiring of J. P. Rodman as the new sales director of the Scenic Loop Playground. Mr. Rodman was quoted as saying 'such sites near any large city in California or Florida would sell for not less than \$5000',¹⁴. E. N. Requa reported that over 30 cottages had already been built and he had never seen such a large percentage of purchasers to build so quickly. Half of the cottages were said to be of rock construction. He said he expected the development to be sold out within 60 days. On June 23, thirty three lot owners who had built or were building in the Playground were named¹⁵. A half page advertisement in the same section listed prices now \$116 to \$696, terms available.¹⁶

Building the Playground

The front page of the Editorial, Sports, and Markets section of the *San Antonio Express* on Sunday morning, July 7, 1929 featured a full page of photographs of completed structures at the Scenic Loop Playground in announcing the eleventh annual Express Publishing Company employee's picnic would again be held at the development on July 14. An article described the recent additions to the property:

The natural beauty of the estate has not been marred by the improvements Mr. Requa has made there. These are in keeping with the rustic surroundings and add to

the material comforts of those who are fortunate enough to spend a day or more within the park.¹⁷

On July 21, a photograph of Frank Huntress thanking E. N. Requa for use of the Playground for the event was published in the *Express*. Moving pictures of the picnic crowd were shown at the recently opened Majestic Theatre during the following week.

Articles on the Playground continued to appear regularly in the Sunday Real Estate Section of the *San Antonio Express*. Five months after the development opened to the public, an article on September 8, 1929 reported that H. E. Hildebrand, real estate partner of E. N. Requa, had sold the house he built for himself on Scenic Loop Road to Tom C. Thorton, a 'retired capitalist' from California, as his permanent home. Mr. Hildebrand said that over 270 home sites had been sold and fifty homes built, 'many of them with native stone obtainable on the development area'.¹⁸ Another article about the popularity of the Playground from the Atlantic to the Pacific appeared on November 5, 1929, reporting the recent sale of Mr. Hildebrand's home to a former Californian, and the conversion of the former field office to a lodge, which was sold to Norman F. Roach from Florida. Alex Parrigan, director of sales for the development, reported the construction of eight new homes in the 'all-year' area, built of native stone from a nearby quarry, and 14 new home sites sold in the Playground.¹⁹

On January 26, 1930, an article in the *San Antonio Express* quoted E. N. Requa forecasting business prospects for 1930 would exceed those of 1929, which had been the most profitable year in the history of his firm. He proclaimed

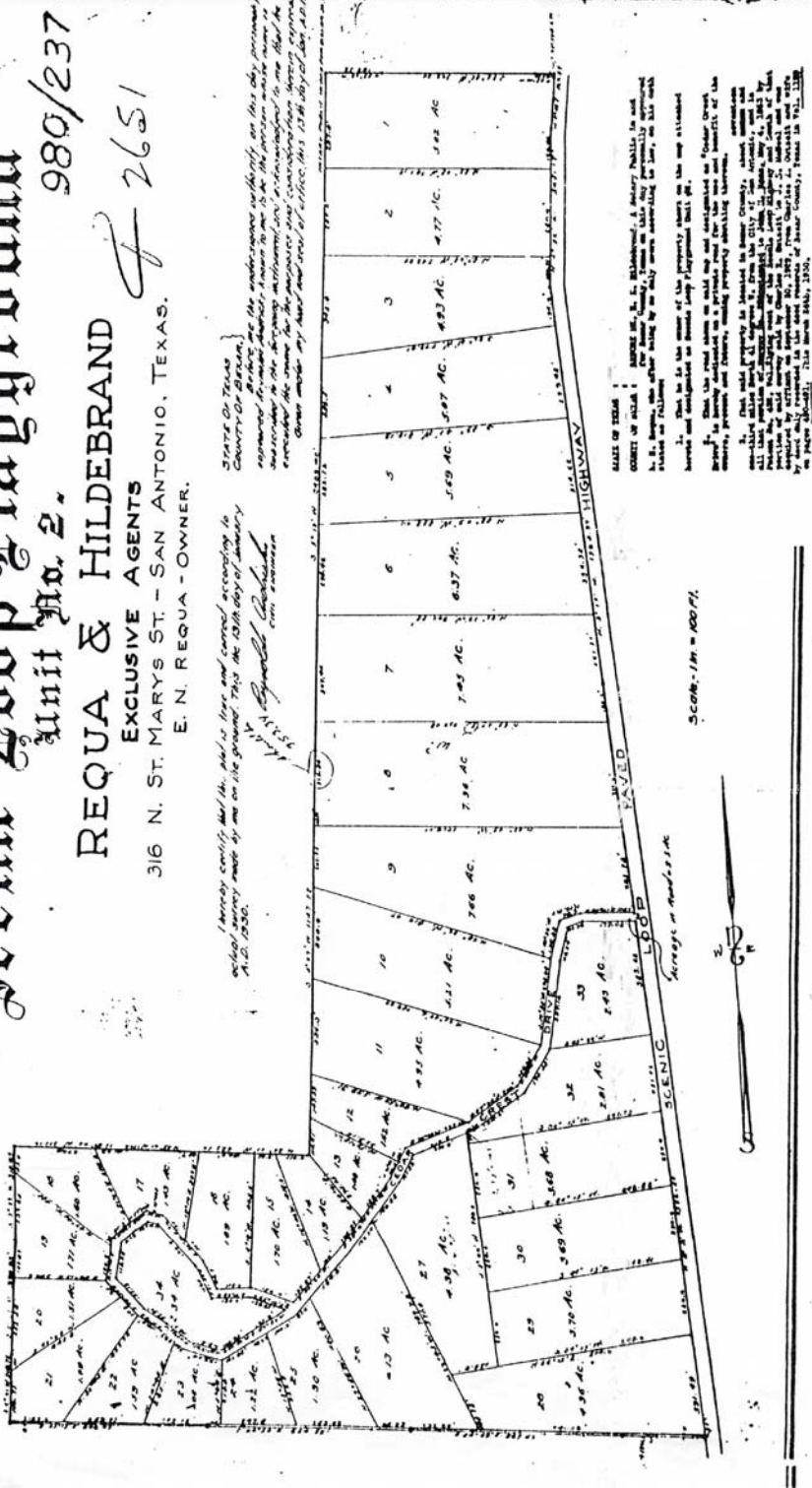
the Scenic Loop Playground one of the most successful developments of the last year, with two hundred acres sold out, including a record eighty lots in the first 10 days. One hundred and twenty additional acres across the Scenic Loop from the original development were now being developed.²⁰ The plan for Unit 2, showing 34 lots, varying from one to nearly eight acres in size, was recorded in Bexar County on March 24, 1930 (see Figure 12).

The front page of the real estate section of the *San Antonio Express* on April 6, 1930 featured a photograph with the caption, 'attractive gray forest lodge formerly used by E. N. Requa as his own, has been purchased by Miss Kathryn McIlroy, short story writer.' Formerly residing in the artists colony at Leon Springs, Miss McIlroy was one of several artists said to be negotiating for lodge sites in the Playground 'because of the natural beauty of the surroundings, which would contribute to their art', according to Mr. Requa.²¹ Other lodges were also being constructed for sale by Mr. Requa to further promote the development. A classified ad on April 27 announced the Scenic Loop Playground open for inspection, including two rock lodges, one in the Grey Forest, and the other on the summit of Lookout Mountain. 260 families were reported to have 'already solved their vacation problems', and 70 to have built lodges²². An article on June 8, 1930 proclaimed 'summer home investors are numerous, 300 sites sold and 80 lodges dot the wooded hills'²³. The accompanying photo pictured a model Scenic Loop Playground lodge built by Mr. and Mrs. E. N. Requa that had been recently purchased by Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Green, formerly of Yoakum.

Scenic Loop Playground

Unit No. 2. 980/237

REQUA & HILDEBRAND
 EXCLUSIVE AGENTS
 316 N. ST. MARYS ST. - SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS.
 E. N. REQUA - OWNER.



State of Texas
 County of Bexar
 I, E. N. Requa, being the undersigned and duly qualified as a surveyor, do hereby certify that the above described land is the same as shown on the accompanying plat, and that the same is the same as shown on the accompanying plat, and that the same is the same as shown on the accompanying plat.

Survey made by me on the ground this the 15th day of January A.D. 1936.
 E. N. Requa
 Surveyor

STATE OF TEXAS
 COUNTY OF BEXAR
 I, E. N. Requa, being duly qualified as a surveyor, do hereby certify that the above described land is the same as shown on the accompanying plat, and that the same is the same as shown on the accompanying plat, and that the same is the same as shown on the accompanying plat.

E. N. Requa
 Surveyor

Figure 12: Scenic Loop Playground, Unit 2

The accelerating value in real estate investment in the city of San Antonio since the end of World War I came to an end in 1929 with a record of \$18,204,050 in new construction, of which about a third was residential, or about \$500,000 per month. For 1930, new construction in all categories would only reach \$8,470,839. Reflecting the significant decline in economic activity nationwide, new residential construction would drop from 1806 dwelling units in 1929 to 1135 in 1930, with an average monthly value less than half that of the previous year.²⁴

The next advertisement for the Playground does not appear until October 26, 1930 inviting the public to the Fall opening to inspect the property and three lodges for sale. Visitors are encouraged to partake in a chicken dinner or juicy sandwich at The Gray Moss Inn, located at the entrance of the property. In an article on November 30, H. E. Hildebrand suggested a recent flurry of real estate sales by Requa and Hildebrand, including a summer home and eleven lots in the Scenic Loop Playground reported by sales manager Alexander Parrigan, were evidence of increasing activity. He said more inquiries were being received from all parts of the country than any time in the last two years. Pictures of two rock houses built by lot owners in the Playground were illustrated in the same section (see Figure 13). On March 1, 1931, E. N. Requa announced the sale of a two-story rock house on Lookout Mountain to A. Salisbury. Speaking of the progress of the development, he declared:

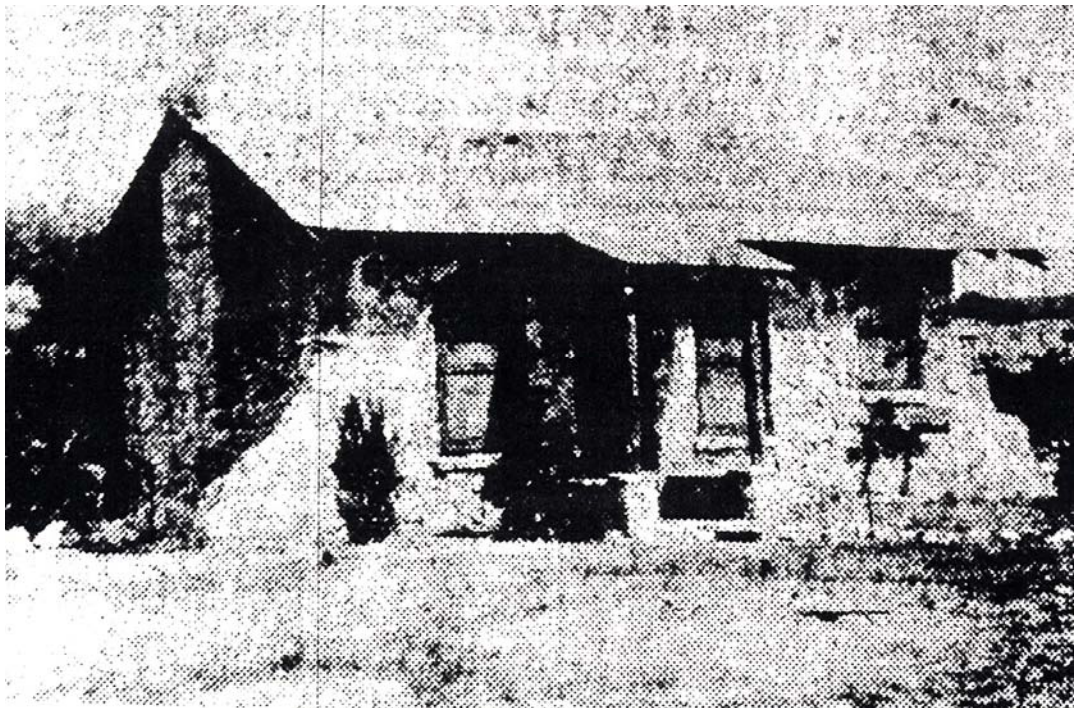
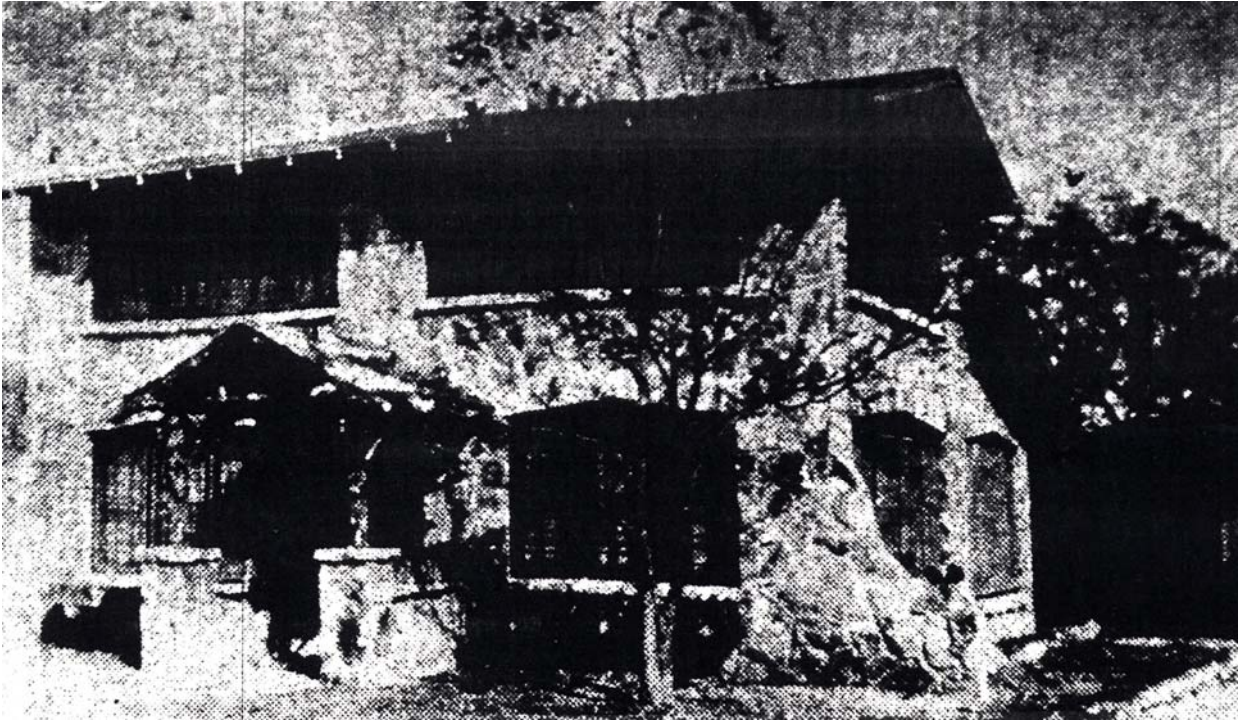


Figure 13: Rock Houses in the Loop Playground

There has been no depression in the Scenic Loop Playground. At all times have there been from two to six structures underway, with sales holding up well.²⁵

The article lists eight others with houses under construction or recently completed in the development. He pointed out that all of the building was being done without any aid from the developers of the Playground. A picture of the two story structure on Lookout Mountain sold to A. Salisbury was published on March 15, 1931 under the caption, 'Rock House in Playground Sold'. In an article on April 5 entitled, 'Great Activity in Playground, Sales of Sites Increasing With Rock Homes Under Way', E. N. Requa stated:

Judging from the number of people that are investigating and driving through the property making selections of sites, it will be but a short time until all this property will be sold out.²⁶

Descriptions of most of the same houses under construction were included from the previous article. A photograph of the rock vacation lodge just completed by J. A. Keller was included later in the same section with the caption, 'The lodge is one of many which have recently been completed or are now underway in the Playground.'²⁷

To encourage residents to improve the appearance of the property, E. N. Requa announced a judging of yards in the Scenic Loop Playground to be held on April 19. Rustic beauty and appearance from the road on which the front yard faced were the main criteria. The contest encouraged the Owners to embellish their properties with:

Such things as entrance, name, various designs of rock, rustic swings, bird boxes, walks, native shrubbery or plants characteristic of the location in the hills.²⁸

No consideration was given for the houses themselves or plants that required constant irrigation. Forty-six yards were entered in the contest. First prize, a lot in the Playground, was awarded to Mr. and Mrs. W. E Green. R. H. Fillingin was awarded second prize, a lunch basket, and Miss Kathryn McIlroy won third prize, a thermos jug. Honorable mention went to Mrs. Mary J. Howell and Herman F. Schmidt. The judges, families, and companions were the guests of E. N. Requa for a chicken dinner at the Howell Grey Moss Inn following the judging.

The value of new construction in San Antonio continued to decline throughout 1931, with less than half the number of residential units being constructed from the previous year. The total value for all new construction in the city for the year would drop to \$3,281,762. As the Depression deepened, the value of new construction continued to fall, totaling only \$1,535,807 in 1932 and \$1,007,218 in 1933, before reaching a bottom of \$944,349 in 1934.²⁹ It would be 1939 before the value of new construction would recover to the even reduced levels experienced in 1930.³⁰

In December, following the death of his partner, H. E. Hildebrand, E. N. Requa announced the relocation of his real estate business from St. Mary Street to the Brady Building. C. V. Starkey was appointed director of the new sales organization with twelve salesmen, to be expanded to at least twenty five at 'an early date', operating under the

firm name of Requa Realty Company. Commenting on the prospects for real estate in the coming year, Requa said:

In my opinion business is bumping along the bottom and it will be but a very short time until there will be an upward trend of business and values along all lines...I have been in the business approximately 30 years and I have never seen a time when a person could make an investment in real estate with such a certainty of increase in price and a sure profit as at the present.³¹

He announced an active campaign in the Scenic Loop Playground to start March 1. A Holiday dinner for the employees was held at the Grey Moss Inn in the Playground on December 28.³²

Closing out the Playground

On March 13, 1932, E. N. Requa announced the sale of 'Shady Lodge' in the Scenic Loop Playground to Marie Wunsche³³. The pictured lodge was described as a rock structure with living and dining room, bedroom, and lavatory, wired for electricity. The lodge was said to be surrounded by great oak trees covered with moss. As this was the last remaining lodge Requa owned in the Playground, he said construction on another would be started immediately. A companion article proclaimed the start of a 'closing out' campaign in the Scenic Loop Playground. He announced the appointment of Adolph Hohensee, a real estate man with 'unusual success' in real estate developments in Florida and California, as sales director over an

organization said to total 20 members. A lecture barbeque luncheon at the Playground was planned for every Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday afternoon. Hohensee described the campaign as a 'finishing' of an already proven property:

That the Scenic Loop Playground has been a success from the start is shown by the fact that 60 percent of the sites have already been sold, while there are 90 lodges and cabins now built in the playground, with three in the course of construction.³⁴

An article on March 27 proclaimed the closing out campaign a success, having exceeded all expectations, with the sale of 19 lots in Unit 1 and 3 tracts in Unit 2 to 17 people during the first ten days of the sale.³⁵ Requa said the idea, that upon sale of a certain percentage of lots, the Playground would be organized into a private club for use of only the residents and their guests, was very popular. Hohensee declared in all his years of experience in real estate, he had never seen a development move so fast, and with so little resistance, as in the closing out campaign at the Playground. In starting the sales campaign, they had estimated it would take until July 1 to complete. But at the present pace, he expected it might be closed within thirty days. On April 10, purchasers of 17 additional lots were announced for a total of 39 sold since the start of the campaign.³⁶

Two weeks later an article in the *Express* described the tremendous profits being made from reselling Scenic Loop Playground sites. E. N. Requa reported from 160 to over 500

percent profits having been made by three investors in reselling lots they had purchased in the Playground. He stated his firm conviction that when the closing out sale was completed, and the public excluded from the grounds, that the value of any lot in the Playground will increase within a short time. Citing the advantages of the Playground as an investment, including the water, the trees, and the natural beauty of the place, Requa proclaimed:

When I first put on this property I only had in mind a weekend vacation place, where our business, professional men, and others could leave the cares of the city behind and go out into the country and swim, fish, stroll along the shady trails and hike over the mountain tops, but it has proven to be far more than that. We now have several families making it their permanent home.³⁷

On April 27, E. N. Requa welcomed members of the San Antonio Tourists Club as his guests to an afternoon and evening outing at the Scenic Loop Playground. The guests were guided around the development and then invited to roam around and make themselves at home. Those who remained around the entrance were entertained with music and song by 'a negro quartet' throughout the afternoon.³⁸ The entertainment was followed by a big barbeque at 6:00 P. M. and dancing until late in the evening.

Photographs of five new structures in the Playground were published in the *Express* on May 8.³⁹ Two rock lodges were shown under construction, as well as a nearly completed rock and cedar home. A lodge with two rooms, a kitchenette,

and a screened porch, recently completed by E. N. Requa, and a barbeque hut completed by Mrs. Howell as an annex to the Grey Moss Inn, were also pictured. Two other lodges not pictured, one costing \$6,000, were said to be starting construction immediately. By the end of July, Requa reported the names of thirteen purchasers of new sites, and nine who had rock and frame lodges completed or underway.⁴⁰ He said there was a feeling that the bottom had been reached and that the market was heading slowly upward. He expected business conditions to be much better by November.

The next article in the *San Antonio Express* on the Playground does not appear until March 1933, announcing the sale of six lodges, fifteen lots in Unit 1, and two tracts in Unit 2.⁴¹ Two lodges had been recently completed by purchasers, and most of the others intended to start construction immediately, or in the near future. Mr. Requa reported that the floor of the main swimming pool had been cemented and was now one of the most beautiful in the entire hill country area. A new sales plan had been developed and a spring close out sale was slated to start within the next 10 days. Based upon recent demand, he anticipated closing out every site left within 30 days. A month later, the sale of a six acre lot in Unit 2 to the county tax assessor, Albert Huth, and eight additional lots in Unit 1, were announced⁴². Three lodges were under construction, with two others planned to start immediately.

In January 1934, Requa reported that based upon the recent sales of ranch land and suburban tracts made by his firm, business through 1934 looked better than it has in several years. He said that he had sold every house he owned in the Scenic Loop Playground and that it remained an

attractive consideration, although they had not pushed it for the past year.⁴³ In March, he announced the inauguration of a close-out sale at what he termed bargain prices and easy terms, with some sites reduced by as much as fifty percent. He announced the recent sales of two rock lodges in the Playground, and the construction of two other lodges and a five bedroom, two-story rock permanent home for Albert Huth. He stated:

Probably no time since this picturesque subdivision has been open to the public has there been as much demand for homes.⁴⁴

He said that most of the lodges constructed in recent months were of a higher type and more expensive than those built previously.

On May 6, Requa presented a proposition to a meeting of the owners in the Scenic Loop Playground. If the owners would agree to assist in selling out the development, he would agree to give the owners a 5 percent commission for selling, or being instrumental in selling, one or more lots. He would donate an additional 5 percent to the club to be used for a clubhouse.⁴⁵ With an estimated \$70,000 worth of property remaining at current prices, this would amount to \$3,500 to the owners and \$3,500 for construction of a clubhouse. Upon sufficient assurance that the residents are able to protect and maintain the roads, parks, swimming pools, wells, and other community property, he would close the development to the public and deed the improvements, embracing 50 or more acres with a value of approximately \$40,000, to the club. If the residents were to sell \$25,000

worth of property with the next 90 days, he agreed to build the clubhouse for them in lieu of the 5 percent fee. If the residents were to sell \$50,000 worth of property, he was willing to donate not only the clubhouse, but an additional building and warehouse for the club's use as well. With 100 lodges now in the Playground, the owners agreed to use their best effort to get as many of their friends as possible to join them as neighbors. The consensus opinion of the owners was that the unsold sites could be sold within the next 60 days. If they were successful in their effort, Mr. Requa agreed to provide a clubhouse of rock and cedar construction for dancing, dinners, and card parties, with a seating capacity for 300, a fireplace to hold four foot logs, smooth glazed concrete floors and a finished ceiling. A rendering of the proposed clubhouse by T. Clyde Williams, architect was published in the *Express* the following week (see Figure 14).

On July 1, sales of 3 lodges and 20 additional lots in the Playground were announced. One lodge was recently completed and three more were under construction, including the first two-story cedar house in the development. Two houses were building additions to double the size of their lodges. Although the offer to construct a clubhouse would not be realized, on July 3, 1934, over five years after the first public offering, E. N. Requa agreed to sign over the common property in the development to the Scenic Loop Playground Club.⁴⁶

An article in the *San Antonio Express* on June 9, 1935 notified the public that the Scenic Loop Playground was now an exclusive resort.⁴⁷ Requa commented that the swimming

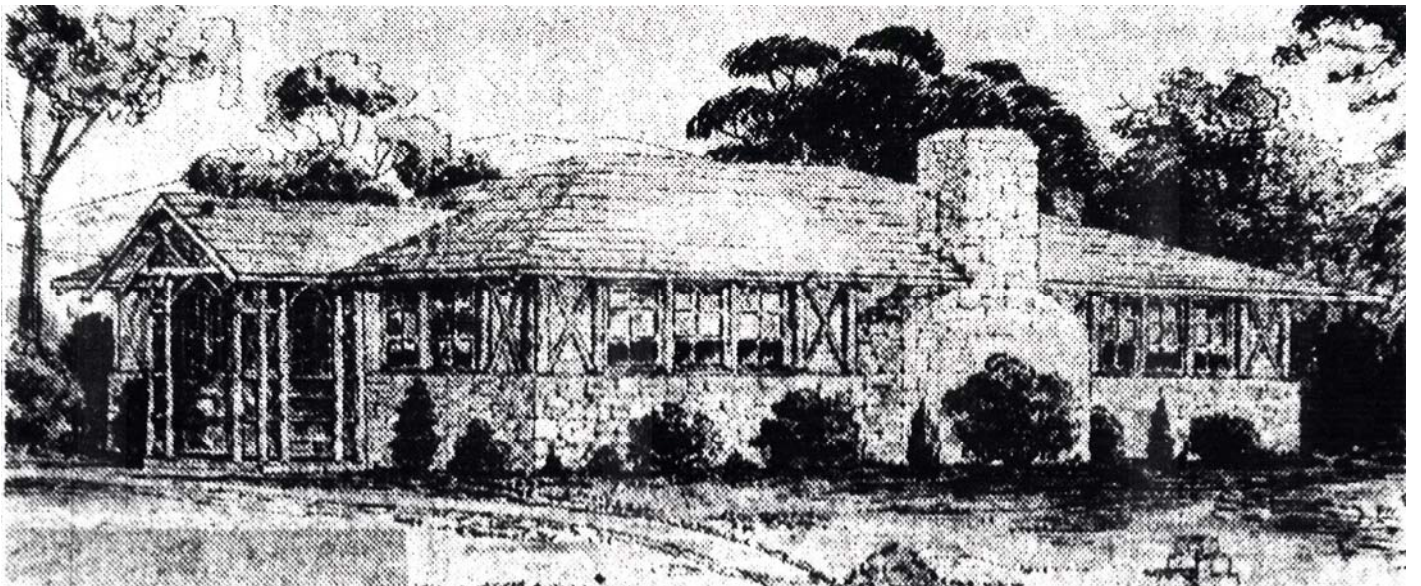


Figure 14: Proposed Clubhouse

pools had never been more beautiful, or the roads in better condition. Street signs had been set up and an officer hired to maintain the grounds for the benefit of the owners. He said that as an exclusive club, the Scenic Loop Playground was one of the few of its kind in the nation and was becoming increasingly popular since it had been turned over to the Scenic Loop Playground Club. He announced the sale of five lots in Unit 1, 2 tracts in Unit 2, and 3 lodges. Nine lodges and one addition had recently been completed. The sales of 17 additional lots were reported on August 4⁴⁸ and the sale of 2 more lots and an existing lodge and house on August 18⁴⁹. Sales of six lots were listed as pending.

A promotional brochure published on the *Scenic Loop Playground* by E. N. Requa, Owner-Developer illustrates the build-out of Unit 1 of the development in the summer of 1935 (see Figure 15). 439 lots are indicated as sold with 128 lodges constructed. 175 lots remained unsold. Articles announcing sales of lodges and remaining lots in the Playground continued to be published in the *San Antonio Express* into the 1940's, until World War II halted civilian construction across the country. After the War, the Playground continued a slow transition from a recreational resort into a year-round rural community. The original development was incorporated in 1962 as the city of Grey Forest, Texas. The 2000 Census recorded a population of 418 residents in 217 housing units within the city limits.⁵⁰

The idea of providing a rural retreat accessible to the middle class businessman and his family was something E. N. Requa said he had considered for some time prior to his development of the Scenic Loop Playground. Although he

THE THRILL OF CHILDREN AT PLAY

*More High Along Old Mount Baldy
It's Situated A Large Beautiful Site --
Has A Spectacular Private Estate
Now Offered At One-Half Former Price*

REAL RUSTIC RUGGED NATURE

NOT A PROMISE BUT A REALITY

LEGEND
OLD HOUSES

MAIN ENTRANCE NEAR GREY MOSS INN

SCENIC LOOP
ATHLETIC GROUNDS
HIGHWAY

BLK. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16

Figure 15: Scenic Loop Playground, ca. 1935

later attempted similar playground developments, and would sell ranch lands to people whose intention was to develop other playgrounds, the deepening of the Depression appears to have prevented any of them from succeeding. Only the Scenic Loop Playground achieved sufficient build-out to reveal the nature of E. N. Requa's original intentions in his conception of a private wilderness recreational development.

² McKlevey, Blake, *The Emergence of Metropolitan America 1915-1966*, p.4, 5, & 31.

³ *Texas Highways*, September 1967, Vol 14, No. 9, p. 14.

⁴ *San Antonio Express*, May 18, 1930, p. A2.

⁵ McNaughton, G. A., 'The Tale of the Meridian Road', *Texas Good Roads Magazine*, January 1917, Vol. 1, No. 2.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *San Antonio Express*, October 29, 1929, Dedication Number Part V, p. 14.

⁸ *San Antonio, Reflections of the Last Two Hundred Years*, San Antonio Board of Realtors, 1976, p.4.

⁹ *San Antonio Express*, June 15, 1928, p. D1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. D5.

¹¹ *San Antonio Express*, April 21, 1929, p. C1.

¹² *San Antonio Express*, April 21, 1929, p. C6.

¹³ *San Antonio Express*, April 28, 1929, p. C1.

¹⁴ *San Antonio Express*, June 9, 1929, p. C1.

¹⁵ *San Antonio Express*, June 23, 1929, p. C2 & C4.

¹⁶ *San Antonio Express*, June 23, 1929, p. C4.

¹⁷ *San Antonio Express*, July 7, 1929, p. A1.

¹⁸ *San Antonio Express*, September 8, 1929, p. C2. H. E. Hildebrand had been in partnership with E. N. Requa in

the early 1920's with offices in the Brady Building. An article entitled 'Hildebrand Now Back with Requa' appeared in the *San Antonio Express*, March 3, 1929, p. C1, announcing his return to the firm after an absence of 3 1/2 years. The firm name was changed to Requa & Hildebrand with offices in the Gunther Hotel Building. The First Public Offering for the Scenic Loop Playground on April 7, 1929 lists Requa & Hildebrand as exclusive agents, with offices at 316 North St. Mary's Street.

- ¹⁹ *San Antonio Express*, November 5, 1929, p. C2.
- ²⁰ *San Antonio Express*, January 26, 1930, p. C1.
- ²¹ *San Antonio Express*, April 6, 1930, p. C1.
- ²² *San Antonio Express*, April 27, 1930, p. C6.
- ²³ *San Antonio Express*, June 8, 1930, p. C2.
- ²⁴ *Worley's San Antonio City Directory 1929-30 & 1931-32.*
- ²⁵ *San Antonio Express*, March 1, 1931, p. A1
- ²⁶ *San Antonio Express*, April 5, 1931, p. C2.
- ²⁷ *San Antonio Express*, April 5, 1931, p. C10.
- ²⁸ *San Antonio Express*, April 19, 1931, p. C1.
- ²⁹ *Worley's San Antonio City Directory 1934-35.*
- ³⁰ *Worley's San Antonio City Directory 1940-41.*
- ³¹ *San Antonio Express*, December 27, 1931, p. C1.
- ³² *San Antonio Express*, January 3, 1932, p. C2.
- ³³ *San Antonio Express*, March 13, 1932, p. C1.
- ³⁴ *San Antonio Express*, March 13, 1932, p. C1.
- ³⁵ *San Antonio Express*, March 27, 1932, p. C1 & C2.
- ³⁶ *San Antonio Express*, p. C1.
- ³⁷ *San Antonio Express*, April 24, 1932, p. C1.
- ³⁸ *San Antonio Express*, May 1, 1932, p. C1. Advertisements for the Scenic Loop Playground stated 'For Caucasians

-
- only'. See 'The Scenic Loop Playground', Advertisement, *San Antonio Express*, June 23, 1929, p. C4.
- ³⁹ *San Antonio Express*, May 8, 1932, p. C1.
- ⁴⁰ *San Antonio Express*, July 31, 1932, p. C1.
- ⁴¹ *San Antonio Express*, March 19, 1933, p. C1.
- ⁴² *San Antonio Express*, April 23, 1933, p. C1.
- ⁴³ *San Antonio Express*, January 14, 1934, p. C1.
- ⁴⁴ *San Antonio Express*, March 11, 1934, p. C1.
- ⁴⁵ *San Antonio Express*, May 13, 1934, p. C2.
- ⁴⁶ 'The Playground Story', *A Voice in the Hills*, Vol. 1, No. 5, Scenic Loop Playground Club, October 1961.
- ⁴⁷ *San Antonio Express*, June 9, 1935, p. C2.
- ⁴⁸ *San Antonio Express*, August 4, 1935, p. C1.
- ⁴⁹ *San Antonio Express*, August 18, 1935, p. C1.
- ⁵⁰ U. S. Census, Table DP-1. Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000, Grey Forest City, Texas.

Part II: Wilderness Recreation and Naturalistic Design

The rural nostalgia that provided a market for the Scenic Loop Playground was built on a romantic and transcendental view of nature that emerged in early 19th century America. Colonial America developed under the European influences from the Age of Enlightenment. The new continent was viewed as a vast and dangerous wilderness that needed to be conquered to make a place safe for human habitation. As industrialization and urbanization of the Atlantic seaboard subdued the wilderness, feelings of alienation and loss of contact with nature began to influence the American attitude. A new romantic view of the remaining wilderness emerged as a place of retreat from the artificial construct of the city, to commune with nature and reconnect with the essential aspects of the human spirit.

Among the first applications of this emerging romantic view of nature were illustrated not in developments for the living, but in rural cemeteries for the dead. Increasing urban densities in the early 19th century resulted in overcrowding in many city cemeteries, traditionally associated with the protection of the church and its immediate surroundings. A new reverential view of the wilderness allowed the development of rural cemeteries, where the dead could be interned outside the city in the beauty of nature. Mount Auburn Cemetery was founded in 1831 on hilly, wooded terrain outside of Boston, Massachusetts, with panoramic views overlooking the city across the Charles River below. The picturesque layout of winding drives, paths, and ponds was designed by General Henry A. S. Dearborn and Alexander Wadsworth following the principles of

naturalistic landscape design developed in late 18th century England (see Figure 16). The contrast of quiet contemplation in the beauty of picturesque nature in the cemetery and the hurried lifestyle of the nearby city made a great impression on visitors to Mount Auburn, and numerous other rural cemeteries that followed its precedence. The rural cemetery became the first public 'pleasure grounds' for leisurely and restful pursuits, and was often advertised in guidebooks as a local attractions for tourists.

A. J. Downing and Principles of Picturesque Design

The person most influential in promoting the practice of naturalistic design in the American landscape was Andrew Jackson Downing. He was born in Newburgh, New York, a town along the Hudson River valley, on October 31, 1815, the son of a nurseryman. In the mid 1800's, he published a series of books and articles on the design of rural buildings and their surroundings that enjoyed wide popularity, particularly among members of the emerging middle class. Following the theories of modern picturesque landscape gardening developed in England by Humphrey Repton and John Claudius Loudon, Downing viewed landscape design as an idealized imitation of nature that should enhance the existing landscape by integrating natural and architectural features into an artistic unity (see Figure 17). His first book, *Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*, originally published in 1841, and in revised editions in 1844 and 1849, detailed the application of these principles, not only in their full realization in the private pleasure gardens and country seats of 50 to 500



Figure 16: Forest Pond at Mount Auburn Cemetery, 1831



Figure 17: Newburgh Estate of A. J. Downing

or twenty acres, fortunately situated, and well treated'. He introduced the nature of his art:

This embellishment of nature, which we call Landscape Gardening, springs naturally from a love of country life, attachment to a certain spot, and a desire to render that place attractive--a feeling which seems more or less strongly fixed in the minds of all men.⁵¹

Downing's artistic expression was based on the popular writings of English authors like William Gilpin and his 1792 essay 'On Picturesque Travel' and Sir Uvedale Price's 'An essay on the Picturesque, as compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful' of 1794. Downing believed all artistic endeavors evolved from these aesthetic expressions as revealed in works of nature, although he felt the grandeur of the sublime to be largely beyond the reach of limited scale of operations available to the landscape gardener, at least as being practiced in America. Based upon their characteristics, two artistic expressions employed in naturalistic design are distinguished, as the 'Beautiful' and the 'Picturesque':

Hence we find all Beautiful forms characterized by curved and flowing lines--lines expressive of infinity, of grace, and willing obedience: and all Picturesque forms characterized by irregular and broken lines--lines expressive of violence, abrupt action, and partial disobedience, a struggling of the idea with the substance or the condition of its being. The Beautiful is an idea of beauty calmly and

harmoniously expressed; the Picturesque, an idea of beauty or power strongly and irregularly expressed.⁵²

In explaining the increasing popular attraction felt toward the Picturesque over the greater perfection found in the Beautiful, he reveals his own philosophical preferences, and that of his age:

...owing partly to the imperfections in our nature by which most of us sympathize more with that in which the struggle between spirit and matter is most apparent, than with that in which the union is harmonious and complete; and partly because from the comparative rarity of highly picturesque landscape, it affects us more forcibly when brought into contrast with our daily lives.⁵³

Downing's design approach was rooted in the local landscape and in enhancing its prevailing natural character. If the surrounding environment exhibited characteristics of the beautiful, then the use of this expression should be employed in its design. But if the landscape is more picturesque in its nature, the design should heighten this character with a 'somewhat wild and bold' expression. He concludes his discussions on the 'Beauties and Principles of the Art' with:

Neither the professional Landscape Gardener, nor the amateur, can hope for much success in realizing the nobler effects of the art, unless he first make

himself master of the natural character of prevailing expression of the place to be improved.⁵⁴

Downing's belief in a nature as a guiding influence was rooted in the ancient Roman concept of the 'Genius Loci', or the belief that a place had been endowed with a unique spirit by its Creator. By understanding the spirit of a place, artistic expressions could extend and enhance its character. The genius of the place influenced every aspect of the design including the type, number, and location of trees to the shape of the ground and the direction, length and number of paths across it. The hierarchy of roads and walks starts with the Approach, a private road providing access to the property from the public highway. He described its design:

The most natural method of forming a winding Approach where the ground is gently undulating, is to follow, in some degree, the depressions of surface, and to curve around the eminences.⁵⁵

The Drive commences where the Approach terminates and proceeds in the same manner, circulating through, and revealing the various parts of the grounds. Walks are laid out similarly, but are more numerous, intended for exercise by foot; providing access to a secluded 'shaded dell', a 'rustic seat', or a 'rugged eminence where an extensive prospect can be enjoyed.'

He found the use of fences in the open landscape to be offensive as barriers in creating impressions of 'ample extent and space for enjoyment.' When located close to the

house, they gave the place a 'confined and mean character'. Fences should be reduced to the minimum necessary and to be concealed by 'plantations', approaching the house only where they must attach to the outbuildings. Where barriers are needed near the house, stone walls covered with vines provided a more picturesque alternative. Where separation from the surrounding landscape was desired, stone terraces or a raised platform could be used. As an alternative to fences of stone or wood, he advocated the use of picturesque verdant hedges, intermingling a variety of flowering shrubs, sweet briars, and other plants into a rich mass. The design for a 'simple and pleasing' barrier of 'rustic work' is described using stout rods of native species, preferably cedar, with bark left on, sharpened and driven into the ground and interwoven as a lattice or other form of trellis to be covered by vines and climbing plants.

The presence of bodies of water in the landscape adds considerable value to the character of the environment. When a water source, such as a spring fed brook runs through the estate, that can be easily improved or developed to create an expanse of water, it should be taken advantage of. To design a naturalistic pond, Downing recommends that one study the characteristics of a beautiful natural lake, which he describes:

...he will find that it is not only delightfully wooded and overshadowed by a variety of vegetation of all heights, from the low sedge that grows on its margin, to the tall tree that bends its branches over its limpid wave; but he will also perceive a striking peculiarity in its *irregular outline*...full of bays

and projections, sinuosities, and recesses of various forms and sizes, sometimes bold, and reaching a considerable distance into the body of the lake, at others, smaller and more varied in shape and connexion...At some places, the shore will steal gently and gradually away from the level of the water, while at others it will rise suddenly and abruptly, in banks more or less steep, irregular, and rugged. Rocks and stones covered with mosses...jut out from the banks, or lie along the margin of the water, and the whole scene will be full of interest from the variety, intricacy, and beauty of the various parts.⁵⁶

If the ground surrounding the stream rises in an irregular form, the natural outline defined by the landscape may be sufficiently varied to produce a pleasing effect. If not, the banks are to be altered by excavation and filled to create the desired shape.

Like in the design of the land and the water, Downing believed that buildings in the rural landscape were to be designed in harmony with their natural surroundings and the genius of the place in which they were located:

...how much more likely to be successful are the efforts of him, who, in composing and constructing a rural residence, calls in to the aid of architecture, the genius of the landscape;--whose mind is imbued with a taste for beautiful scenery, and who so elegantly and ingeniously engrafts art upon nature, as to heighten her beauties; while by the harmonious

union he throws a borrowed charm around his own creation.⁵⁷

He defines the proper characteristics for a rural residence:

...such a dwelling...not only gives ample space for all the comforts and conveniences of a country life, but by its varied and picturesque form and outline, its porches, verandas, etc., also appears to have some reasonable connexion, or be in perfect keeping, with surrounding nature. *Architectural beauty* must be considered conjointly with the *beauty of the landscape* or situation.⁵⁸

The selection of an appropriate style for the building was related to the artistic expression of its surroundings. For the beautiful landscape expressions, classical styles, including Grecian, Roman, and Italian designs, harmonize best; while for the picturesque, romantic styles, such as Gothic, Tudor, and Old English were preferable. Downing also identified intermediate styles, originally variations of the classical style, that had become more picturesque in their outline and effects through additions over time. In the *Swiss* style, the *bracketed cottage*, and the *Italian villa*, Downing felt classical elements could be adapted in an accommodating manner, more in harmony with general nature than with Greek or Roman revival structures. His preference for the vernacular is expressed in recommending the more simple and regular versions for any 'plain country', reserving the more 'irregular and artistical' forms for more highly varied and suitable locations. Of all the styles

considered, the one Downing felt most suitable for the rural American landscape was the English Cottage style, or *Rural Gothic*, a simplified, domestic vernacular version of English Tudor architecture. Like the Italian style, the Rural Gothic accommodates irregular plans while contributing to a picturesque outline, but also expresses the romantic and poetic associations of the Gothic, and the charm of the medieval English country life of our founders.

Downing's second book, *Cottage Residences* of 1842, was the first building pattern book intended for widespread distribution outside of the building trades. Ten designs illustrated houses of various styles appropriate for use in the rural landscape, in differing degrees of elaboration, that could be followed by the reader in completing their own building projects. Advocating the expression of truthfulness in building design, all of the plans featured expressed the purpose of dwelling through prominently featured chimneys, bay windows, and the use of porches and verandas. Downing felt these features not only increased the beauty of the building form, but also expressed the culture and refinement of the society that inhabited them.

Cottage Residences featured one illustration in color, the only one in any of his publications. The plate contained six color samples, the first three, various shades of gray, and the second three, shades of a drab or fawn color, all of which would be found 'pleasing and harmonious' for the exterior of rural cottages and villas. Downing also felt the choice of color was an expression of truthfulness, using a 'quiet, unobtrusive tone of color' for a barn or stable and a 'cheerful, mellow hue' for a cottage or villa. A mansion should have a 'graver color' than a cottage to

express the 'greater dignity' of its inhabitants. The one color which he felt bound to protest against as 'entirely unsuitable and in bad taste' was white:

The glaring nature of this color, when seen in contrast with the soft, green of foliage, renders it extremely unpleasant to an eye attuned to harmony of coloring, and nothing but its very great prevalence in the United States could render even men of some taste so heedless of its bad effect. No painter of landscapes that has possessed a name was ever guilty of displaying in his pictures a glaring white house, but, on the contrary, the buildings introduced by the great masters have uniformly a mellow softened shade of color, in exquisite keeping with the surrounding objects.⁵⁹

A. J. Downing died in a steamboat accident on the Hudson River in 1852, but his books and publications continued to be reprinted, and had considerable influence on architectural taste in late 19th century America, particularly among the rapidly growing middle class.

The picturesque landscape design principles advocated by A. J. Downing for private country estates were applied to the design of one of the earliest suburban developments in the U.S. in Llewellyn Park, New Jersey starting in 1852. The development was located on a wooded parcel, eventually totaling 400 acres, in the eastern foothills of the Orange Mountains west of the Hudson River, accessible from ferry terminals to Manhattan, thirteen miles away, over the recently completed Delaware, Lackawanna, and Western

railroad. Laid out by the developer, Llewellyn S. Haskell, with the assistance of the principal illustrator of Downing's early publications, the architect Alexander Jackson Davis, lots averaging more than three acres in size, provided sites for about fifty original houses designed by Davis, located along seven miles of winding roadways following the hilly terrain (see Figure 18). Fifty acres around a tumbling stream through the property were set aside as a natural 'ramble', improved only by the provision of curving pedestrian walkways through the woods to a cliff walk along the ridge of the mountain above with spectacular views of Manhattan. A Committee of Management, elected by the landowners, was established to oversee the maintenance of the wilderness area for the use of the residents. To maintain the rural character and continuity of the landscape, covenants prohibited the uses of fences and hedges separating the houses. Rustic bridges and a picturesque gatehouse at the development entrance, also designed by Davis, enhanced the picturesque character of the property.

Llewellyn Park provided a model for the picturesque suburb which was replicated along commuter railroads and street car lines outside of most major American cities following the Civil War. But even this shared vision of retreat to a park-like setting in the country remained accessible only to the more affluent members of society who could afford the cost of an expensive residence and the time for commuting to and from the city. For the vast majority of urban residents in the mid 19th century, ready access to contact with nature was limited or nonexistent. The idea of a large scale wilderness area within the city, accessible to

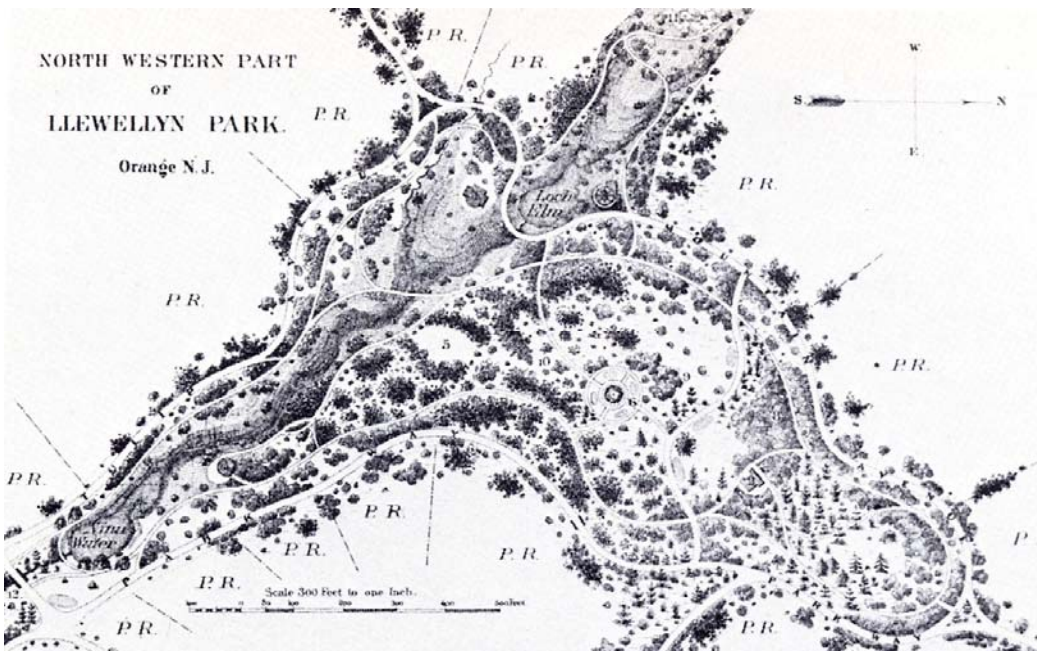


Figure 18: Llewellyn Park Picturesque Suburb, ca 1852

the public, was first proposed in the 1857 proposal by Fredrick Law Olmsted and Downing's former partner, Calvert Vaux, for 'Greensward', their entry in a competition for the design of New York's Central Park. Their winning design provided the required facilities for public recreation and enjoyment, integrated into an overall picturesque design composition that enhanced the beauty of the existing natural environment. For the great variety of arbors, shelters, footbridges and other embellishments within the park, Calvert Vaux followed the suggestion of Downing, with constructions of unpeeled tree trunks and branches, crafted in a rustic style, using the simple construction techniques of the pioneer (see Figure 19). The naturalistic public park first realized in New York was quickly followed in other cities employing similar models, including Brooklyn's Prospect Park in 1866, another Olmsted and Vaux collaboration, and Boston's Franklin Park in the 1880s, designed by Olmsted with early structures by Henry Hobson Richardson.

Wilderness Recreation and the Foundations of Rustic Design

By the mid 1800s, the natural environment along the eastern seaboard of the United States had been largely overcome and converted to pastoral uses. Even the American West, which once seemed a limitless frontier, was being divided and civilized. The continuity of the American wilderness was being segmented and separated into discrete tracts. The remaining parcels were typically in the most rugged or difficult-to-reach places, where nature exhibited its most picturesque form. The Adirondack region of New York, at the headwaters of the Hudson River, was one of the

last such wilderness areas in the East within close proximity to major urban populations. The Reverend William H. Murray's *Adventures in the Wilderness; or Camp-Life in the Adirondacks* of 1869, publicizing a fishing trip to the region, attracted many others in civilized society to seek recreation and rejuvenation offered by a trek into the wilderness. Thomas C. Durant's Adirondack Railroad started construction in 1865 northward from Saratoga, New York, reaching sixty five miles into the region to Blue Creek by 1871, and carrying over 120,000 passengers, principally tourists, in its first five years of operation⁶⁰.

Following an education in Europe, William West Durant joined his father in 1876 with plans for opening the central Adirondacks to tourism linking with the construction of hotels and clubs in the wilderness connected to the railway a stagecoach line and ferries. In 1878, William took over several cabins built by his father at Long Point on Raquette Lake, called Pine Knot Camp, and started construction on his first of four great camps (see Figure 20). Using traditional log construction techniques, modeled after rustic shelters used by trappers and loggers in the area, combined with artistic influences inspired by traditional Scandinavian and Japanese building forms and decoration, Durant developed the basic elements of a style uniquely suited to its natural environment. His camps consisted of a compound of individual structures, serving various functions, scattered about the site in an informal manner, similar to the character of a woodsmen's camp. Individual structures were of log construction, built from spruce logs taken from the site, with corner lock joints notched only on



Figure 19: Rustic Shelter at Central Park by Calvert Vaux

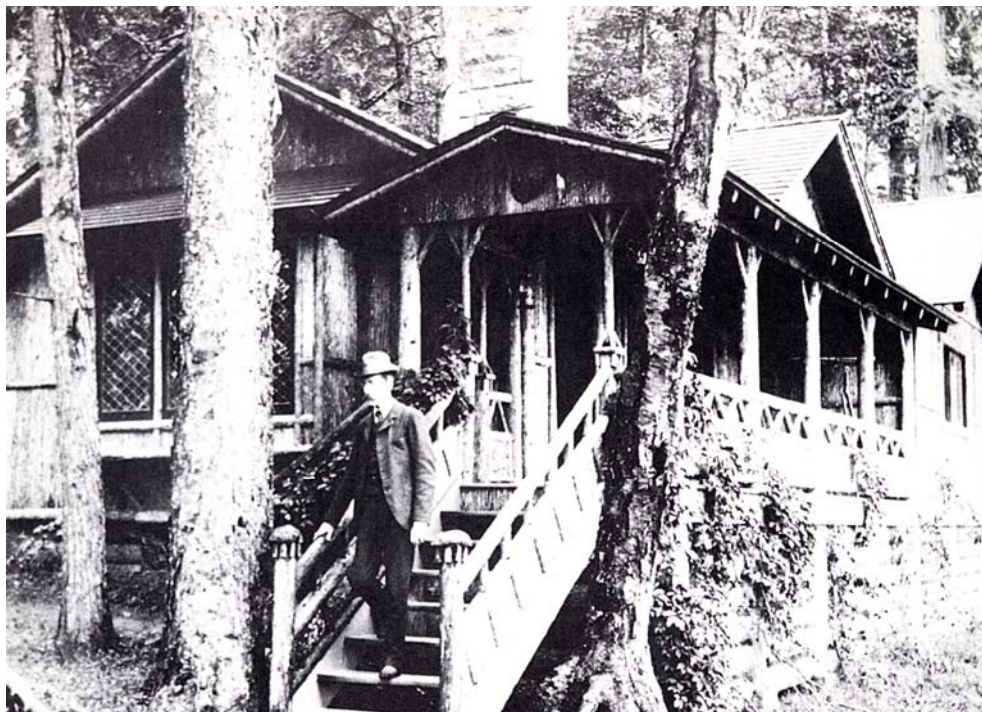


Figure 20: William West Durant's Pine Knot Camp, ca. 1878

the bottom. Beams and rafters of native timber were left exposed as decorative elements. Unpeeled limbs and branches were used as ornamental railings on porches and along galleries. Sheets of peeled bark were applied over ordinary frame construction to create a rustic appearance for both exterior and interior applications. Building interiors focused around fireplaces of native stone, gathered from the site, with rustic furnishings built by the same craftsmen Durant assembled to execute his buildings. The models provided by Durant's camps were imitated by others in the construction of tourist resort hotels, campgrounds, and elaborate private estates for the wealthy throughout the Adirondack wilderness and beyond into the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Efforts to preserve what remained of the wilderness in the west from private development began in 1864 with a grant of the Yosemite Valley and Mariposa Grove from the United States to the State of California for the purposes of public use and recreation. In 1872, Yellowstone became the first national park, set aside by Congress as a 'pleasuring ground for the benefit and enjoyment of the people', soon followed by Yosemite, Sequoia, and General Grant in 1890, Mount Ranier in 1899, and Crater Lake in 1902.⁶¹ The Antiquities Act passed by the United States Congress in 1906, allowed the President to proclaim national monuments on public land containing objects of historic or scientific interest, in addition to the new national parks created by Congress. Theodore Roosevelt declared Lassen Peak a national monument in 1907 and Grand Canyon in 1908. By 1916, when the National Park Service was created, there were 17 national

parks and 22 national monuments covering an area of more than 9800 square miles.⁶²

The earliest structures in the national parks date from before the age of the automobile, when visitors arrived by rail to stay in hotels built by the railroad or private concessionaires. The Old Faithful Inn, the first of the great lodges of the national parks, was constructed in Yellowstone in 1903, an eighth of a mile from the Geyser that bears its name (see Figure 21). The structure, was designed by Robert Chambers Reamer for the Northern Pacific Railroad in a rustic Swiss-influenced 'Adirondack style' to harmonize with the surrounding environment. A departure from the earlier Victorian era railroad hotels that had preceded it, the young architect's design embraced the principles of the American Arts and Crafts style, with its emphasis on simplicity, the use of handwork and native materials, and blending the building with its site. The asymmetrical structure is dominated by a massive gable roof, enclosing a seventy six foot high atrium space, with balconies and stairways of peeled limbs, tree trunk columns, and gnarled knee supports around a massive central chimney of lava rock. The original structure had 140 guest rooms, mostly with shared baths, with rustic log veneer finish on the first floor and unpainted rough sawn pine boards on the upper floors. The building's concrete foundation was veneered with locally quarried stone and the conventional frame structure clad with hand hewn locally harvested logs on the first floor, and wood shingles on the upper gables, dormers, and roof above, to blend with the natural surroundings.

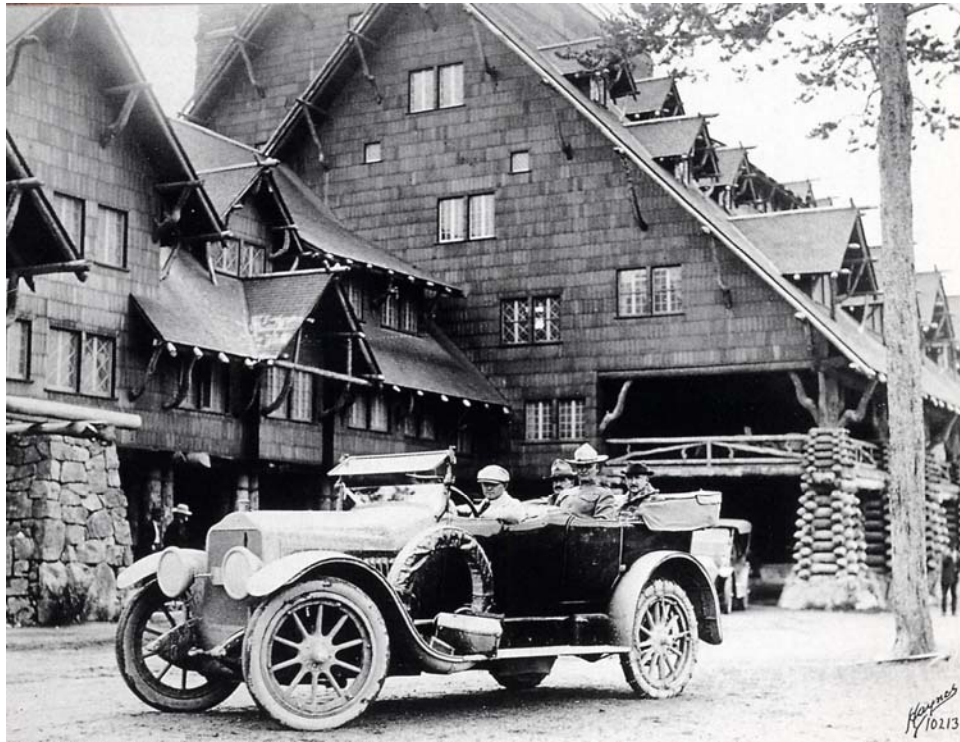


Figure 21: Old Faithful Inn by Robert Reamer, 1903

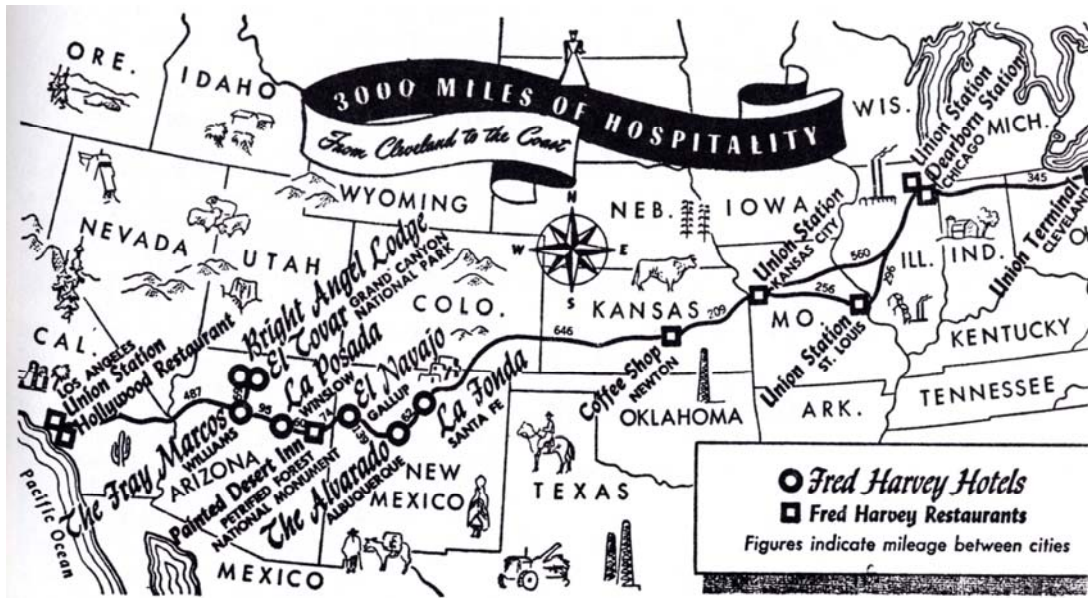


Figure 22: Fred Harvey Hotels, 3000 Miles of Hospitality

In 1901, the Santa Fe and Grand Canyon Railroad began delivering passengers to the South Rim of the Grand Canyon along a spur line from the Santa Fe Railroad's main line at William, AZ. Fred Harvey, an English immigrant determined to improve services available to travelers by rail, joined forces with the Santa Fe Railroad starting in 1876, gradually assuming the operation of all the restaurants and hotels on the Santa Fe line west of the Missouri River by 1889 (see Figure 22) . In 1905, the Santa Fe Railroad and Fred Harvey Company opened the 100 guest room El Tovar Hotel on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon, doubling the accommodations available for the growing numbers of visitors. Designed by Charles F. Whittlesey, architect for the Santa Fe Railroad, the El Tovar was described in the original promotional brochure by the Company as a structure that 'combined in admirable proportions the Swiss chalet and the Norway villa.'⁶³ The horizontal massing of the structure stretches along the canyon rim, punctuated by exposed log framed porches, balconies, and a low tower with a turret roof. Similar to the structural character of the Old Faithful Inn, the first floor walls were clad in dark stained peeled logs resting on a rough limestone foundation. Remaining influences of the popular Queen Anne style are still evident in changing the exterior siding to wood planks for the second floor walls, and the wood shingled mansard roof with dormer windows containing the third floor rooms. The interiors of the public spaces are covered in a siding sawn from peeled logs, with vaulted ceilings of exposed log rafters and decking, and rustic stone fireplaces (see Figure 23).

Immediately adjacent to the El Tovar Hotel along the canyon rim, a second structure also opened to the public in 1905. The building was designed to house the Fred Harvey Company's collection of Native American arts and crafts and a gift shop where Native American handicrafts could be purchased. Unlike the refined rustic character of the El Tovar, the Hopi House was rugged stone structure with tiny windows and an irregular terraced roof accessed by rustic ladders of tree limbs (see Figure 24). The building was designed by Mary Elizabeth Jane Colter as interior designer and architect for the Fred Harvey Company. She had been commissioned by the Fred Harvey Company in 1902 to design the interiors of the 'Indian Building', a portion of the Spanish Mission style Alvarado Hotel complex in Albuquerque, New Mexico, also by architect Charles Whittlesey for the Santa Fe Railroad. Colter paneled the series of rooms in horizontal natural wood planks and furnished them with simple benches and tables, integrating Fred Harvey's collection of Native American rugs, blankets, pots, baskets and other handicraft into a unified artistic composition of Southwestern Arts and Crafts design. The Hopi House, like the Indian Building, combined museum space, craft demonstrations, and a sales showroom, but in a free standing structure. Colter based the design of the building upon the traditional pueblo dwellings at Oraibi, a Hopi village in northeastern Arizona that dates to 1100, and is thought to be the oldest inhabited settlement in the United States. The building was constructed by Hopi workmen of local Kaibab limestone, set in mud mortar, with a facing of Coconino sandstone. The floors and roofs are supported by locally harvested peeled logs and covered with two layers of smaller



Figure 23: El Tovar Hotel by Charles Whittsley, 1905

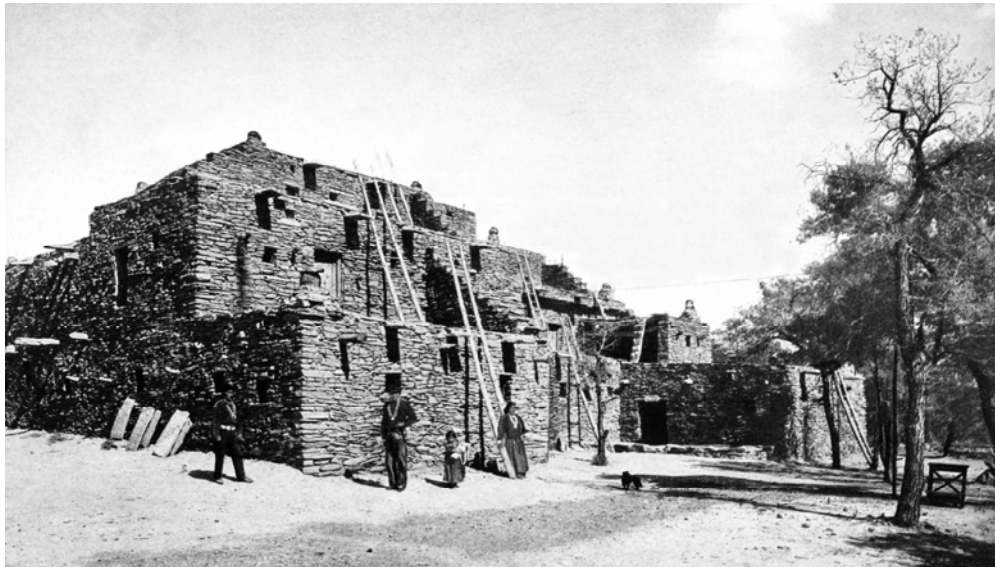


Figure 24: Mary Colter's Hopi House, 1905

branches left exposed for the low ceilings. Concrete floors and plastered irregular interior walls appear to be of traditional adobe construction. Upper floors and roof terraces provided housing for the Hopi employees that demonstrated and produced traditional handicrafts available for sale in the structure.

In 1910, the Fred Harvey Company hired Mary Colter on a permanent basis as architect and interior designer for all of its facilities. To support the expansion of tourism at the Grand Canyon, the Santa Fe Railroad had constructed a log depot in a Swiss chalet style down the slope from the El Tovar Hotel in 1909. The Railroad also constructed the eight mile long Hermit Rim Road along the Canyon rim to the west of Grand Canyon Village in 1910-12, with Fred Harvey Company providing horse-drawn open carriage rides for sightseers between the panoramic overlooks along the route. The Fred Harvey Company had Mary Colter design a viewing station for the western end of the road, where tourists could rest and relax before their return trip to the Village. Constructed in 1914, Colter's unique design appears to be a romantic ruin of some ancient rustic shelter, built from locally available materials, similar to the type of structure an early prospector in the region may have constructed for himself. Partially buried into a mounded hillside on the edge of the canyon, 'Hermit's Rest' emerges from the ground like a pile of stone rubble, terminated by a tapering chimney stack (see Figure 25). A log framed porch roof, supported on peeled tree trunk columns, projects from the stone construction along the rim of the canyon. Inside the structure, the ceiling opens to a vaulted space above, with daylight streaming in through

clerestory windows that are hidden from view on the exterior. The solid stone masonry walls are exposed as interior finish, and like at Hopi House, capped by a log framed roof with tree branch infill, supporting an earth toned freeform concrete shell that merges into the hillside. The interior space is terminated by a massive arch containing a coved inglenook and fireplace set within the stone masonry.

A second structure, also designed by Colter, was constructed in the same year atop a promontory on the Canyon rim near the El Tovar Hotel, as a place for tourists out for a stroll along the rim trail to stop and relax while enjoying views of the Canyon. Called the 'Lookout', the low, horizontal structure is constructed of rough-cut Kaibab limestone, the same material as the upper walls of the canyon. A series of terraces with irregular rubble stone walls step down around the structure and appear to merge into the Canyon wall so that it is difficult to determine where the work of nature ends and the manmade begins (see Figure 26). The flat concrete roof, supported on rough hewn logs exposed below, was covered with earth and planted to appear as part of the bank. The masonry walls terminate in an irregular parapet, resembling what could be a ruin of some ancient watchtower. The stone chimney emerges naturally from partially buried rubble about the site merging into the masonry walls of the structure. The interior, though similar in material composition to Hermit's Rest, is more domestic in scale, the rustic stone fireplace enclosed within a smaller alcove, providing a comfortable retreat from the vastness of the Canyon experienced on the



Figure 25: Hermit's Rest, 1914



Figure 26: The Lookout, 1914

terraces outside. In these two unusual structures, Mary Colter succeeded in merging the handicrafts of Native Americans and the construction technology of the pioneer with building forms derived from the surrounding landscape.

Before 1915, most of the improvements funded in the Nation's parks by the federal government consisted of roads and trails. Downing's classification of approach and circuit roads to access to the country seat served the park system well, providing the model for public access from routes outside and circuit roads connecting features of interest and visitor facilities within the park. To manage the growing national park system and control park development, the National Park Service was established by Congress in 1916. The first director of the National Park Service, Stephen Mather, defined the new agency's policy regarding new construction within the parks in 1918:

In the construction of roads, trails, buildings, and other improvements, particular attention must be devoted always to the harmonizing of these improvements with the landscape.⁶⁴

For the 240,193 visitors to the national parks in 1914, only 455 vehicles were permitted. By 1917, 487,368 visitors arrived with 22,286 automobiles⁶⁵. To better facilitate automobile access to the parks, Stephen Mather proposed the construction of a park-to-park highway as early as 1915, connecting all the western parks in a great scenic loop from Denver across to California by way of the Grand Canyon, up the Sierras to the Cascades, across the North Rockies to

Glacier, and back to Denver. The National Park-to-Park Highway was dedicated by Mather in 1920, consisting of six thousand miles of state and county roads, about one-third of which were paved⁶⁶ (see Figure 27). By 1921, over a million people visited the National Parks, mostly arriving by private automobile over the new scenic highway.

With the public demand for new facilities, funding for the National Park Service increased as well, exceeding one million dollars in 1921, which was less than half of what Mather felt he needed just to address 'essential needs'⁶⁷. Charles Punchard had been appointed by Mather in 1918 to the position of 'Landscape Engineer', charged with planning and review of park improvements and 'buildings of all kinds, whether they are to be erected by the government or by the business interests catering to the needs of the public', with 'the guiding principle ... that the natural conditions of the parks are to be disturbed as little as possible consistent with necessary development in the public interest'.⁶⁸ He toured Grand Canyon Village in 1919, following its designation as a national park, to review with Mary Colter proposed future improvements by the Fred Harvey Company and determine a location for a new park service administration building. In his report to Mather, he suggested that to avoid the Village becoming a 'jumble' of architectural styles, new construction within the Park should adhere to the rustic characteristics of the rest houses and curio shops built by the Railroad and the indigenous adobe architecture of the Native Americans and Pioneer settlers in the region. The new park service administration building, and the design and supervision of many other new structures to be built in the national parks

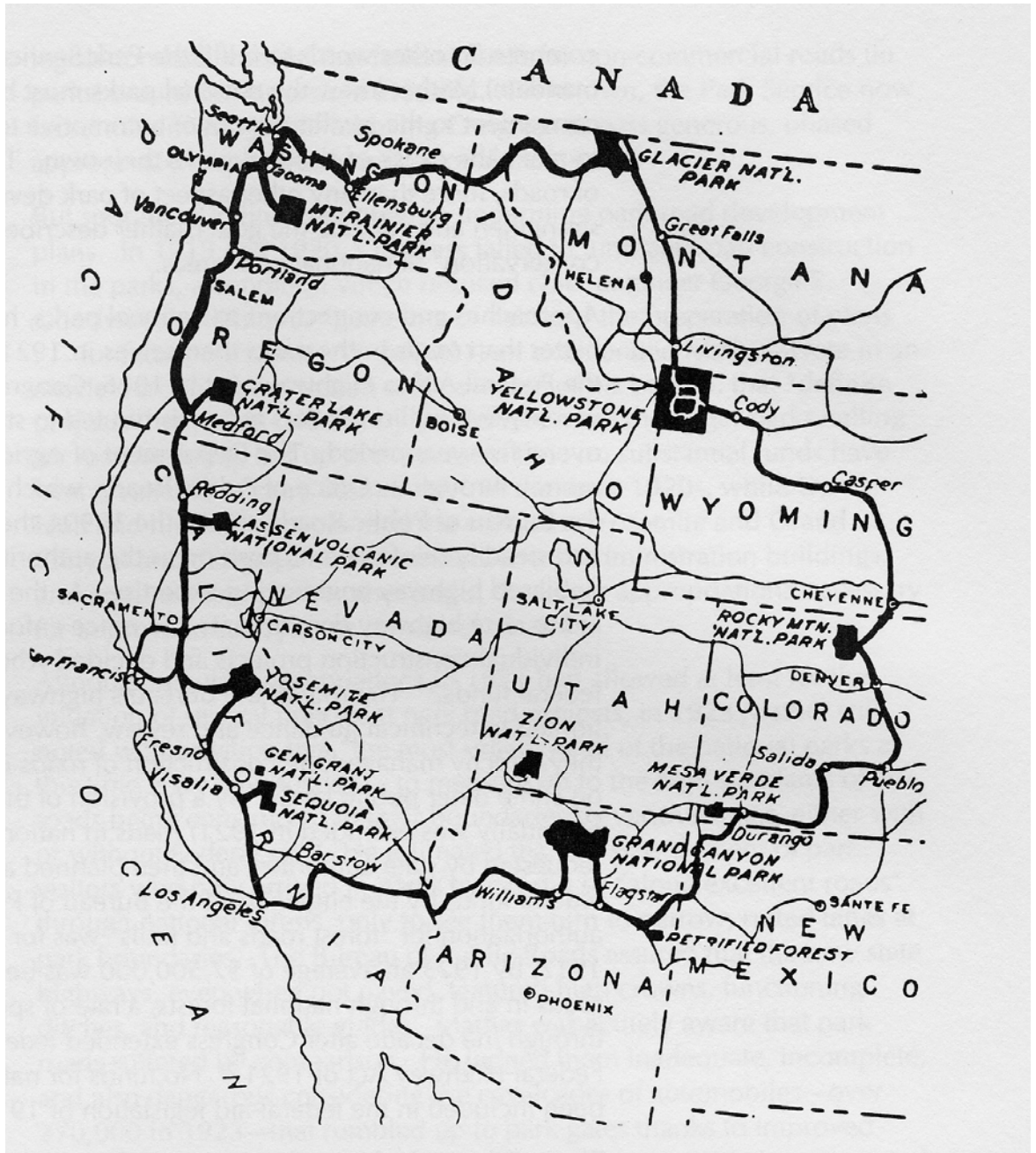


Figure 27: The National Park to Park Highway, 1920

during the 1920s, were completed under the direction of Punchard's successor, Daniel Hull. Trained in 'civic design' under Charles Robinson at the University of Illinois, with a Masters degree in Landscape Architecture from Harvard University, Daniel Hull became the Park Service's Assistant Landscape Engineer in 1920, and assumed the position of Landscape Engineer upon Charles Punchard's death later the same year.

With the dramatic increase in tourism to the new national park following the First World War, additional means of access into the Canyon required the improvement of trails for use by the public. In 1921, the Park Service completed improvement of the Kaibab trail, from the South Rim near the eastern access point of Grandview, including a 420 foot suspension bridge over the Colorado River, to link up with the Bright Angel trail at the Canyon bottom. The improved accessibility to the inner Canyon provided by the new trail prompted the Fred Harvey Company and the Santa Fe Railroad to propose the construction of additional visitor accommodations as a destination stop for their mule rides at the base of the Canyon next to Bright Angel Creek. Mary Colter designed a small complex of structures, she called 'Phantom Ranch'. Constructed in 1922, 'Phantom Ranch' consisted of four two-person cabins, a caretaker's cabin, and a lodge containing a kitchen and dining hall (see Figure 28). The modest frame structures blend into the surrounding natural landscape with a battered veneer of stone rubble, gathered from the site. The stone is laid randomly, with larger boulders toward the base, and recessed mortar joints for a dry-laid appearance. Simple low pitched shingled

gable roofs overhang the stone walls, with windows, doors, and other exterior woodwork stained in muted earth tones.

Mary Colter's design for Phantom Ranch was a strong influence on Daniel Hull in his concurrent design for one of the first structures erected by the Park Service, the 1921 Grand Canyon Administration building (see Figure 29). The first floor walls of the two-story structure were veneered in heavily rusticated Kaibab limestone, randomly laid, with dark stained board and batten siding above. Projecting piers of stone masonry are balanced by the broad intersecting gables and deep overhangs of the wood shingled roof. The characteristics employed in the design of this structure would provide a model for much of the National Park Service architecture that would follow, including the 1924 Administration Building at Yosemite by architect Myron Hunt and the second administration building in Grand Canyon Village of 1929, designed by Thomas C. Vint.

Thomas Vint had been assistant landscape architect under Daniel Hull since 1922, and succeeded him as chief landscape architect for the National Park Service upon his departure in 1927. His design for the Second Grand Canyon Administration Building is one of the premier examples of the architectural style developed for use in the national parks which came to be known as NPS rustic. Like in Daniel Hull's earlier structure, the lower walls are veneered in rusticated stone masonry. Massive battered stone piers anchor the corners of the central mass, extending to the middle of the second floor walls. The broad gables of the wood shingled roof are supported on short columns and beams of peeled logs. Dark stained board and batten siding cover



Figure 28: Lodge at Phantom Ranch
By Mary Colter, 1922



Figure 29: Grand Canyon Administration Building
by Daniel Hull, 1921

the remaining exterior surfaces (see Figure 30). Unlike any architectural style that had preceded it, rustic design was unique in its conception of buildings and other structures as an accessory to nature. Under the supervision of Daniel Hull and his assistants, not only the buildings, but the roads, bridges, guardrails, drainage structures, trail shelters, and other tourist facilities, were designed as part of a coordinated landscape plan that expressed and blended in with the unique natural characteristics of the park.

Many of the most significant structures built within the national parks continued to be designed by architects outside of the National Park Service for the railroads and other concessionaires that provided public accommodations. In 1922, The Union Pacific Railroad proposed construction of a rail spur off its main line at Lund, Utah to new tourist accommodations at Cedar City. A new road would provide motor coach access to additional accommodations built in the national monuments at Zion and Bryce Canyons, and a more limited facility at Cedar Breaks. Hull suggested a former classmate, Gilbert Stanley Underwood, an architect practicing in Los Angeles, for the job of designing the tourist accommodations within the park. Based upon suggestions by Hull and Stephen Mather, the facilities at Zion (see Figure 31) were designed, not in a single massive structure as at the Old Faithful Inn and El Tovar, but decentralized, with separate standard and deluxe tourist cabins surrounding a main lodge, making the buildings less obtrusive and better integrating them into the landscape setting. Completed in 1924, Zion Lodge was built of exposed frame construction covered on the exterior with dark stained



Figure 30: Second Grand Canyon Administration Building
by Thomas Vint, 1929



Figure 31: Zion Park Lodge, 1924
by Gilbert Stanley Underwood

tongue and groove wood paneling and covered by an overhanging wood shingled hip roof shedding down to a single story eave at each end. A porch stretched across the two story front of the structure with four native sandstone columns supporting a balcony opening off the dining room. Full length multi-paned windows center between the stone columns. Zion lodge would provide the model for Underwood's subsequent commissions for the Union Pacific Railroad in the design of the Lodge at Bryce Canyon, completed in 1925, and the Grand Canyon Lodge on the north rim of the Grand Canyon, completed in 1928. With each design, the use of native timber and stonework, on both the exterior and extending into the interiors, became a more expressive part of the composition. Perched on the edge of the north rim, the design of the Grand Canyon Lodge reflected characteristics of Mary Colter's earlier Lookout studio across the canyon, cascading toward the rim in a series of outdoor terraces and stairways, culminating in a stone watchtower (see Figure 32).

The architect who would have the greatest influence on the development of park architecture was Herbert Maier. A native of San Francisco, Maier, like Vint and many other designers in the National Park Service, was educated in the Arts and Crafts tradition at Berkeley. Maier's work in the National Parks began with the commission to design a new interpretive museum building at Yosemite for the American Association of Museums. Completed in 1925, with funding from the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial, the lower floor of the museum building was of fireproof concrete construction veneered with rough granite boulders. The overhanging second floor was of frame construction covered

with dark stained wood shakes and a simple gable roof, complementing Myron Hunt's administration building across Yosemite Village's new central plaza. Commissions for other museums within the national parks soon followed. His design for the Yavapai Point Observation Station on the south rim of the Grand Canyon, completed in 1928, illustrates the pervasive influence of Mary Colter's earlier work on Maier's evolution. Constructed of native stone, the low structure appears to emerge from the canyon wall, with a horizontal projecting roof that mimics the canyon rim (see Figure 33). For museum at Yellowstone, Maier employed a decentralized approach, designing a series of four smaller trailside museums located along the Grand Loop Road though the park. Foundations of heavily battered boulders, and massive logs used for posts and beams, exaggerated the proportions of the structural elements on the modestly scaled buildings. Roofs were constructed with deeply projecting eaves and covered with large scale wood shakes. Surrounded by terraces and connected to nearby outdoor amphitheaters, the trailside museums integrated the interpretive experience into the park itself.

The success of the national parks in preserving the outstanding features of the American wilderness while providing for the public's use and enjoyment, increased the demand for additional parks. Sixteen proposals were introduced in congress for new wilderness parks in 1916, only two of which were deemed of substantial value to merit the designation of national park⁶⁹. Stephen Mather convened the first National Conference on Parks in Des Moines, Iowa in January of 1921 to encourage those interested in creating new parks to work with their state governments to establish

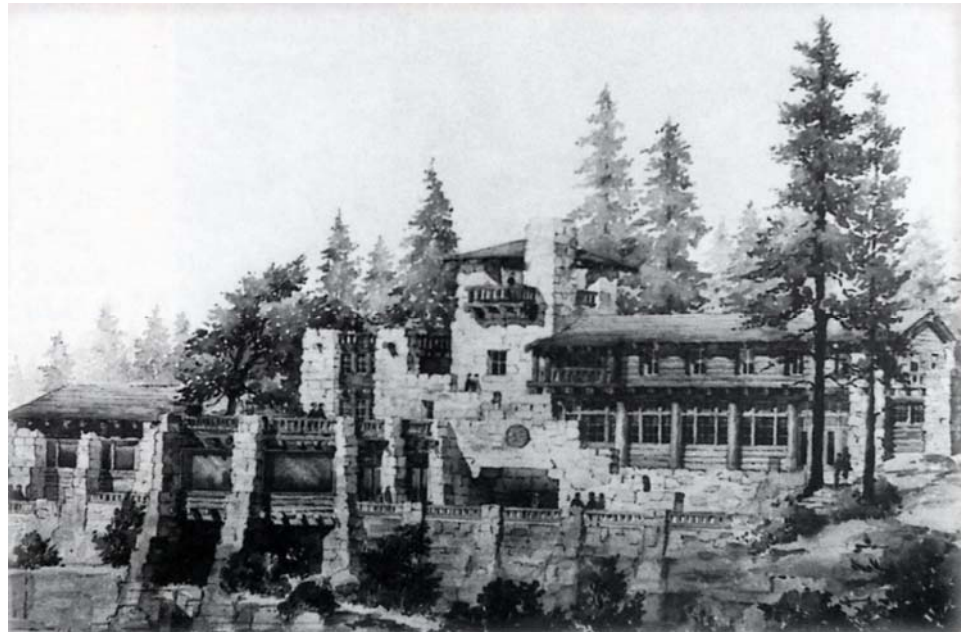


Figure 32: Grand Canyon Lodge
by Gilbert Stanley Underwood, 1928



Figure 33: Yavapai Point Observation Station
by Herbert Maier, 1928

a national system of state parks. Texas had been among the earliest States to set aside land for public use as a park with the purchase of the San Jacinto battlefield site in 1883. In 1923, a state park board was appointed and by 1927, 24 state parks had been established, most along state highways⁷⁰. These new state parks largely followed the picturesque landscape layouts and rustic designs popularized by the National Park Service to provide a wilderness recreational opportunity within easy reach of every major urban population across the country.

The number of visitors to our national parks continued to increase through most of the Great Depression with about 2.5 million automobile permits issued in 1928 increasing to over 500 million by 1937⁷¹. A major reorganization of the National Park Service in 1933 under Franklin Roosevelt transferred responsibility for over 50 additional national monuments and battlefields, mostly in the east, and all the public buildings and parks of Washington DC, to their management, creating a truly national system of parks. One of Roosevelt's first actions upon taking office in 1933 was proposing the creation of a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), a peacetime army of unemployed youth assigned to emergency conservation work across the country. The National Park Service was given responsibility for planning, design, and providing technical assistance for all park and recreational facilities outside of the national and state forests. In addition to the many projects carried out within the national parks, over 70 percent of the CCC work supervised by the National Park Service was in 560 state, county, and municipal park areas⁷². Emergency Conservation Work in the state parks was organized into four districts

under the new State Parks Division headed by Conrad Wirth. Herb Maier was assigned to District III, responsible for supervision of projects in Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming, Nebraska, Utah, Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Louisiana, and Texas.

The National Park Service Principles of Rustic Design

Acting as a spokesman for the National Park Service on park architecture, Maier addressed the Conference of State Park Officials in 1935. Based upon over ten years of experience in designing museum structures within the national parks, he presented his design principles for blending new construction inconspicuously in a manner that harmonized with a particular environment. He defined six basic ways in which structures could be made inconspicuous: screening, the use of indigenous and native materials, the use of indigenous and frontier methods of construction, designing buildings with low silhouettes and horizontal emphasis, avoiding right angles and straight lines, and eliminating the lines of demarcation between buildings and nature. Referring to the precedents set by the pioneers to a given region⁷³:

Whether he set up his abode on the forest, or sod or adobe covered plains, or in a rock-strewn country, he was forced to adopt the natural material immediately at hand, and when the structure was completed, it consequently echoed the identical materials and color from its surroundings.

He recommended the use of colors that blended a structure with the immediate surroundings. Warm browns and driftwood grays were preferred; green was discouraged, being difficult to match with greens in nature. Colors that matched the surrounding earth were determined to be least conspicuous. Low pitched roofs of no more than a third were suggested to maintain a horizontal character and to prevent the roof from becoming dominate or visible from greater distances. Foundations of large boulders appearing as natural outcroppings or planting of native vegetation around the foundations were employed to obliterate the line between building and ground. For mountainous areas where forests abound, structural elements of logs, exposed timber, and rocks should be oversized in scale with surrounding trees, boulders, and other natural features. Wood shakes were to be one inch thick, laid in wavy courses to create a free hand character, doubled every fifth course to add to the apparent weight of the roof. He advised that rocks should be placed with their natural bedding planes horizontal, laid in a irregular pattern, with stones of varying size⁷⁴.

In a wall larger rocks should be used near the base, but this does not mean that smaller ones should be used exclusively in the upper portions, rather a good variety of sizes should be common to the whole surface. I like to see a rock wall splay out near the base and especially at the corners so as to give a feeling of natural outcropping and to prevent a fixed line of demarcation at the ground.

Maier had incorporated these design principles in a photographic handbook for use by district inspectors in 1934. Twenty two numbered plates, many of his own design from his earlier work in the national parks, illustrated individual principles described on the reverse. Conrad Wirth had also hired Dorothy Waugh to gather information on existing park structures and prepare an illustrated design manual that could be used in the CCC camps. Designed in a loose leaf notebook format to allow additions as more information became available, the *Portfolio of Comfort Stations and Privies*, soon updated to include other types of park structures, as the *Portfolio of Park Structures*, were both published in 1934. Additional designs were issued to the camps as they became available which could be added to the appropriate sections in the portfolio.

The popularity of these early portfolios in the CCC camps demonstrated the need for a more comprehensive publication on the design of park structures and facilities. An editorial board, consisting of Thomas Vint, Paul Brown, Herbert Maier, Oliver Taylor, Norman Newton, and Dorothy Waugh was appointed by Conrad Wirth to select examples to be included in the new volume. Albert H. Good, an architect from Ohio, was hired as editor. A talented draftsman, Good prepared plans, elevations, and sections to accompany photographs of projects selected by the board, as well as writing the text that described the design principles, materials, and methods employed in their construction. Published in 1935, *Park Structures and Facilities*, was organized into two volumes, Part One contained examples of Administration and Basic Service Facilities and Part Two those representing Recreational and Cultural Facilities.

The stated purpose of the examples presented was not to serve as a pattern book of designs to be copied, but as a guidebook illustrating the design principles employed to integrate new construction into the particular natural characteristics of the local environment.

Due to the enormous volume of new construction accomplished in the nation's parks by the CCC between 1935 and 1938, a revised edition, entitled *Park and Recreation Structures*, was published in 1938. Also edited by Albert Good, the new publication considerably expanded the number of examples included in the previous volumes, and added a third volume on the design of Overnight and Organized Camping Facilities. The revised three volume set contained new examples for all types of park construction, including buildings, bridges and water control structures, and other embellishments completed by the CCC camps that exhibited design characteristics appropriate for a natural park setting. Included were projects designed by architects for the National Park Service constructed in the national parks (see Figure 34), as well as regional variations completed in state, county, and municipal parks, designed by local architects under the review of Park Service architects, illustrating a broad application of rustic design principles to a wide range of structures across the country.

Some of the most innovative designs for new structures included in the revised edition of *Park and Recreation Structures* were those constructed in District III, under the supervision of Herbert Maier and his staff of architectural inspectors. In Texas, Palmetto State Park, located on 264 acres of land along the San Marcos River in Gonzales County, was developed by three CCC companies between 1934 and 1937.

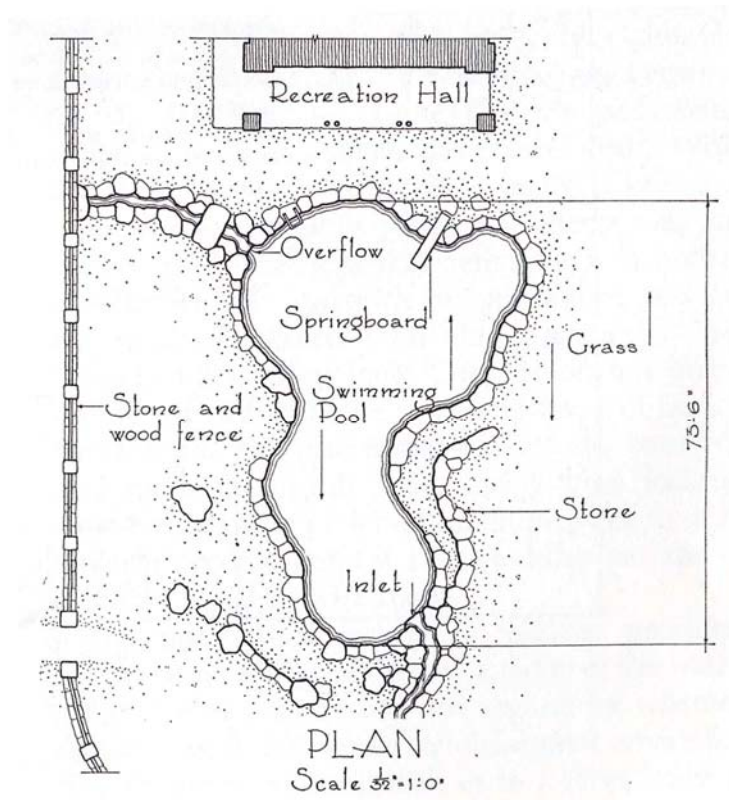
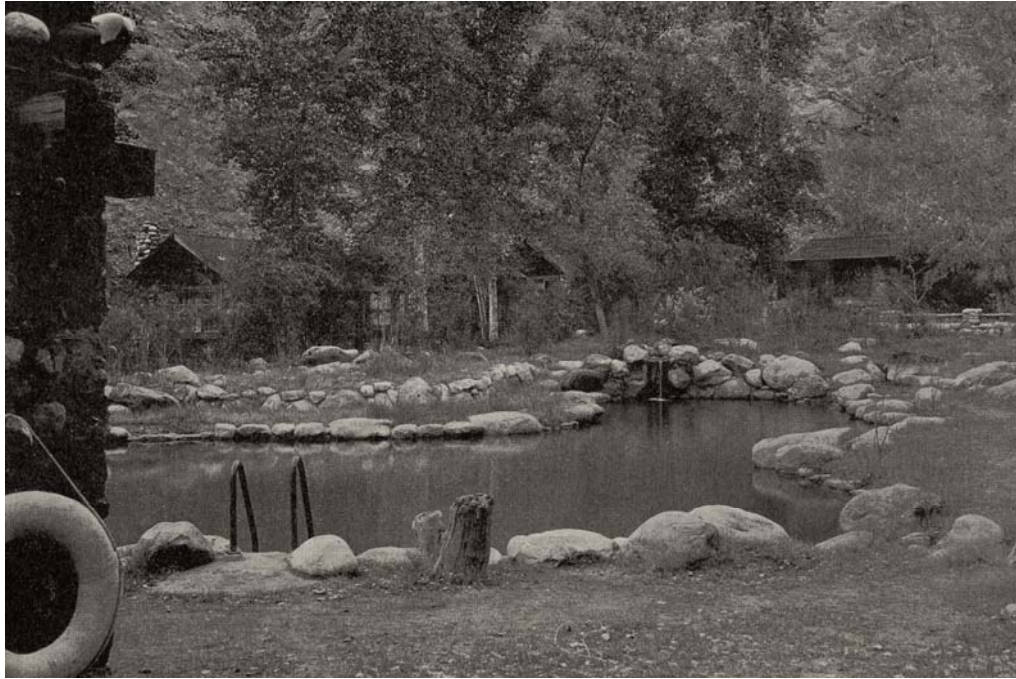


Figure 34: Naturalistic Pool at Phantom Ranch, 1933-34

The refectory from 1935, designed by architect Olin Smith, was constructed with walls of native stone that appear to grow out of the ground from half buried boulders surrounding the structure. Gable ends were sheathed with locally sawn waney edged wood siding, stained dark brown, and capped by a roof of hewn timbers, originally thatched with fronds from the abundant palmetto after which the park was named (see Figure 35). In Bastrop State Park, architect Arthur Fehr designed a series of fourteen cabins of native stone and timber that were built by CCC craftsmen also in 1935. The low pitched timber framed roofs, massive stone chimneys, and battered stone walls following the sloping topography provide one of the best mature examples of the application of Herbert Maier's principles to the design of structures that merge into surrounding nature.

Although the revised edition of Park and Recreation Structures published in 1938 was intended to guide future construction in our nation's parks, in reality it became the best historic record illustrating the mature character of the rustic style of architecture in the U. S., already in decline. Federal funding for the CCC was reduced every year after 1935 until the program ended with the start of World War II. Funding for the National Park Service was severely limited during and after the War, only allowing a resumption of significant park development in the mid 1950's. By then a new generation of architects and landscape architects were guiding park policy. Simplicity of design and economy of construction replaced romantic character as the principal standard for new park structures. Yet overall our nation's parks have been good stewards of their built architectural heritage. Few rustic park structures have been demolished,



Refectory, Palmetto State Park



Cabin, Bastrop State Park

Figure 35: Rustic Style in Texas State Parks, 1935-38

and many have been, or are being restored of past indignities. Today these historic structures, designed to become a part of the surrounding natural environment, continue to be highly prized in the public image of the wilderness park.

⁵¹ Downing, A. J., *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening*. New York: A. O. Moore & Co., 1859, p. 18 & 19.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 290.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 305.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 321.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 320.

⁵⁹ Downing, A. J., *Cottage Residences*, New York: John Riley and Sons, 1873, p. 14.

⁶⁰ Kaiser, Harvey H., *Great Camps of the Adirondacks*, Boston: David R. Godine, Publisher, 1982, p. 39.

⁶¹ Carr, Ethan, *Wilderness by Design, Landscape Architecture and the National Park Service*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998, p. 55.

⁶² Ise, John, *Our National Park Policy: A Critical History*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1961, p. 18.

⁶³ Berke, Arnold, *Mary Colter, Architect of the Southwest*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2002, p. 61.

⁶⁴ National Park Service, 'Report of the Director of the National Park Service', Washington DC: Government Printing Office, 1918, p. 274.

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- ⁶⁵ McClelland, Linda Flint, *Building the National Parks*, Baltimore: The John Hopkins Press, 1998, p.131.
- ⁶⁶ Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *1920 Annual Report*, p. 37-44 and *1921 Annual Report*, p. 24-26.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14-16 & 22-23.
- ⁶⁸ Department of the Interior, National Park Service, *1919 Annual Report*, p. 25-27.
- ⁶⁹ Landrum, Ney C., *The State Park Movement in America*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2004, p. 77.
- ⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 104.
- ⁷¹ Carr, Ethan, p. 256.
- ⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 257.
- ⁷³ Department of Interior, National Park Service, *Proceedings of the National Park Service Conference of State Park Authorities*, Washington DC, February 25, 1935.
- ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

Part III: A Scenic Playground

The design of the Scenic Loop Playground was based upon a wilderness model similar to the contemporary development of the state parks, but preserved the natural amenities and recreational opportunities for the use of purchasers of individual camp or lodge sites with the development and their guests. The development was located along the most picturesque portion of the Scenic Loop Road, an early automobile touring route associated with escape from the city and the enjoyment of the beauty of nature. In the hilly terrain created by the uplift of the Balconies Fault, the Playground occupied a beautiful natural setting along spring-fed creek beds at the convergence of Lee and Helotes Creeks. Appreciated for its scenic beauty, the spot was a favorite setting for paintings by local artists, particularly the area with large live oak trees draped with Spanish moss that grew near Helotes Creek in an area known as 'The Gray Forest'.

Scenic Roadways

Of the 46.3 miles of the original Scenic Loop, only about ten and half miles, starting at the 'Old Town' section of Helotes, and ending at Leon Springs via the Boerne Stage Road, retain a semblance of its scenic rural character. The remainder of the original loop has been absorbed by thoroughfares and freeways connecting the City of San Antonio to its surrounding suburban development. By 1980, the rapidly expanding extraterritorial jurisdiction of the City of San Antonio had completely surrounded the former site of the Scenic Loop Playground⁷⁵. To support the

expected future increase in residential developments in this scenic area, the remaining Scenic Loop was widened with the addition of paved shoulders and improved concrete culverts at the multiple low water crossings over Helotes Creek. Only a little more than a mile, in the section that passes through the area immediately surrounding the original Playground development, retains the width and characteristics of the original road. Confirmed by the width of the remaining concrete culvert crossing Helotes Creek within the Playground, the two-way paved roadway was limited to 20 to 21 feet in width, with native gravel shoulders allowed to vegetate naturally, preserving the rural character of the route (see Figure 36).

The original 320-acre development is divided into two sections by the Scenic Loop Road. Lots not fronting along the Scenic Loop Road are accessed by narrow, winding circuit roadways following the natural terrain through and around the surrounding hillsides on either side (see Figure 37). The land on the eastern side, identified as Unit no. 1, contains the creeks and other community amenities. The principal access from the Scenic Loop Road follows the path of the Lee Ranch Road, the original entrance road to the property. Named Park Drive in the development plan⁷⁶, this 21 foot wide roadway crosses Helotes Creek over a concrete culvert low water crossing between concrete bollards 25 feet apart. Community pool facilities are located on the right along the creek and recreational fields and clubhouse location are to the left. Approaching the residential area, the entrance road curves to the right, reduces to 18 feet wide, and forks around two sides of a triangular park containing the relics of two of the original community wells



Figure 36: The Scenic Loop Road

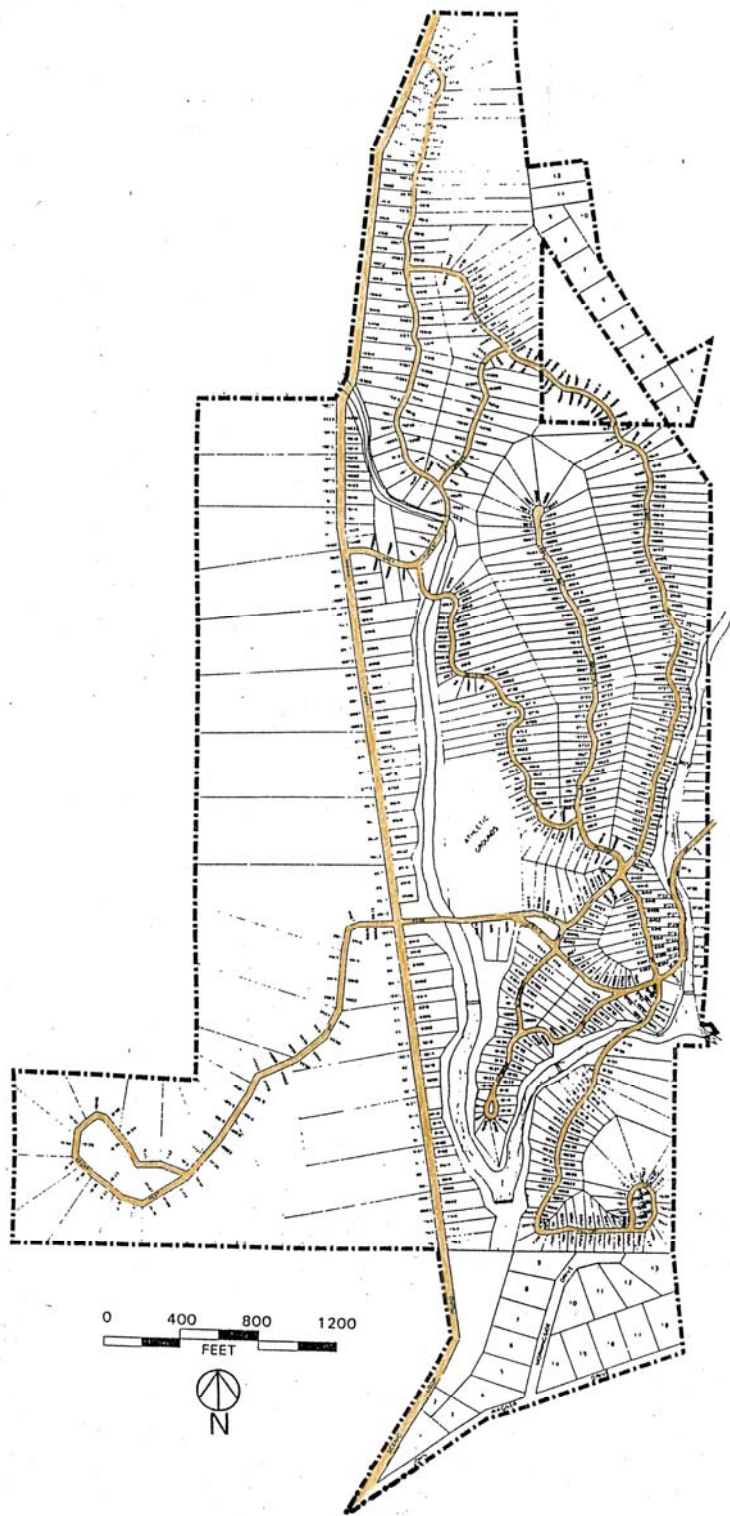


Figure 37: Playground Roads

(see Figure 38). Park Drive forks to the right, reducing to 16 foot wide as it enters the residential area. Scenic Loop Drive continues to the left at 18 feet wide, also reducing to 16 feet past the triangle intersection. The third side of the park is defined by Bluebonnet Drive, branching from the Scenic Loop Drive on the north at 18 feet wide along the park, and reducing to 14 feet after crossing Park Drive to the south. The original caretaker's house and barn located across Park Drive from the triangle are among few existing structures that predate the development.

A secondary access road named Grey Forest Drive intersects with the Scenic Loop Road about one half mile north of the primary entrance at Park Drive. Stone gate posts from the original development entrance gate, spaced 16 feet apart, mark each side of the road, though the rustic signage above was lost long ago. The traveled roadway is only 13 feet wide as it passes between the Grey Moss Inn to the south, a restaurant that dates to the first years of the development, and Requa's original sales office, now used for housing restaurant employees, to the north (see Figure 39). The roadway widens to 18 feet at the rear of the restaurant property exiting between two stone gate posts spaced 25 feet apart. Past the gate, Hillside Drive forks to the south, crossing Helotes Creek, and reducing from 15 to 16 feet in width to 13 feet wide through the residential area beyond. Grey Forest Drive forks to the north, also crossing Helotes Creek, and reduces in width from 17 feet to 15 feet at Lover's Lane. Both of these concrete culverts crossing Helotes Creek were altered substantially after being damaged by severe flooding in the early 1990's. Grey Forest Drive



Figure 38: Entering the Playground



Figure 39: Development Entrance and the Grey Moss Inn

continues to the north, varying in width from 15 to as little as 12 feet, as it winds through the Live Oak forest, turning west to again intersect the Scenic Loop Road at the north end of the development (see Figure 40).

The development roads are laid out in a manner consistent with A. J. Downing's recommendations for circuit roads on a country estate, winding through the undulating terrain, following the depressions of the surface, and curving around the eminences. The natural topography of the property varies from level to gently sloping along both sides of Scenic Loop Road and adjacent to a portion of Helotes Creek, to steeply sloping hillsides to the east extending beyond the boundaries of the development. The major circuit road, originally called Scenic Loop Drive, extends north from the triangle park near the main entrance, crosses over the intersection of Lookout Mountain Trail to the left and Hilltop Drive to the right, and follows the path of Lee Creek to the north, winding around the eastern side of Lookout Mountain, to intersect with Grey Forest Drive. Lover's Lane branches to the left and proceeds south, along the base of Lookout Mountain, to intersect with Grey Forest Drive near the crossing over Helotes Creek. The remains of the third original community well are found at the intersection of Scenic Loop Drive and Lover's Lane. Both roads average 15 to 16 feet, widening at intersections.

Lookout Mountain rises to a peak at 1290 feet, roughly in the center of Unit 1. Lookout Mountain Trail proceeds up along the ridge line from 17 feet wide at Scenic Loop Drive, reducing to 15 feet at the intersection with Hillside Drive, and to 13 feet approaching the cul-de-sac turning circle at



Figure 40: Touring the Gray Forest

the top of the hill. E. N. Requa had originally intended to locate the clubhouse on this site to take advantage of the spectacular views out over the surrounding hill country. Hillside Drive reduces in width from 17 feet at the intersection with Lookout Mountain Trail to 13 feet as it winds down the western slope of Lookout Mountain, through a series of switchbacks, and over the crossing at Helotes Creek to intersect with Grey Forest Drive, completing the loop road around the base of the hill.

Opposite the intersection of Lookout Mountain Trail with Scenic Loop Drive, Hilltop Drive at 18 feet wide follows the path of Lee Creek to the south, reducing to 16 feet at the intersection with Park Drive, and to 14 feet crossing a 16 foot wide concrete culvert over the creek. The road rises along the opposite bank, widening to 17 feet, and culminating in a loop drive 14 to 15 feet wide around a second hilltop located at the southeast corner of the development (see Figure 41). Lakeshore Drive branches off of Park Drive to the right, following Lee Creek to an intersection with Bluebonnet, completing two smaller loops to the south and east of the triangle park, and continuing to end in a cul-de-sac turning circle near the intersection of Lee and Helotes Creek. Road widths in the area between the creeks average 13 to 14 feet wide increasing to 15 to 16 feet at intersections. Approximately half of the larger lots located on the western side of the development, identified as Unit no. 2, are located along the Scenic Loop Road. The remaining lots are accessed by way of Cedar Crest, a graduated width road similar to those in Unit 1.



Figure 41: Over Creeks and Hillside

Cedar Crest starts from the Scenic Loop opposite the Park Drive entrance, and winds gently upward through the rolling terrain to a loop turnaround.

All of the development roadways were originally constructed of locally available base material in the same buff color as the native limestone and subsoil from which the surrounding hills are made. By 1980, only the Scenic Loop Road and most of the Scenic Loop Drive were paved with asphalt⁷⁷. Due to the steep grades of some of the roads, and their use for storm water runoff into the creeks, maintenance of the gravel surface proved an ongoing effort, leading to the topping of all of the development roadways with asphalt in the late 1980s. The original natural edge of the roadways, without the addition of curbs or gutters, was maintained.

Nature's Playground.

The primary expression in the imagery of the Playground as a retreat from the manmade urban existence of the city is contact with nature. The numerous live oak trees and other native vegetation within the development were preserved maintaining its wilderness character. Over thirty acres were set aside, approximately ten percent of the development area, principally along the creek beds, for bridle trails, athletic fields, tennis courts, and pocket parks within the small lot development, providing easy access to the natural resources by all property owners(see Figure 42). With nearly a mile and a half of waterfront along Helotes Creek, the development's most alluring features are the spring fed pools and ponds created behind five concrete spillway dams constructed along the creeks.

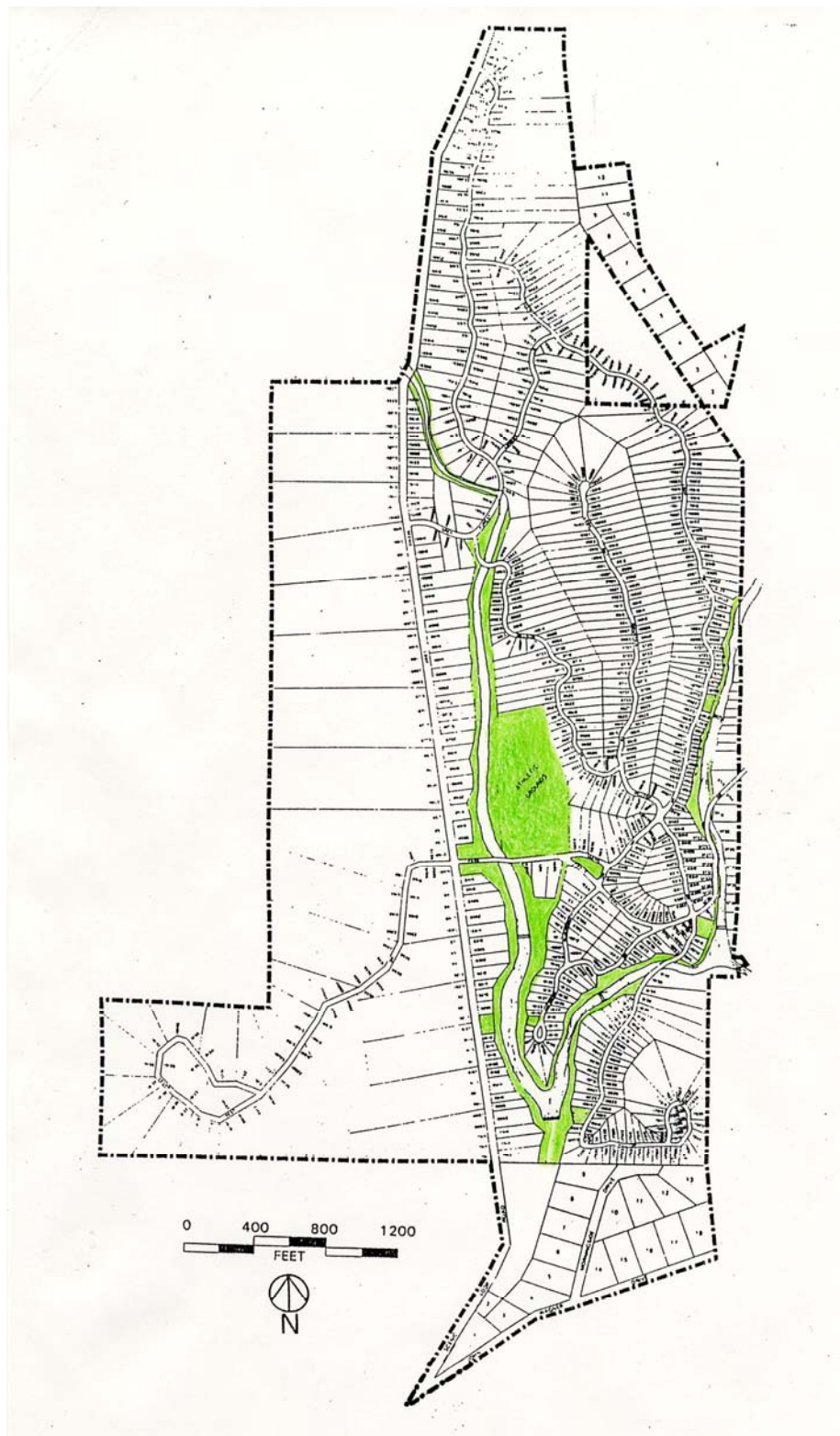


Figure 42: Natural Places

The Deep Springs Bathing Pool, on Helotes Creek off the main entrance road, continues to be maintained by the Scenic Loop Playground Club as a community pool. A 42 foot long, 7 foot high reinforced concrete spillway dam, battered from 18 inches at the top to 42 inches at the base, was constructed across the creek to create an idyllic swimming pool. With natural limestone sides and surrounds, the pool varies in depth from approximately three feet at the upper end to seven feet at the spillway. A stone retaining wall built into the creek at the shallow end defines a separate wading pool for smaller children. Several springs feed directly into the pool from the limestone banks maintaining the pool at a relatively constant temperature of around 70 degrees Fahrenheit. Under drought conditions, the springs cease to run, and without surface runoff, the pool is allowed to dry up. The original drain at the base of the dam has been replaced, allowing the pool to be emptied each spring to clean out settlement and debris that collects over the fall and winter. Original stone steps and walkways constructed to access the pool are largely intact. The stone walls and floors of the original bath houses also remain, although their deteriorated wooden roof structures were removed in the 1960s (see Figure 43).

Bridle paths continue down both sides of the creeks forming a continuous greenbelt through the development. Originally intended for hiking or horseback riding, the paths have not been routinely maintained and are overgrown and largely inaccessible. Pocket parks, or open lots within the development were provided allowing community access to various pools and ponds, and other significant features, like Rock Falls, below the Deep Springs Bathing Pool on

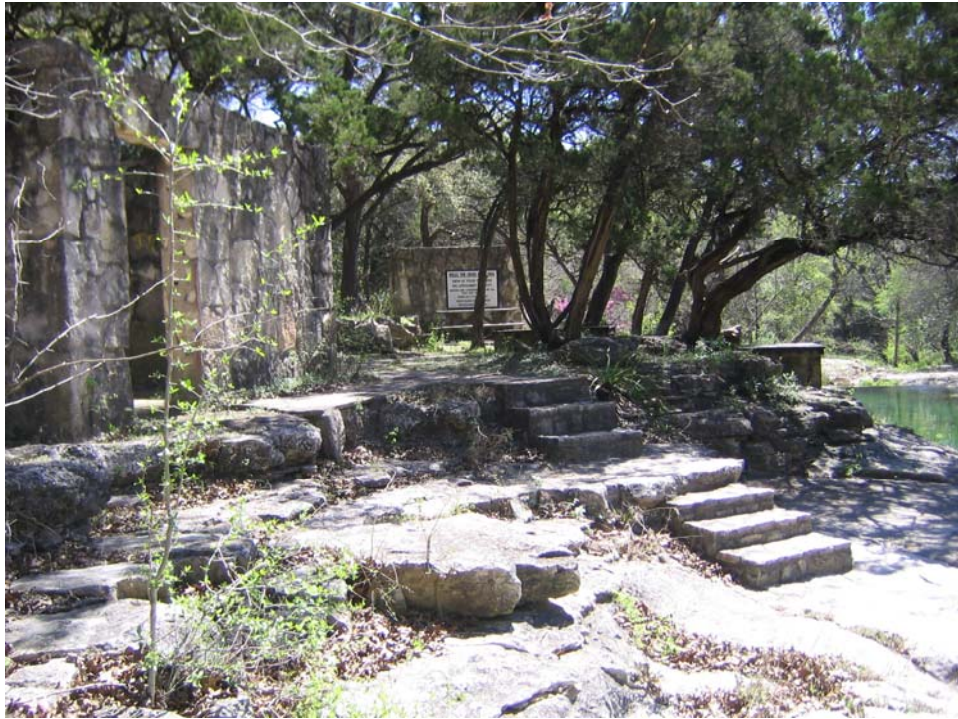


Figure 43: Deep Springs Bathing Pool and Bath Houses



Figure 44: Rock Falls and Roosevelt Dam

Helotes Creek. The largest pond was created below the falls, at the convergence of Lee and Helotes Creeks, behind the 11 foot high Roosevelt Dam (see Figure 44), named for Theodore Roosevelt, a significant supporter of wilderness recreation and preservation. The pond behind the dam provides a significant wildlife habitat and was stocked in the 1950's to allow recreational fishing⁷⁸. The 18 inch thick steel reinforced concrete spillway dam batters in a slurry finish on the exposed face, and similar to the dam at the Deep Springs Bathing Pool, is thickly covered with green algae, ferns, and other natural vegetation. Stepping stones on the top of the dam provide access across the spillway to the opposite shore.

Three other concrete spillway dams were constructed along Lee Creek to provide the residents with additional opportunities for natural recreation within the development. A second swimming pool was created behind the steeper banks of the upper creek accessed from the pocket park on Scenic Loop Drive. The 9 1/2 foot high concrete dam constructed across the creek is similar to those on Helotes Creek, varying in thickness from 18 inches at the top to 30 inches at the base. Below the dam, accessed from the pocket park on Hilltop Drive near the intersection with Park Drive, A 26 inch high concrete spillway dam, battering from 12 inches at the top to 16 inches, creates a broad wading pool suitable for small children (see Figure 45). Further downstream, on the other side of the low-water crossing at Hilltop Drive, another wading pool was created behind a 42 inch high concrete spillway, also battering from 12 to 16 inches in thickness. A dry laid native stone stairway provides access



Figure 45: Swimming and Wading Pools on Lee Creek



Figure 46: Native Stone Steps and Concrete Spillway Dams

down the steep bank from the park off Lakeshore Drive (see Figure 46).

The large field on the north side of the principal entrance between Helotes Creek and the foot of Lookout Mountain was reserved for community use as athletic fields. A tennis court and a baseball diamond were constructed as part of the original development. A fenced riding rink has also been provided on the relatively flat former pastureland. Construction of the long delayed clubhouse, now called the 'Youth Building', began in 1949⁷⁹ adjacent to the Athletic Field along Helotes Creek. Built of recycled World War II ammunition crates with volunteer labor, the building was finally completed in the early 1950s, and provides an example of the typical wood-sided frame structures built in the Playground during the years following the Second World War, as the development transitioned from a recreational resort to a year-round community. Numerous improvements have been made to the building since the 1950s, including the recent addition of a porch on a native stone base across the front of the structure and repainting of the exterior in a buff color, again completed with volunteer labor and contributions, which help blend the structure into the natural surroundings (see Figure 47).

Mission Rustic

The stone walls, pathways, patios and many of the original cottages were built from limestone rubble gathered from within the development area (see Figure 48). Much of the masonry was completed by descendants of the pioneer



Figure 47: Clubhouse and Athletic Fields



Figure 48: Rock Houses in the Loop Playground

families from the local area who laid their work in the traditional manner. Native peeled and unpeeled cedar timbers were used for porch columns and rafters, as well as accessory elements such as the original entrance sign for the development (see cover photo). This consistent use of native materials relates the various elements of the built environment to each other and to the essential aspects of the natural environment of which they are a part.

Many of the original structures share characteristics of building form common to the rustic Craftsman style. Most are sited with floor level at or near grade, often extending the interior living spaces into the natural environment with porch covered stone patios surrounded by low stone walls. Originally used as a camp structure, many of the buildings are of a diminutive scale (see Figure 49}. Walls were typically constructed of load bearing stone masonry, although frame construction, with stone veneer or wood siding, is also used, particularly for second floors and additions. Traditional plank or wood and glass doors, and wood windows, of both double hung and casement design, with single or divided lights, are typical. Roof forms are simple, usually of a low pitched gable or hip shape. Additive shed or gable roofed porches and additions are common. The majority of the original lodges were probably roofed in wood shingles, although none survive. Most have been replaced with asphalt shingles or galvanized metal. The only evidence of wood shingles is the recollection by a resident of their use on the roofs of the bath houses before they were demolished.

Similarities in form and detailing of the early structures suggests the use of standard plans, though no two



Figure 49: Native Stone Cabins

structures are identical.⁸⁰ Rustic Mission style details like stone buttress walls and exterior chimneys merge into the stone masonry in a fluid, freeform manner (see Figure 50). Shallow arched window openings and wrought iron details are also common on many structures (see Figure 51). Curved parapet walls, similar to those used at the Alamo, are employed to conceal flat roof decks over two lodges with attached garages (see Figure 52). This combination of characteristics defines a unique regional interpretation of rustic design with a vernacular Spanish Colonial influence (see Figure 53). The prevalence of this characteristic design vocabulary, within the overall collection of individual dwellings related by a common landscape and materiality, contributes to the overall experience of place in the community. Measured drawings of a typical Scenic Loop Playground Lodge are provided in Appendix A.

Stone garden walls and fences extend the buildings into the landscape, establishing a relationship between the building and its site. Low stone walls with wrought iron gates (see Figure 54) or natural wood fencing along the property lines define the street edges while maintaining a distinctive rural feel. Outdoor barbeque grills, fountains, wells, and other ancillary structures are also common (see Figure 55). These embellishments break down the barriers between interior and exterior space, furthering the intimate relationship with nature and the outdoors that symbolizes the campground character of the resort.



Figure 50: Single Story Lodges



Figure 51: Two Story Lodges



Figure 52: Attached Garage Plans



Figure 53: Rustic Details



Figure 54: Stone Walls and Wrought Iron Gates



Figure 55: Embellishments

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- ⁷⁵ Tangum, Richard R., et.al., *Community Analysis of Grey Forest*. San Antonio: The University of Texas at San Antonio, 1980, p. 23.
- ⁷⁶ City of Grey Forest, *Index, Ordinances of the City of Grey Forest, Texas*, 1971. City Ordinance No. 36 changed the name of the entrance portion of Park Drive to Scenic Loop Drive. Scenic Loop Drive has since been renamed Sherwood Drive in memory of long time resident Sherwood Nelson.
- ⁷⁷ *Community Analysis of Grey Forest*, p. 13.
- ⁷⁸ United States Department of Interior letter dated September 25, 1958 from the Scenic Loop Playground Club's archives notifying Mr. R. S. Nelson of the delivery of 337 Black Bass and 225 Red Ear Sunfish to stock the fish pond.
- ⁷⁹ *Minutes of meeting of Scenic Loop Playground Club officers*, Sunday April 15, 1951, from the Scenic Loop Playground Club archives.
- ⁸⁰ Plans for original Playground lodges may have been designed by Robert H. H. Hugman. A native of San Antonio, Mr. Hugman returned in 1927 from an apprenticeship in New Orleans to start his architectural practice in his home town. Throughout his career, he was generally referred to as a landscape architect, and the majority of his independent projects were landscape designs, most including the creation of ponds and water features. In a personal interview with the author in 1982, Wanda Ford, the widow of architect O'Neil Ford, credited the design of the Scenic Loop Playground to Robert Hugman. O'Neil Ford was the architect for the first restoration of La Villita, completed during the

Depression simultaneous with Robert Hugman's adjacent work on his most well known project, the San Antonio River Walk.

Part IV: Preserving the Playground

On July 3, 1934, five years after the opening the Scenic Loop Playground for sale to the public, E. N. Requa deeded all the common property in the Playground, including the parks, playing fields, roads, dams and pools, to a non-profit corporation, The Scenic Loop Playground Club. The Club became responsible for paying property taxes on this common property and maintaining the roadways, pools, and other facilities. As the only semblance of a governmental structure for the community, the Club also assumed responsibility for fire protection by maintaining a fire truck⁸¹ and establishing a volunteer fire department of community residents. Although purchasers within the development received rights to use the common facilities, payment of the original six dollars in annual dues was not mandated, causing difficulties in funding the Club's obligations. After the Second World War, acknowledging the fact that the once week-end picnic ground had become a year-round community of permanent homes with increased expenses, annual dues were doubled to twelve dollars, but remained voluntary and continued to be a problem to collect from all of the residents.⁸²

The benefits of incorporation as a legal entity were already under consideration by the late 1930s. Through incorporation, the community could assess and collect taxes to support maintenance and other civil services, and payment would be mandatory. The residents would have the ability to enact ordinances to regulate problems of community life, with fines for violation, rather than depending upon voluntary compliance. In the fall of 1947, the Scenic Loop

Playground Club authorized retaining legal council to advise them on the possibility of incorporating the development as a legal village⁸³. A meeting of the residents was held on June 5, 1948, with a majority of those present voting to submit a petition to the Bexar County Court for a local election to decide on incorporation. Surveyed plats of the original development were assembled and filed with the court, along with the agreed name of Scenic Loop City, and the article was placed on the ballot on September 4, 1948 for decision by the residents.⁸⁴ The initiative failed principally due to an opposition that felt that the benefits of incorporation were not as significant as the new rules and taxes that would affect their rural existence. Many of the residents lived along the paved Scenic Loop Road, didn't use the development roads or other community assets, and didn't want to be made to pay to maintain them. Others feared incorporation would open the community to the general public, eliminating the exclusive use community residents had enjoyed since its development.⁸⁵

By the early 1960s, costs for maintaining the common facilities within the development had continued to escalate, while collection of the still twelve dollars voluntary annual dues from many of the property owners remained a problem. Community facilities were acknowledged to be neglected and not being effectively utilized. Nearly half of the annual expenditures remained the value of volunteer labor contributed by the residents. Of the cash expenses funded from the dues collected, the largest outlay, amounting to forty-five percent of the total, was going toward expenses for maintaining the development roadways.⁸⁶ A new proposal for incorporation was proposed and approved

by a majority of the residents on April 14, 1962, and the Scenic Loop Playground became the City of Grey Forest, Texas.⁸⁷ The Scenic Loop Playground Club deeded to the City the land containing the roadways within the development but retained ownership of the parks, playing fields, youth building, pools, and other recreational facilities. The City assumed ongoing maintenance expenses for the roadways from its new tax base, with the Scenic Loop Playground Club continuing to be responsible for taxes and maintenance on the remaining common property, funded through voluntary dues payments.

Although incorporation relieved pressure on the Club's finances temporarily, the voluntary dues collection has continued to be inadequate to maintain the community facilities remaining under its management in their original condition. In 1988, as part of an application for a Community Development Block Grant to improve the clubhouse and other community facilities, an agreement was negotiated with the City to take ownership of the remaining property, with the Scenic Loop Playground Club retaining rights to conduct its programs on the properties rent free⁸⁸. The grants were not received and options on the property expired without further action. Adequate sources of revenue remain the major impediment to the Club being able to restore and maintain the common facilities.

Saving Place

Through incorporation the residents of Grey Forest gained their greatest tools to preserve the character of their community, the use of planning and zoning control. Growing concerns over the availability of adequate water

supplies and ground water contamination from substandard septic systems, supported conservation efforts aimed at limiting new development. On September 16, 1965, the new City Council passed Ordinance No. 11, creating a planning and zoning commission for the City of Grey Forest and prescribing their powers and duties⁸⁹. Interim zoning Ordinance No. 11a required application to the city planning and zoning commission for issuance of Building Permits, until the adoption of a comprehensive Zoning Ordinance. Ordinance No. 21 established the first rules and procedures for subdivision within the corporate limits of the City and the one-half mile extra-territorial jurisdiction surrounding it. Ordinance No. 45, passed March 17, 1971, established a single zoning district for the city with all lots therein classified as R-1, single family dwelling and provided penalties for violation. Allowable uses were restricted to single family dwellings, church, schools, public parks, community buildings, municipal buildings, including non-profit libraries or museums, police and fire stations, accessory buildings and uses incident to above uses not involving conduct of a business, farms, nurseries, and greenhouses without sales offices. The Ordinance also included restrictions on the use and allowable dimensions of signage.

Ordinance No. 45 also established dimensional requirements for new construction within the city, including a maximum height limit of two and one-half standard stories. Building setbacks from streets were required to be a minimum of twenty five feet with a required setback from sidelines of ten percent of lot width, not less than five feet, except for side setbacks for corner lots were not to be less than

fifteen feet. Rear setbacks were specified at twenty five percent of the depth of the lot, not less than twenty five feet. A minimum lot area of 20,000 square feet with an average width of one hundred feet was required except for preexisting lots not in common ownership with adjacent parcels. Non-conforming use of property without structures was limited to two years. Non-conforming uses of existing structures were allowed to continue unless such use was abandoned or suspended for one year, though expansion or alteration was prohibited.

On January 8, 1980, Ordinance No. 19 adopted all regulations governing septic systems as approved by Bexar County. To bring local zoning ordinances in compliance with Bexar County septic regulations, Amending Ordinance No. 29 on March 13, 1980, increased the minimum lot area required to build a new dwelling to 32,670 square feet (3/4 acre), with an average width of not less than one hundred feet. A new subdivision ordinance, governing lot creation within the corporate limits and extra territorial jurisdiction, was approved on the same date. Ordinance No. 28 replaced previous subdivision ordinances, setting a minimum size for new lots of 5 acres with 300 feet of street frontage, adopting Bexar County standards for streets, required utility easements, and set a maximum block length of 1,800 feet. The Board of Adjustment was allowed to recommend a variance for hardship only when 'necessary to, or desirable in, the public interest'. By eliminating the 'grandfather' provision for preexisting undersized lots not in common ownership with adjacent parcels, the number of possible new houses in Unit 1 was substantially reduced. As many of the original lots were between 1/4 and 1/3 acre, three

continuous lots were often required to build a new dwelling. The large minimum lot size required under ordinance 28 effectively eliminated subdivision within Units 1 & 2, and limited the economics of new development in the extra territorial jurisdiction.

Ordinance No. 28A on November 28, 1995 amended the subdivision ordinance, reducing the minimum lot size to 3/4 acre with 100 foot frontage along a public street, consistent with requirements for a buildable lot under Ordinance No. 45. Ordinance 28A was amended on April 25, 2000, increasing the filing fee for new subdivisions from \$250.00 plus \$25.00 per lot to \$250.00 plus \$250.00 per lot, and requiring preparation of an impact study for subdivisions of more than five lots. Ordinance No. 45 was amended on October 22, 2002 as Ordinance No. 45A creating two zoning districts, Unit 1 and all annexed properties east of the Scenic Loop Road became District A, and Unit 2 and all properties annexed to the west of Scenic Loop Road became District B. Consistent with Bexar County septic system regulations for houses on private wells, new lots in District B were required to be a minimum of 1 1/2 acres, unless the lot was 'grandfathered', being a lot or combination of lots at least 3/4 acre in size with 100 foot of street frontage. New lots in District A, where a municipal well and central water system had been installed in the early 1990's, a minimum lot size of 3/4 acre with 100 foot of street frontage was allowed. Combinations of lots, adding up to the minimum lot size and frontage, were 'grandfathered', allowing construction of a new dwelling. New construction on undersize lots was prohibited, unless for the purpose of replacing a building 'destroyed by fire

or similar disaster'. Existing dwellings on undersized lots were also 'grandfathered', but require a variance from the Board of Adjustment before a Building Permit is issued for 'any addition, alteration, rebuilding of an existing dwelling, or enlarging or building of any new accessory building'. The subdivision ordinance was correspondingly amended on June 24, 2003 as Ordinance 28B requiring a minimum lot size of 3/4 acre (32,670 sq. ft.) for new lots in District A and 1 1/2 acres (65,340 sq. ft.) in District B, with a minimum of 100 feet of frontage on a public street. New lots in the extra territorial jurisdiction were also required to be a minimum of 1 1/2 acres.

Zoning requirements under Ordinance No. 45A are the same for both districts with the exception of required lot size. Use regulations were modified adding guest houses, not for full time occupancy or rent, to the list of permitted accessory structures, in addition to the 'bonafide servant's quarters' allowed previously. Total building coverage was limited to one third of the lot area. Dimensional requirements were also changed, limiting building height to 2 1/2 stories or 35 feet, increasing the sideline setback to 15 feet, and reducing rear setback to 20 feet. A new section on 'Aesthetics' was added, requiring all new construction to be 'of natural material (wood and/or masonry) or be natural looking material similar to wood or masonry, the design of which shall blend with the same rustic/rural nature of the City.' The Ordinance prohibits the use of Cedar, or other type of wood shingles, and requires a variance from the Board of Adjustment for 'a design or material contrary to the rustic/rural nature of the City'. The ordinance was amended July 13, 2004 as

Ordinance No. 45B, reducing the side and rear setback requirements for 'accessory, portable, or other structures' to 10 feet, not including servant or guest houses, and allowing the construction of 'carport/storage buildings with no slab consisting of posts and roof/wall covering with no electricity or plumbing' on undersized lots without variance.

The effect of these ordinances has been to successfully limit the rate of new construction within the City to an average of only about one house per year over the last 13 years⁹⁰. Particularly within the historic limits of Unit No. 1, the majority of combinations of lots meeting the dimensional requirements have been developed and few of those are large enough to subdivide under the regulations. Many of the existing houses in Unit No. 1 are on undersized lots that require a variance from the Board of Adjustment for new work, providing some protection from inappropriate additions and demolition of existing structures for replacement by new construction. Increasing the minimum lot size in Unit 2 and the extra territorial jurisdiction to 1 1/2 acres, reduced by one-half the potential number of new lots that can be created within these areas. The cost of extending city services to new development within the extra territorial jurisdiction, relative to the small number of taxpayers added, limits the City's interests in further annexation beyond the current city limits. This area serves as an important buffer zone from the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the City of San Antonio that encircles it. Without annexation, the City of Grey Forest is limited jurisdiction to control new development, which is principally governed by county regulations that are not

compatible with historic character of the development found within the present city limits.

Threats to Preservation

The unique characteristics of place that define the Scenic Loop Playground are increasingly being threatened by new suburban development around the City of San Antonio. The community presently enjoys a high degree of integrity, with few intrusions that do not contribute to its historic character. Its location outside of Loop 1604 and off the major highways, accessed by way of the Scenic Loop Road, has until recently preserved its rural character from the continued encroachment of suburban. The threat to its continued survival was brought to the attention of the residents in the fall of 2004 by Wal-Mart and its intention to build a new super center in Helotes at the intersection of Highway 16 (Bandera Road) and the Scenic Loop Road, two miles from the southern edge of the Playground development. Community concerns and the efforts of the Helotes Heritage Association in informing the public of the potential negative consequences to the historical character of the area, led to the project being denied needed zoning considerations by the Helotes City Council. The presence of Wal-Mart, or another major commercial development at this critical intersection, will encourage new commercial and residential developments along the Scenic Loop Road approaching the Playground, increasing traffic demands and altering the historic character of the community (see Figure 56). As the Scenic Loop Road passes through the center of the development, and is an important part of its historic



Figure 56: Development Pressure on the Scenic Loop

character, such alterations would severely impact the continued image of the Playground as a rural retreat.

Major thoroughfare planning by the San Antonio Planning Commission has recently proposed a planned extension of Camp Bullis Road from Babcock Road to Highway 16, crossing the Scenic Loop Road between Grey Forest and Helotes, near the southern boundary of Grey Forest's extra territorial jurisdiction. After input from the city governments of Helotes and Grey Forest, an alternative thoroughfare has been proposed, extending Babcock Road across the Scenic Loop to Highway 16 around the north side of Grey Forest (see Figure 57). Babcock Road and the remainder of Scenic Loop Road to the north would be improved as a part of the planned thoroughfare system for the area. This alternative route is better than the extension of Camp Bullis Road in preserving the existing character of Grey Forest and the Scenic Loop Road south of Babcock, but would still effectively reduce what remains of the Scenic Loop by half, and surround the rest, including the City of Grey Forest, while providing access to support substantial new development to the north.

The City of Grey Forest is responsible for maintaining the roadways within its boundaries, including the Scenic Loop Road. The local government has managed to maintain the original character of the Scenic Loop Road through Grey Forest in the 1980s by refusing to support county efforts toward increasing traffic flow on Scenic Loop Road and maintaining a 35 mile per hour speed limit within city limits. In the spring of 2006, Bexar County agreed to replace eroded gravel shoulders along the roadway, at cost to the City, with two foot wide asphalt shoulders, effectively increasing the road width by four feet through

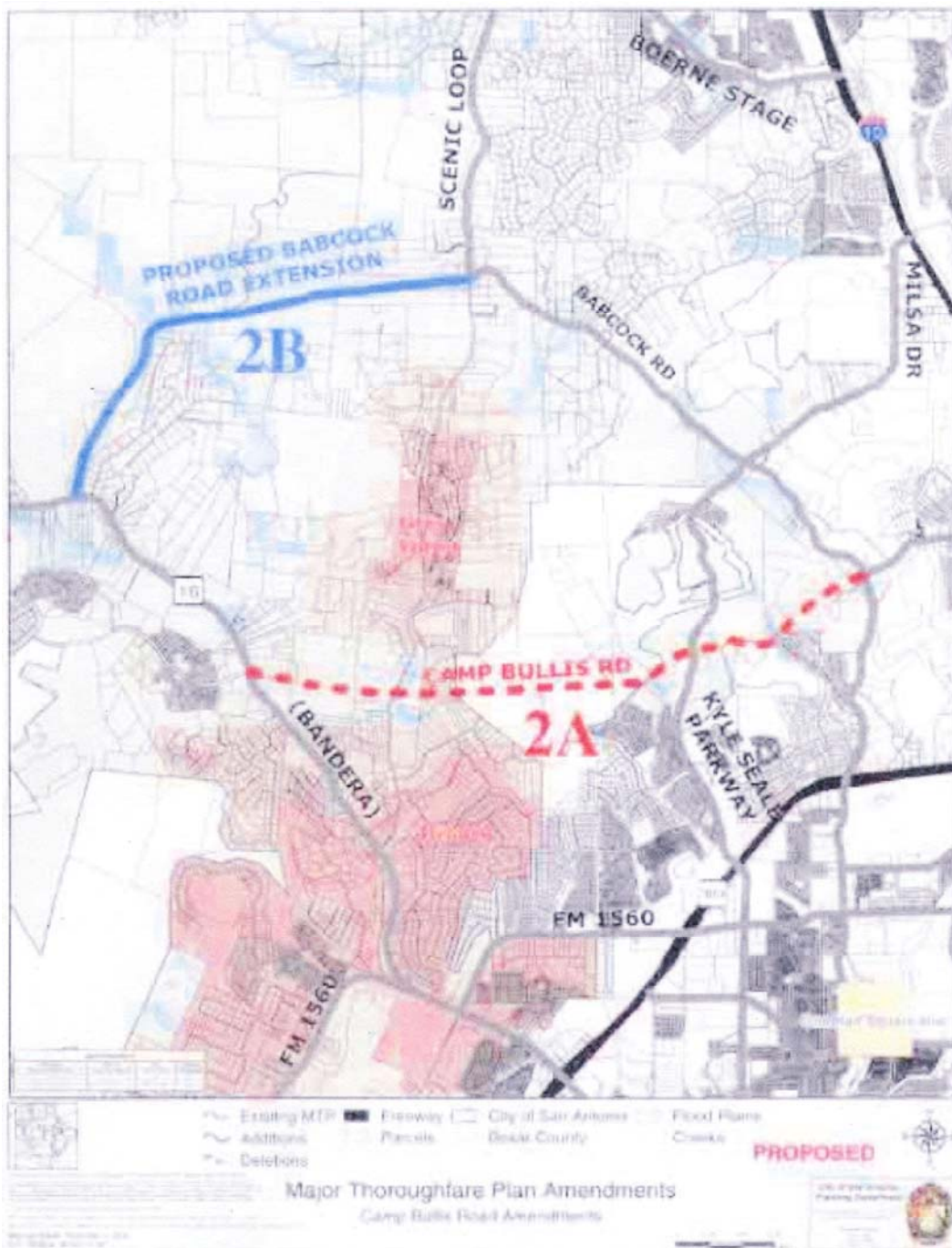


Figure 57: Roadway Improvements Encourage New Development

the center of the city. Although the Grey Forest City Council generally felt this would be desirable from a public safety standpoint, and possibly would allow the use of the improved shoulders as a bike lane, the Council decided to maintain the historic width of the pavement and have the County rebuild the original gravel shoulders instead, at a substantially reduced expense.

The Scenic Loop Playground Club continues to manage the creeks, parks, and other open space within the city for the exclusive use of their members, although all residents of the city are eligible for membership. Even though annual dues have been raised to sixty dollars per household, funding remains inadequate to maintain the property for the purposes it was intended. Most trails are largely overgrown and nearly impassable. Intrusion into the relatively unused park areas by adjacent private property owners is apparent in several areas. The majority of maintenance work done on property managed by the Scenic Loop Playground Club continues to be completed by volunteer labor, and has principally focused on the Deep Springs Bathing Pool. Annual removal of silt and rock washed down the creek and trapped behind the dam, has limited silt build up in the larger fishing pond behind the Roosevelt Dam. Spillway dams along Lee Creek serve a similar function, although the swimming and wading pools have not been maintained. When the development roads were of native gravel, the material removed from behind the spillway dam was used in topping and grading the roads. Since the city streets have been paved, the removed debris has been disposed of off-site. In spring of 2006, the large amount of collected material was disposed of by dumping over the dam (see Figure 58), rather than by



Figure 58: Maintaining the Wilderness

removal. This procedure, although more economical on a short-term basis, will result in increased silt build up behind the Roosevelt Dam, where its eventual removal will be much more difficult and expensive.

Improvements dating from the original development are showing signs of age and many are in need of repair. Spillway dams should be inspected on a regular basis. Damaged areas, including exposed reinforcing steel, should be repaired. Loose paving stones and steps around the Deep Springs Bathing Pool need to be repaired to eliminate potentially hazardous conditions. The remaining walls of the original bath houses should be preserved, being the most significant of the few public structures built as a part of the Playground development. The buildings need be secured and protected. Security concerns led to a proposal in the summer of 2006 from the Parks Committee to demolish the walls down to bench height and install picnic tables. After discussions among the membership, this proposal was abandoned, but the lack of funding necessary to maintain the aging original improvements by the Club remains a major concern.

Zoning and subdivision ordinances adopted by the City have been successful to date in minimizing new construction in and around the boundaries of the original Playground. The subdivision ordinance extends a limited measure of control over development in the extra territorial jurisdiction surrounding the city by regulating lot size and roadway requirement. For developments of over five lots, impact studies must be filed, giving the City Council the right to approve or deny an application based upon its impact to the health, safety, or welfare of the City of Grey

Forest. The requirement for filing an impact study is extended to proposed developments outside the City and its extra territorial jurisdiction as well that obtain their access through the City. Bexar County regulations for required roadways in new subdivisions are useful in restricting potential development, but in most cases are not compatible with the existing roadways that characterize the Playground. The only new development approved in the extra territorial jurisdiction under the regulations has been a small subdivision of large lots accessed by way of Requa Road, outside of the original Playground boundaries. Based upon traffic impact through the City, the number of lots was reduced, with the developer being required to provide a 16 foot wide paved access road, with gravel shoulders, to match Requa. The developer was allowed to construct a gated entry for the development, with a Y-shaped paved access around a central planter, and a 57 foot wide concrete apron along Requa that is over-scaled for the street and out of character with other streets in the Playground (see Figure 59).

Most potential new construction within the City's influence will occur in its extra territorial jurisdiction, where limited building regulations do not allow a means of assuring the new development will be compatible with the character of the area. Even within the incorporated limits of the city, the aesthetics clause as written is too broad, to be effective at its stated goal of maintaining compatibility with the rural/rustic nature of the City. Although the rate of new construction within the City has been low, that rate appears to be accelerating. Beyond approval required by the Board of Adjustment for alterations



Figure 59: Incompatible Surrounding Development

to existing structures on undersized lots, there are no controls over demolition of historic structures and reconstruction of new buildings on conforming lots. Many of the infill dwellings constructed to date have attempted to conform to the character of the area by presenting a single story eave across the front and being constructed, at least on the street side, with stone veneer. Most have retained the natural vegetation providing a considerable degree of screening. New construction tends to be boxier and of a larger scale than the original structures. Attempts to maximize views result in vertical structures, disconnected from the ground and the screening vegetation; standing out from their surroundings, rather than becoming part of them (see Figure 60).

Saving the Scenic Loop

With future growth and development encroaching from both directions, strategies need to be undertaken to protect remaining resources. Pursuit of National Register listing for available resources along the road would require future projects involving Federal funds or approval under Section 4f of the United States Department of Transportation Act to avoid impacting such resources unless there is no feasible or reasonable alternative. The development plan for the Scenic Loop Playground is one of the strongest candidates along the route to qualify for listing in the National Register. As the Playground is located on both sides of the Scenic Loop Road, substantial alteration of the roadway in the section between Helotes and the Bandera Road would not be possible without detrimental effect on the historic character of the community. In May 2005, the Grey Forest



Figure 60: New Infill Structures

City Council appointed the Grey Forest Area Historical Preservation Committee to pursue listing the Scenic Loop Playground as an historic district in the National Register and researching what other means of preservation were available that might extend protection to the Scenic Loop Road. The committee has completed a survey of the historic resources of the original Playground and has found that approximately seventy-five percent of the dwellings in the historic bounds of the original development could be considered as contributing structures to a National Register District. The nomination application is in progress, and a public hearing for community input is expected early next year.

Protection of the rural surroundings that provide the setting for the Playground is beyond the ability of residents of Grey Forest to control on their own. The continuing suburban sprawl extending ever outward from the City of San Antonio is a regional issue and will require pursuing partnership agreements with Helotes and the City of San Antonio to have any significant impact on preserving the rural character of the area. The City of San Antonio has already recognized the natural value of this region in their preservation of Friedrich Wilderness Park along Interstate 10 and the recent acquisition of Rancho Diana, the original ranch estate of Frank Huntress near the southeast boundary of Grey Forest at the end of Manchaca Road, as one of the City of San Antonio's new Natural Areas. Continued intensive development in this environmentally sensitive area, much of which serves as an aquifer recharge zone, is not in the best interest of the City of San Antonio, still dependant solely upon wells to supply its growing

population's need for water. Designating a greenbelt of open space and low density development around the outside of Loop 1604 would help protect this valuable community resource and provide a clear division between city and country. The creation of greenbelts around other cities in the United States has been shown to encourage denser development inside the greenbelt and to reduce suburban sprawl outside.

Other sources of state and federal funding should be investigated to support the regional aspects of conservation efforts. The Scenic Loop Road could be incorporated as part of a Hill Country Heritage Trail, which may be eligible for designation as a National Heritage Area, a public-private partnership under the administration of the National Park Service, to utilize existing historic resources as the centerpiece of a public recreational area. National Heritage Areas were originally organized along historic transportation corridors, but have been expanded to include entire regions related to a physical or thematic corridor. The Park Service provides start up funding to organize local interests around the historical resources along the corridor. Additional funding may be available from the Federal Transportation Agency or state and county sources to allow the creation of a separate hiking/biking trail, from the 'Old Town' of Helotes at Highway 16 to Leon Springs at Interstate 10, serving an already active biking community. Additional open space along the corridor should be acquired by direct acquisition of park land and the purchase of preservation easements to limit the development of the large private ranch tracts that contribute to the rural character of the area. Subdivision ordinances within the

environmentally sensitive region should be amended to limit density, providing development benefits to cluster housing on smaller lots adjacent to existing city services along Highway 1604, and preserving open space along the Scenic Loop Corridor.

Preserving the Playground

The City of Grey Forest can create its own greenbelt buffer around the city by changing its subdivision ordinance to require a minimum lot size of ten acres in the extra territorial jurisdiction, based upon wellhead protection for the City's water supply and the preservation of wildlife habitat⁹¹. Incentives could be provided to cluster development on 3/4 acre lots adjacent to existing development, easily served by town water and utilities, and preserve the open space buffer beyond. Local road construction guidelines should be adopted to extend the existing graduated width roadway layout into any new development. Unit No. 2 of the original Playground development was divided into 5 to 6 acre tracks to provide for the raising of livestock, retaining the characteristics of the pastoral rural environment as part of the Playground experience. To preserve this historic character and limit incompatible new development along Scenic Loop Road, the minimum lot size in District B, encompassing the historic boundaries of Unit No. 2, should be returned to 5 acres. Preexisting 'grandfathered' lots should be required to be a minimum of 1 1/2 acres to build a new dwelling, in compliance with Bexar County septic system regulations. A procedure should be provided for variance to be recommended by the Board of Adjustment upon a determination of hardship.

These amendments to the present subdivision ordinance would further reduce the number of new structures that could be built within the City's jurisdiction and substantially contribute to maintaining the existing character of the City and preserving the historical integrity of the district.

The City of Grey Forest should assume responsibility for restoring and maintaining the creeks and water control structures within its boundaries. Although privately owned and managed by The Scenic Loop Playground Club, these facilities, in conjunction with the development roadways, are the only means of storm water management with the City. The Club could grant an easement for storm water management across their property, assigning the cost of restoring and maintaining the creeks and watersheds to the City. This could include clearing the creeks and various pools and ponds of settlement and debris, inspecting and maintaining the spillway dams and water control structures, and clearing and restoring the paths around the creeks, all work required to improve the efficiency of storm water management, and to reduce the chance of future flooding in the City. As the easement would be for storm water management only, public access would not be required, and members of the Club would retain the exclusive recreational use of the property. By moving the cost of public storm water management to the tax base, The Scenic Loop Playground Club would be better able to maintain its other structures and facilities with its volunteer labor and membership dues, including the preservation and restoration of the original bath houses. Restoration drawings for the Deep Springs Bathing Pool Bath Houses, prepared by the author for use by the Club toward this goal, are included in Appendix B.

The City should also amend its zoning Ordinance No. 45B to extend the limits on building coverage to include all impervious cover, including driveways, patios, and walkways, to limit storm water runoff from private property into the public drainage system. Total building coverage could be reduced to twenty-five percent of lot area, with a total impervious cover not to exceed thirty-five percent. For a minimum lot size of 3/4 acre, this would still allow a building footprint of over 8,000 square feet. To limit runoff from clearing of the natural vegetation on private property, a new requirement to retain the natural vegetation on a minimum of fifty percent of the lot area, should be applied to all new development. As the natural vegetation is an essential aspect in the character of the Playground, this provision would also serve an important historic preservation goal. Due to the historic significance of the large trees that comprise the 'Gray Forest', amendments to the tree ordinance should also be considered to require a permit before removing any tree over a specific dimension. A limit of approximately 18 inches in diameter one foot above grade is a reasonable size to allow some control in protecting the more significant trees within the City, without impeding the ability of an owner to use their property as they intend. Yard beautification contests, encouraging appropriate landscaping and embellishments in context with the nature of the Playground, and civic pride in their uniqueness, should be reinstated, either by the City or the Scenic Loop Playground Club.

Building height limits in the zoning ordinance need to be clarified by deleting the reference to 2 1/2 stories and limiting structures to a maximum height of 35 feet.

Determination of building height should be referenced to existing grades to prevent alteration of the existing terrain to permit a taller structure. The clause on aesthetics is too vague in its requirements and broad in its interpretation to serve the purpose for which it intends. The prohibition on wood shingles, the probable original roof for most of the Playground, should be eliminated. Fire concerns in a woodland community with limited fire protection is a major concern, but may be addressed by requiring the use of shingles that have been pressure treated with a fire retardant, without discouraging the use of a historically appropriate material. For a community with a well established historical context like Grey Forest, the most effective way to assuring compatibility of new construction in materials and design is by replacing this section with a separate historic district ordinance. As an general law city under Texas statutory law, Grey Forest is allowed to create special zoning districts for historic preservation that act as an overlay zone, without affecting existing land use regulations defined under the present zoning requirements. The overlay zone may be adopted as either an individual landmark or district, but must be part of a comprehensive plan⁹².

The landmark district allows designating individual structures within the City as contributing to the historic character of the community. Landmark structures may be required to obtain a certificate of appropriateness from a local historic preservation commission before allowing demolition or alteration of a designated structure. Most landmark ordinances require approval by the owner to become a designated structure. Incentives, typically in the form

of a percent reduction in property taxes, are often used to encourage participation.

The creation of a historic district allows extending preservation of individual historic structures to the entire community by assuring the compatibility of adjacent new construction. Based upon the survey of historic resources in the community, design guidelines may be established to direct new construction within the district. The guidelines may include approved standards for color, materiality, and design, similar to the existing aesthetics clause, with a local historic preservation commission to interpret and recommend variances to the guidelines in case of hardship. Historic commissions are generally appointed by the mayor or city council from a list of applicants with knowledge of local architectural history. If an owner is not satisfied with a decision of the commission, an appeal may be made to the City Council.

The Texas Historical Commission has provided a model ordinance to guide local municipalities in writing and adopting historic ordinances appropriate to their community's needs. The model ordinance includes standard procedures for creating a local historic preservation commission, for designating landmark structures and districts, and for obtaining a certificate of appropriates for a proposed project within the City. A draft version of this model ordinance for the City of Grey Forest is included as Appendix C. A commission of interested residents should be appointed by the Mayor and approved by the City Council to review the draft ordinance, and adjust the specifics as necessary to address local concerns, before proceeding with its adoption and implementation.

The unique characteristics that define the Scenic Loop Playground, based in 19th century romanticism, are inherently incompatible with the economic rationalism of modern development that threatens its historic character. Its remote location outside of San Antonio is no longer adequate to preserve its unique environment without regional and local actions to regulate new development. The residents of the Scenic Loop Playground have always been proactive in creating the institutions necessary to preserve the character of their community. Through incorporation as a city, the residents have provided many of the tools necessary to maintain these values in the face of increasing development pressure. New regulations that direct and support development in a historically appropriate manner must be adopted if the community's unique sense of place is to be preserved for the future.

⁸¹ Receipt from Scenic Loop Playground Club archives.

⁸² Perron, Marius, letter to the Club membership dated April 23, 1948, from the Scenic Loop Playground Club archives.

⁸³ *Minutes of Board Meeting of the Scenic Loop Playground Club, Inc.*, dated Sunday, August 10, 1947, from the Scenic Loop Playground Club archives.

⁸⁴ 'History of Incorporation', *The Scenic Looper*, pub. by Marius Perron, Vol. No. 1, August 27, 1948.

⁸⁵ *Minutes of Scenic Loop Playground Club Meeting*, Sunday May 1, 1949, from the Scenic Loop Playground Club archives.

⁸⁶ 'What does it take to operate the Scenic Loop Playground Club', *Scenic Loop Scoop*, Vol. 2, No. 1, April 1962.

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- ⁸⁷ 'Election of Town Officials', *Scenic Loop Scoop*, Vol. 2. No. 2, June 1962.
- ⁸⁸ Agreement between Scenic Loop Playground Club and City of Grey Forest, expiration date September 30, 1989, from the Scenic Loop Playground Club archives.
- ⁸⁹ City of Grey Forest, *Index, Ordinances of the City of Grey Forest, Texas*, 1971.
- ⁹⁰ Personal interview with City Secretary, Nancy Butler, November 17, 2006.
- ⁹¹ The City of Grey Forest was designated a Wildlife Preserve on June 9, 1978.
- ⁹² Texas Historical Commission, *Local Government Assistance Series Number 1, Guidelines for Drafting Historic Preservation Ordinances and Model Ordinance*, p. 308-309.

Appendix A: A Typical Playground Lodge

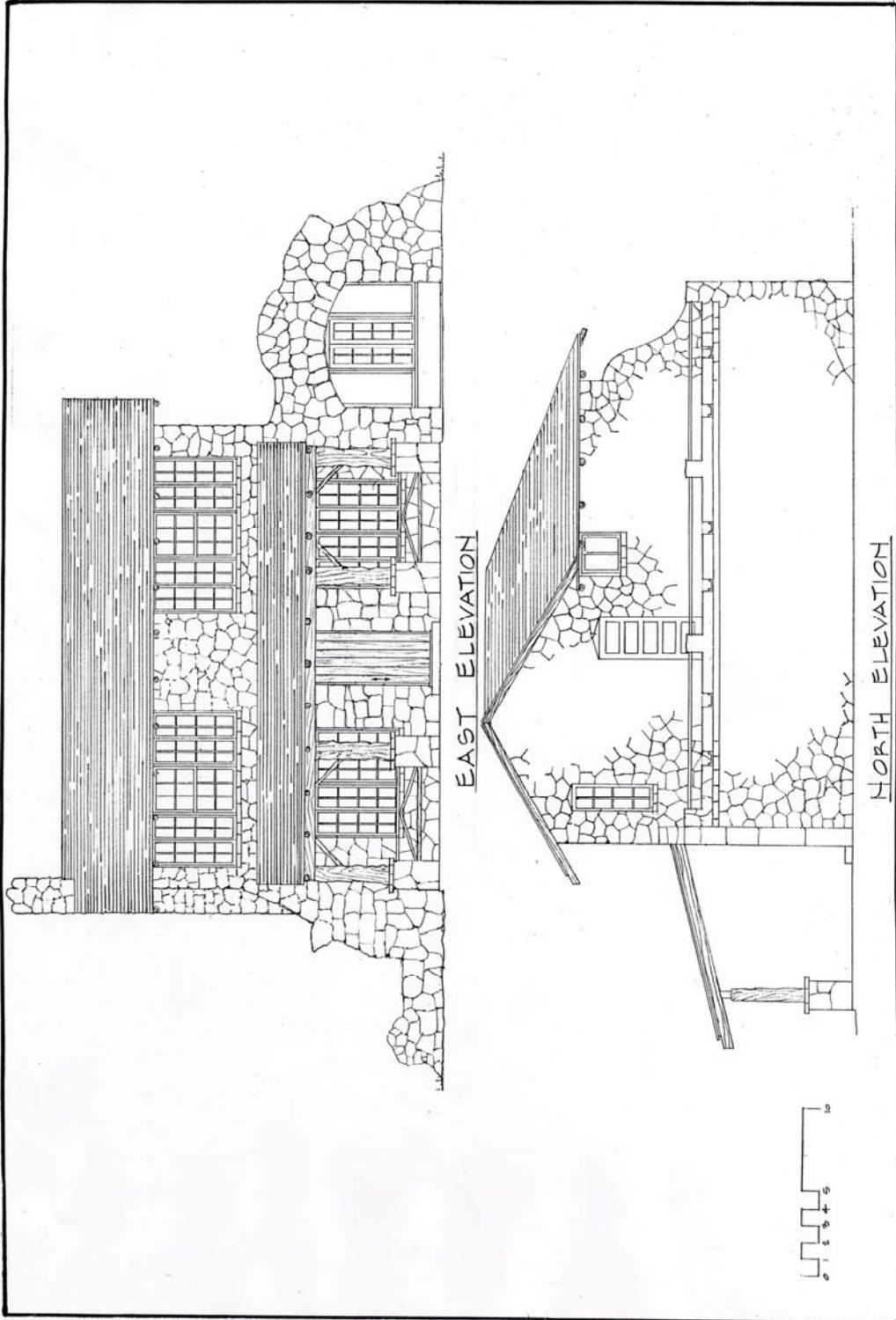
'Rust Haven' is an original Scenic Loop Playground Lodge constructed in the first years of the development. The house was built for a Mr. & Mrs. Wilks and was purchased from Mrs. Wilks by the current owner, Cleta Boehly and her husband. The house has had few alterations and retains a great degree of integrity. In the spring of 2005, the author was granted permission to measure the lodge as an example of typical lodge floor plans and rustic details. Photographs of the house are included at the bottom of Figure 52 and Figure 53. The gate posts and wall at the street are shown at the bottom of Figure 54.

The lodge was constructed of native stone, with a raised tooled joint found throughout the development. The first floor walls are solid masonry with a masonry veneer over frame construction used on the second floor. The exterior stone masonry fireplace is terminated with an irregular cap in an indeterminate manner. The masonry walls extend into the landscape with curving buttresses and planter walls. Rustic mission style parapets around the concrete roof deck over the original garage provide a similar character. The porch covered patio is constructed of peeled native cedar columns on masonry piers with unpeeled cedar rafters supporting an exposed wood roof deck. The main roof of the house is of conventional wood framing with unpeeled exposed rafter tails lap-spliced to the rafters of the house at the outside wall. Original ornamental wrought iron grills, gates, and craftsman style light fixtures remain and are in good condition.

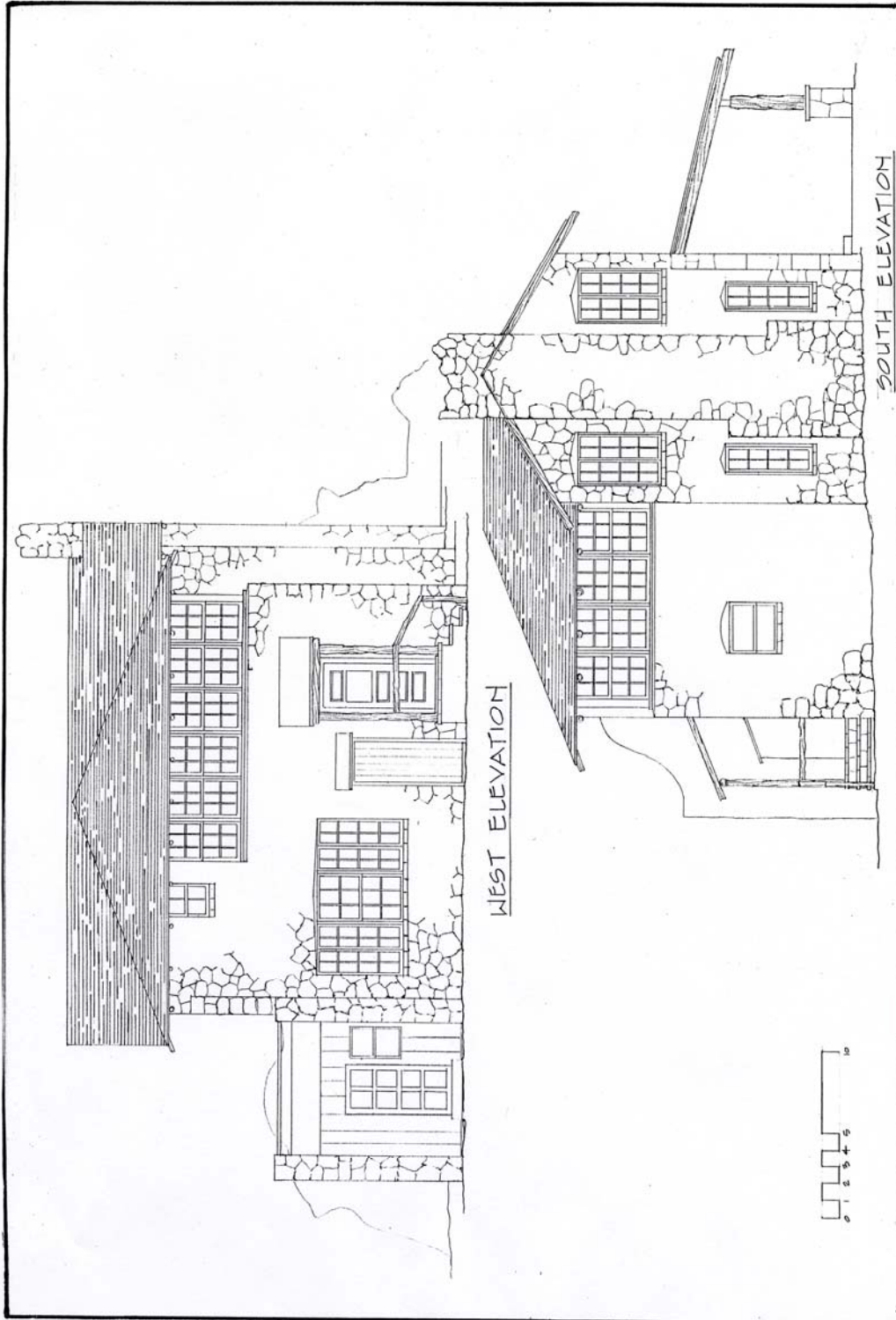
The lodge has a characteristic bungalow plan, entering directly into the main living space, with a rustic stone fireplace on one end, and a winder stair to the second floor on the other. Interior walls on the first floor are native stone masonry. Natural wood beams and decking are exposed as the finished ceiling in the living room. The living room is open to a separate dining space through a wide arch. The cabinetry in the adjacent kitchen has been updated by the current owners, and the former garage was converted to create a bedroom and bath on the first floor. The second floor was originally divided into two bedrooms, sharing the small bath through a short hallway. The sunroom, used as a study by the current owners, may have been an open sleeping porch that was later enclosed with windows. The current owner removed the dividing partitions and uses the entire second floor as a master suite. The outdoor roof deck over the garage is accessed from a door off the staircase. A separate native stone structure for staff housing constructed behind the main house also remains.

DEHNTLEY & CHURCHILL ARCHITECTS
3707 MERRIDITH ST. AUSTIN, TX 78703

MEASURED DRAWINGS FOR RUST HAVEN
SCENIC LOOP PLAYGROUND, GREY FOREST

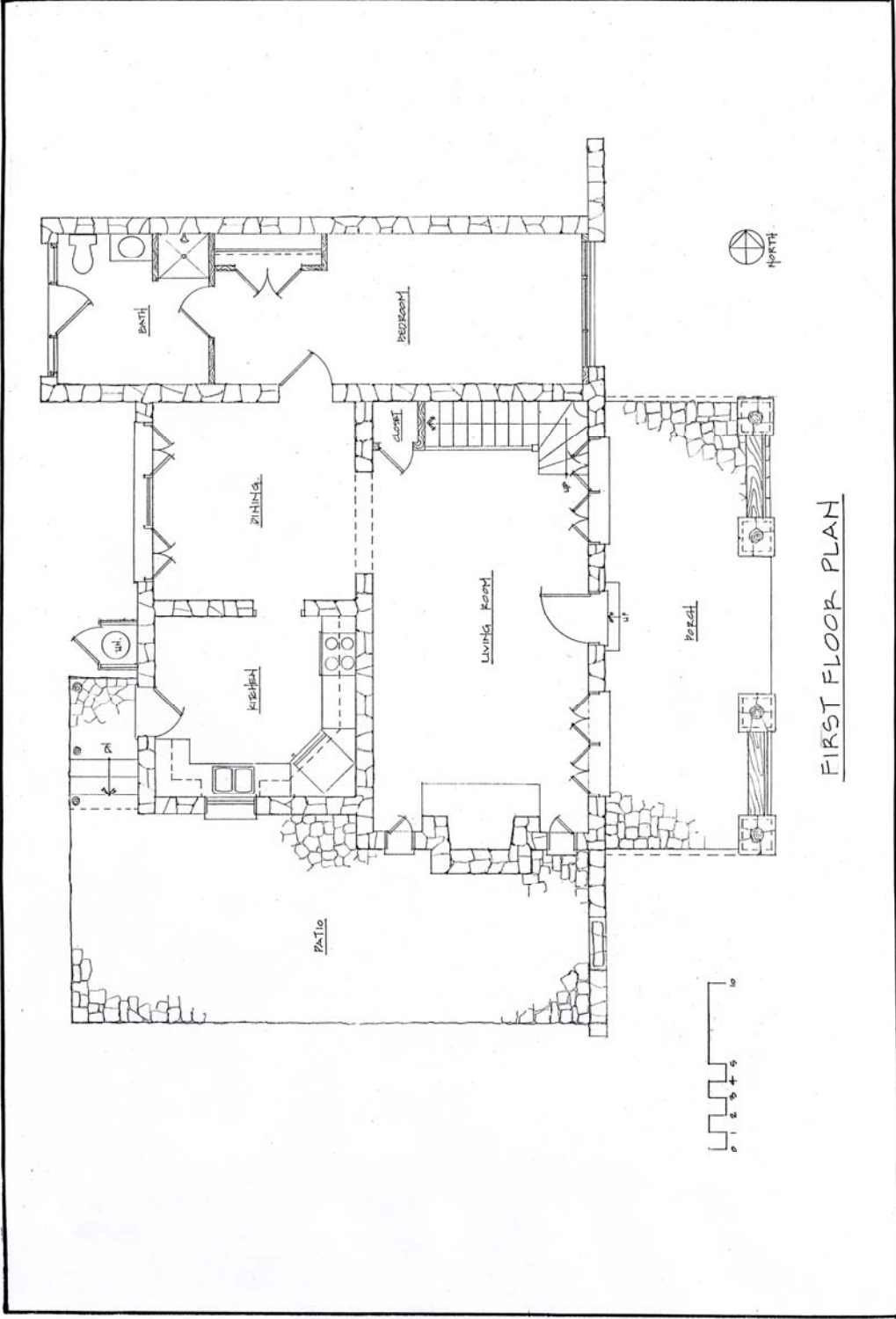


MEASURED DRAWINGS FOR RUST HAVEN
SCENIC LOOP PLAYGROUND, GREY FOREST
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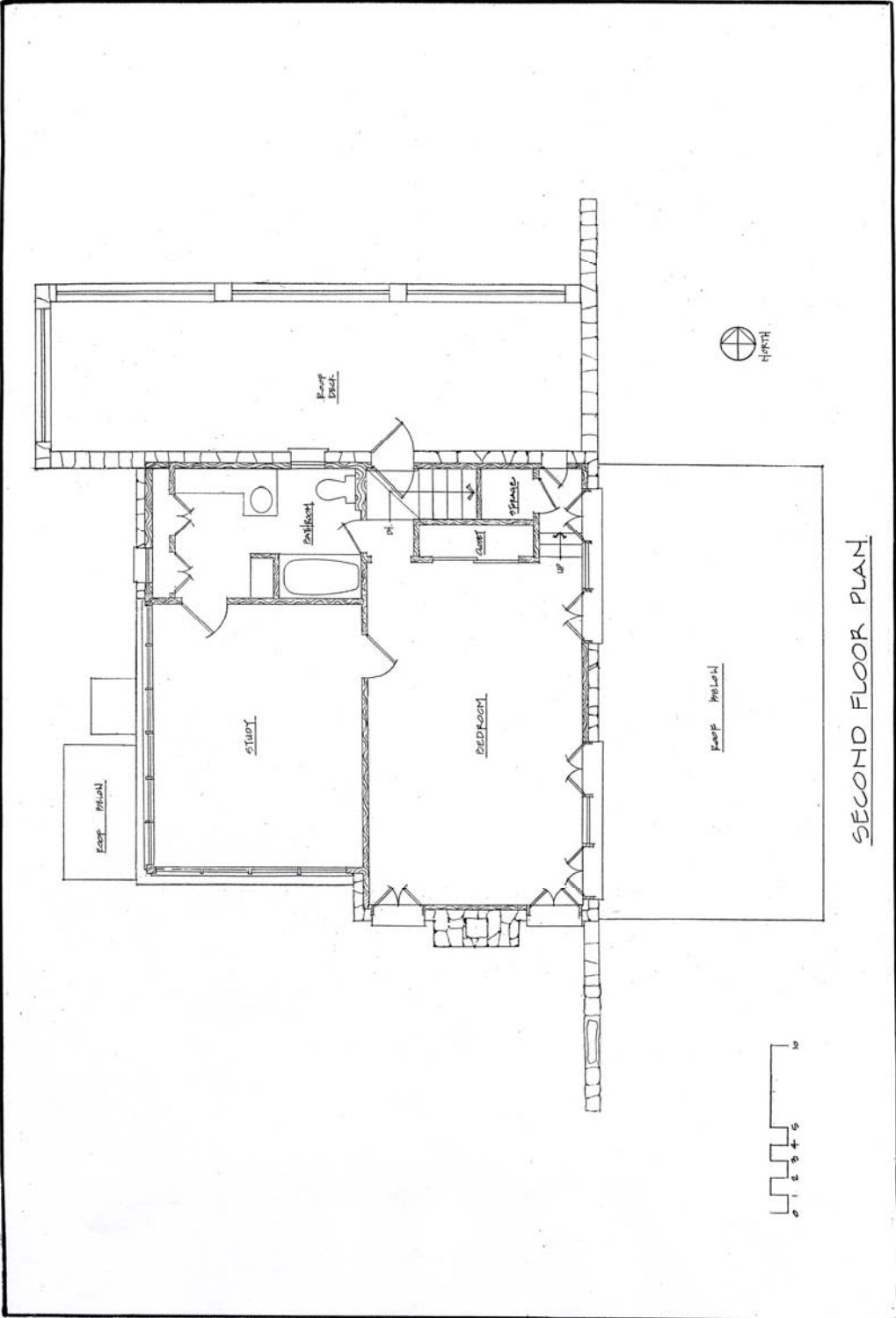
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MEASURED DRAWINGS FOR RUST HAVEN
BENIC LOOP PLAYGROUND, GREY FOREST



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MEASURED DRAWINGS FOR RUST HAVEN
GENIC LOOP PLAYGROUND, GREY FOREST

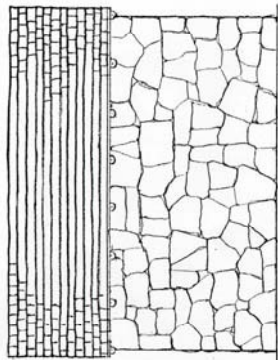


Appendix B: Restoration Drawings for the Deep Springs
Bathing Pool Bath Houses

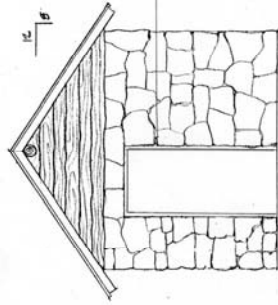
These drawings were prepared by the author for use by the Scenic Loop Playground Club in restoring the original bath houses at the Deep Springs Bathing Pool. As no drawings or historical photographs were available, the design of the restoration was based upon recollections of the remaining roof before it was demolished, and the typical roof forms, pitch, and common materiality with the other original structures within the development. Existing native stone walls and floors are to be repaired, using appropriate conservation methods to preserve their historical integrity. New gable end walls are to be attached by existing anchor bolts to support the roof framing. The ridge beam and rafters are of unpeeled native cedar, similar to the porch framing found on many of the original houses. Cedar strapping and a fire treated hand split shake roof provides interior and exterior finish. Native materials were to be donated from landscape clearing in the surrounding area. Other materials would be obtained by donation or purchase by the Club. It was hoped the rustic nature of the project would allow local Boy Scouts to participate, with other volunteer labor, in restoring the buildings to resume their original purpose.

BENTLEY & CHURCHILL ARCHITECTS
3707 MEFFERTH ST. AUSTIN, TX 78703

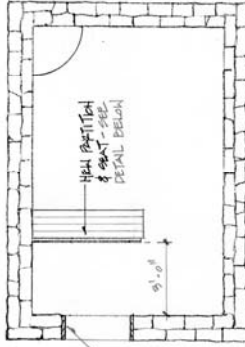
BATHHOUSE RESTORATION
SCENIC LOOP PLAYGROUND, GREY FOREST



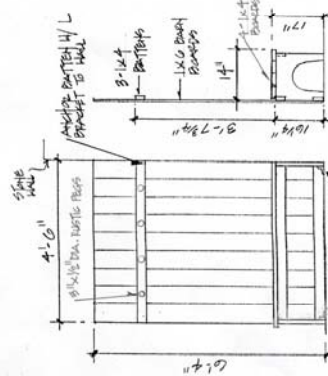
SIDE ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



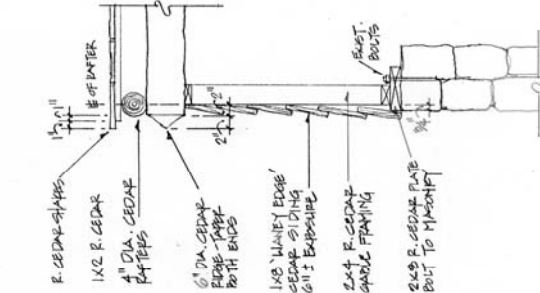
FRONT ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



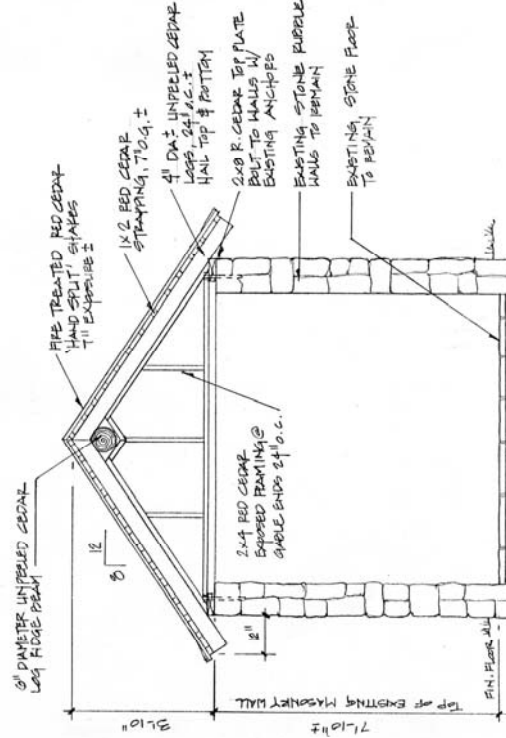
PLAN VIEW
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



PARTITION & SEAT DETAILS
SCALE: 3/8" = 1'-0"



SECTION @ GABLE
SCALE: 3/4" = 1'-0"



SECTION
SCALE: 3/8" = 1'-0"

Appendix C: Draft Historic Landmark and District Zoning
Ordinance for the City of Grey Forest, Texas

This draft ordinance is based upon the Model Ordinance provided by the Texas Historical Commission for adoption by municipalities within the State of Texas. The draft ordinance deletes the recommended qualifications for commissioners, beyond requiring a general 'interest, competence, or knowledge in historic preservation within the City of Grey Forest', due to the small size of the community. The suggested size for the historic preservation committee is similarly based upon an operable size for a commission in a small community, balancing the limited number of people who are available to serve, with the public interest in having at least three agree on a determination of appropriateness to preserve the unique character of the community.

DRAFT ~~Model Ordinance~~
Historic Landmark and District Zoning Ordinance

WHEREAS, CH.221 TEXAS LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE, the Municipal Zoning Authority, specifically authorizes zoning functions and procedures for municipalities; and

WHEREAS, CH.221 TEXAS LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE, Section 211.005 authorizes the governing body of a municipality to divide the municipality into districts, within which the governing body may regulate the erection, construction, reconstruction, alteration, repair, or use of buildings, other structures, or land and within which zoning regulation must be uniform for each class or kind of building in a district; however, zoning regulations may vary from district to district.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF

GREY FOREST:

That the following Historic Landmark and District Zoning Ordinance is hereby (**adopted, Amended, enacted**) as part of the comprehensive zoning plan, pursuant to CH.211 TEXAS LOCAL GOVERNMENT CODE.

Section 1. Purpose

The City Council of GREY FOREST hereby declares that as a matter of public policy the protection, enhancement, and perpetuation of landmarks or district of historical and cultural importance and significance is necessary to promote the economic, cultural, educational, and general welfare of the public. It is recognized that the CITY OF GREY FOREST represents the unique confluence of time and place that shaped the identity of generations of citizens, collectively and individually, and produced significant historic, architectural, and cultural resources that constitute their heritage. This act is intended to:

- (a) protect and enhance the landmarks and districts which represent distinctive elements of GREY FOREST's historic, architectural, and cultural heritage;
- (b) foster civic pride in the accomplishments of the past;
- (c) protect and enhance GREY FOREST's attractiveness to visitors and the support and stimulus to the economy thereby provided;
- (d) insure the harmonious, orderly, and efficient growth and development of the village/town/city;
- (e) promote economic prosperity and welfare of the community by encouraging the most appropriate use of such property within the ~~village/town/city~~;
- (f) encourage stabilization, restoration, and improvements of such properties and their values.

[Note: Other purposes may be included, but a general statement on aesthetics should be avoided in most cases. Significant or unusual geographic and historic features may be mentioned here, e.g., riverfront, oceanfront, town form, etc., and how it is integral to the village/town/city.]

[Note: A list of definitions conforming to the ordinance should be included at this point. You may refer to the attached appendix for definitions.]

Section 2. Historic Preservation Commission

There is hereby created a commission to be known as the GREY FOREST Historic Preservation Commission.

[Note: Other possible names include _____ Landmark Commission, _____ Historic District and Landmark Commission, or Board of Architectural Review.]

- (a) The Commission shall consist of 5 members to be appointed, to the extent available among the residents of the community, by the (mayor, ~~council, commission~~) as follows. AND APPROVED BY CITY COUNCIL

~~These are possible representatives:~~

~~at least one shall be an architect, planner, or representative of a design profession;~~

~~at least one shall be a historian;~~

~~at least one shall be a licensed real estate broker;~~

~~at least one shall be an attorney;~~

~~at least one shall be an owner of a landmark or of a property in a historic district;~~

~~at least one shall be a member of _____;~~

~~[Note: This blank should include the name of whatever preservation nonprofit exists.]~~

~~at least one shall be an archeologist or from a related discipline;~~

- (b) All Commission members, regardless of background, shall have a known and demonstrated interest, competence, or knowledge in historic preservation within the village/town/city of GREY FOREST.

(c) The Commission as a whole shall represent the ethnic makeup of the ~~village/town/city~~.

(d) Commission members shall serve for a term of (at least two) 2 years, with the exception that the initial term of 2 members shall be 2 years, and 1 members shall be 1 years.

[Note: The term may be set for one, two, or whatever necessary period to achieve a staggered term.]

(e) The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Commission shall be elected by and from the members of the Commission.

[Note: They also may be appointed by the mayor, council, or commission.]

(f) The Commission shall be empowered to:

(i) Make recommendations for employment of staff and professional consultants as necessary to carry out the duties of the Commission.

(ii) Prepare rules and procedures as necessary to carry out the business of the Commission, which shall be ratified by the City Council.

(iii) Adopt criteria for the designation of historic, architectural, and cultural landmarks and the delineation of historic districts, which shall be ratified by the City Council.

(iv) Conduct surveys and maintain an inventory of significant historic, architectural, and cultural landmarks and all properties located in historic district within the village/town/city.

(v) Recommend the designation of resources as landmarks and historic districts.

(vi) Create committees from among its membership and delegate to these committees responsibilities to carry out the purposes of this ordinance.

(vii) Maintain written minutes which record all actions taken by the Commission and the reasons for taking such actions.

(viii) Recommend conferral of recognition upon the owners of landmarks or properties within districts by means of certificates, plaques, or markers.

(ix) Increase public awareness of the value of historic, cultural, and architectural preservation by developing and participating in public education programs.

(x) Make recommendations to the ~~village/town/city~~ government concerning the utilization of state, federal, or private funds to promote the preservation of landmarks and historic districts within the ~~village/town/city~~.

- (xi) Approve or disapprove of applications for certificates of appropriateness pursuant to this act.
- (xii) Prepare and submit annually to the (mayor/~~council/commission~~) a report summarizing the work completed during the previous year.
- (xiii) Prepare specific design guidelines for the review of landmarks and districts.
- (xiv) Recommend the acquisition of a landmark structure by the ~~village/town/city~~ government where its preservation is essential to the purpose of this act and where private preservation is not feasible. **[optional]**
- (xv) Propose tax abatement programs(s) for landmarks or districts. **[optional]**
- (xvi) Accept on behalf of the ~~village/town/city~~ government the donation of preservation easements and development rights as well as any other gift of value for the purpose of historic preservation, subject to the approval of the City Council. **[optional]**
- (g) The Commission shall meet at least monthly, if business is at hand. Special meetings may be called at any time by the Chairman (or mayor) or on the written request of any two Commission members. All meetings shall be held in conformance with the Texas Open Meetings Act, Texas Civil Statutes, Article 6252-17.
- (h) A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of not less than a majority of the full authorized membership.

Section 3. Appointment of Historic Preservation Officer

The (mayor, ~~council, commission~~) or a designee shall appoint a qualified ~~village/town/city~~ official, staff person, or appropriate resident of the municipal entity to serve as historic preservation officer. This officer shall administer this ordinance and advise the Commission on matters submitted to it.

In addition to serving as representative of the Commission, the officer is responsible for coordinating the ~~village/town/city~~'s preservation activities with those of state and federal agencies and with local, state, and national nonprofit preservation organizations.

[Note: In the absence of a qualified official or staff person of the municipality, a volunteer resident serving as preservation officer should be aware of the liability issues involved in serving in this capacity.]

Section 4. Designation of Historic Landmarks

- (a) These provisions pertaining to the designation of historic landmarks constitutes a part of the comprehensive zoning plan of the City of GREY FOREST.

- (b) Property owners of proposed historic landmarks shall be notified prior to the Commission hearing on the recommended designation. At the Commission's public hearing, owners, interested parties, and technical experts may present testimony or documentary evidence which will become part of a record regarding the historic, architectural, or cultural importance of the proposed historic landmark.
- (c) Upon recommendation of the Commission, the proposed historic landmark shall be submitted to the Zoning Commission within thirty (30) days from the date of submittal of designation request. The Zoning Commission shall give notice and conduct its hearing on the proposed designation within forty-five (45) days of receipt of such recommendation from the Commission. such hearing shall be in the same manner and according to the same procedures as specifically provided in the general zoning ordinance of the City of GREY FOREST. The Zoning Commission shall make its recommendation to the City Council within forth-five (45) days subsequent to the hearing on the proposed designation.
- (d) The City Council shall schedule a hearing o the Commission's recommendation to be held within forty-five (45) days of receipt of the recommendation of the Zoning Commission. The City Council shall give notice, follow the publication procedure, hold hearing, and make its determination in the same manner as provided in the general zoning ordinance of the City of GREY FOREST.

[Note: The general zoning ordinance should provide a time limit within which the City Council must make its determination. Time limits may be set in accordance with the city's own zoning ordinance.]

- (e) Upon designation of a (building, object, site, structure) as a historic landmark or district, the City Council shall cause the designation to be recorded in the Official Public Records of Real Property of BEXAR County, the tax records of the City of GREY FOREST, and the BEXAR COUNTY Appraisal District as well as the official zoning maps of the City of GREY FOREST. All zoning maps should indicate the designated landmarks with an appropriate mark.

Section 5. Designation of Historic Districts

- (a) These provisions pertaining to the designation of historic district constitute a part of the comprehensive zoning plan of the City of GREY FOREST.
- (b) Property owners within a proposed historic district shall be notified prior to the Commission hearing on the recommended designation. At the Commissioner's public hearing, owners, interested parties, and technical experts may present testimony or documentary evidence which will become part of a record regarding the historic, architectural, or cultural importance of the proposed historic district.
- (c) The Commission may recommend the designation of a district if it:
 - (i) Contains properties and an environmental setting which meet one or more of the criteria for designation of a landmark; and ,

- (ii) Constitutes a distinct section of the ~~village/town/city~~.
- (d) Upon recommendation of the Commission, the proposed historic district shall be submitted to the Zoning Commission within thirty (30) days from the date of submittal of designation request. The Zoning Commission shall give notice and conduct its hearing on the proposed designation within forty-five (45) days of receipt of such recommendation from the Commission. Such hearing shall be in the same manner and according to the same procedures as specifically provided in the general zoning ordinance of the City of GREY FOREST. The Zoning Commission shall make its recommendation to the City Council within forty-five (45) days subsequent to the hearing on the proposed designation.
- (e) The City Council shall schedule a hearing on the Commission's recommendation to be held within forty-five (45) days of receipt of the recommendation of the Zoning Commission. The City Council shall give notice, follow the publication procedure, hold hearings, and make its determination in the same manner as provided in the general zoning ordinance of the City of GREY FOREST.

[Note: The general zoning ordinance should provide a time limit upon which the city council must make its determination. Time limits may be set in accordance with the city's own zoning ordinance.]

- (f) Upon designation of a historic district the City Council shall cause the designated boundaries to be recorded in the Official Public Records of real property of BEXAR County, the tax records of the City of GREY FOREST and the BEXAR COUNTY Appraisal District as well as the official zoning maps of the City of GREY FOREST. All zoning maps should indicate the designated historic district by an appropriate mark.

Section 6. Criteria for Designation of Historic Landmarks and Districts

A historic landmark or district may be designated if it:

[Note: National Register criteria are most easily and often used here. Additional criteria may be added as appropriated. In order to have a valid zoning ordinance, criteria must be clearly established so that it can withstand a challenge for being unconstitutionally vague.]

- (a) Possesses significance in history, architecture, archeology, and culture
- (b) Is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the board patterns of local, regional, state, or national history.
- (c) Is associated with events that have made a significant in our past.
- (d) Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction.
- (e) Represents the work of a master designer, builder, or craftsman.

- (f) Represents an established and familiar visual feature of the ~~neighborhood/village/town/city~~.

Section 7. Certificate of Appropriateness for Alteration or New Construction Affecting Landmarks or Historic Districts

No person shall carry out any construction, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, rehabilitation, or relocation of any historic landmark or any property within a historic district, nor shall any person make any material change in the light fixtures, signs, sidewalks, fences, steps, paving, or other exterior elements visible from a public right-of-way which affect the appearance and cohesiveness of any historic landmark or any property within a historic district.

[Note: In historic districts, it is a good idea to require a certificate of appropriateness for proposed new construction to ensure compatibility with the existing historic resources of the district.]

Section 8. Criteria for Approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness

In considering an application for a certificate of appropriateness, the Commission shall be guided by any adopted design guideline, and where applicable, the following from *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Buildings*. Any adopted design guideline and *Secretary of the Interior's Standards* shall be made available to the property owners of historic landmarks or within historic districts.

- (a) Every reasonable effort shall be made to adapt the property in a manner which requires minimal alteration of the building, structure, object, or site and its environment.
- (b) The distinguishing original qualities or character of a building, structure, object, or site and its environment shall not be destroyed. The removal or alteration of any historic material or distinctive architectural features should be avoided when possible.
- (c) All buildings, structures, objects, and sites shall be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and which seek to create an earlier appearance shall be discouraged.
- (d) Changes which may have taken place in the course of time are evidence of the history and development of a building, structure, object, or site and its environment. These changes may have acquired significance in their own right, and this significance shall be recognized and respected.
- (e) Distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftsmanship which characterize a building, structure, object, or site shall be kept where possible.
- (f) Deteriorated architectural features shall be repaired rather than replaced, wherever possible. In the event replacement is necessary, the new material should reflect the material being replaced in composition, design, color, texture, and other visual

qualities. Repair or replacement of missing architectural features should be based on accurate duplications of features, substantiated by historical, physical, or pictorial evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different architectural elements from other buildings or structures.

- (g) The surface cleaning of structures shall be undertaken with the gentlest means possible. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that will damage the historic building materials shall not be undertaken.
- (h) Every reasonable effort shall be made to protect and preserve archeological resources affected by, or adjacent to, any project.
- (i) Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural, or cultural material, and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the property, neighborhood, or environment.
- (j) Whenever possible, new additions or alterations to buildings, structures, objects, or sites shall be done in such a manner that if such additions or alterations were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the building, structure, object, or site would be unimpaired.

Section 9. Certification of Appropriateness Application Procedure

- (a) Prior to the commencement of any work requiring a certificate of appropriateness the owner shall file and application for such a certificate with the Commission. The application shall contain:
 - (i) Name, address, telephone number of applicant, detailed description of proposed work.
 - (ii) Location and photograph of the property and adjacent properties.

[Note: Historical photographs may be requested as well.]

- (iii) Elevation drawings of the proposed changes, if available.
- (iv) Samples of materials to be used.
- (v) If the proposal includes signs or lettering, a scale drawing showing the type of lettering to be used, all dimensions and colors, a description of materials to be used, method of illumination (if any), and a plan showing the sign's location on the property.
- (vi) Any other information which the Commission may deem necessary in order to visualize the proposed work.

[Note: These requirement may be too extensive for small cities. If so, adjust them as necessary.]

- (b) No building permit shall be issued for such proposed work until a certificate of appropriateness has first been issued by the Commission. The certificate of appropriateness required by this act shall be in addition to and not in lieu of any building permit that may be required by any other ordinance of the village/town/city of GREY FOREST.
- (c) The Commission shall review the application at a regularly scheduled meeting within sixty (60) days form the date the application is received, at which time an opportunity will be provided for the applicant to be heard. The Commission shall approve with modifications the permit within forty-five (45) days after the review meeting. In the event the Commission does not act within ninety (90) days of the receipt of the application, a permit may be granted.

[Note: The Commission s decision is limited to those decisions stated in the ordinance, i.e., approve, deny, or approve with modifications. Suspension of action for a specified time also can be provided for in lieu of or in addition to these provided.]

- (d) All decisions of the Commission shall be in writing. The Commission s decision shall state its findings pertaining to the approval, denial, or modification of the application. A copy shall be sent to the applicant. Additional copies shall be filed as part of the public record on that property and dispersed to appropriated departments, e.g., building inspection.
- (e) An applicant for a certificate of appropriateness dissatisfied with the action of the Commission relating to the issuance or denial of a certificate of appropriateness shall have the right to appeal to the City Council within (30) days after receipt of notification of such action. The City Council shall give notice, follow publication procedure, hold hearings, and make its decision in the same manner as provided in the general zoning ordinance of the city.

[Section 10. Certificate of Appropriateness Required for Demolition

A permit for the demolition of a historic landmark or property within a historic district, including secondary buildings and landscape features, shall not be granted by the (building inspector or other city official) without the review of a completed application for a certificate of appropriateness by the Commission, as provided for in Section 7,8 and 9 of the ordinance.

Section 11. Economic Hardship Application Procedure

- (a) After receiving written notification from the Commission of the denial of certificate of appropriateness, an applicant may commence the hardship process. No building permit or demolition permit shall be issued unless the Commission makes a finding that hardship exists.
- (b) When a claim of economic hardship is made due to the effect of this ordinance, the owner must prove that:
 - (i) the property is incapable of earning a reasonable return, regardless of whether that return represents the most profitable return possible;

- (ii) the property cannot be adapted for any other use, whether by the current owner or by a purchaser, which would result in a reasonable return; and
 - (iii) efforts to find a purchaser interested in acquiring the property and preserving it have failed.
- c) The applicant shall consult in good faith with the Commission, local preservation groups and interested parties in a diligent effort to seek an alternative that will result in preservation of the property. Such efforts must be shown to the Commission.
 - d) The Commission shall hold a public hearing on the application within sixty (60) days from the date the application is received by the (~~building inspector~~, preservation officer). Following the hearing, the Commission has thirty (30) days in which to prepare a written recommendation to the (~~building inspector or other official~~). In the event that the Commission does not act within ninety (90) days of the receipt of the application, a permit may be granted.
 - e) All decision of the Commission shall be in writing. A copy shall be sent to the applicant by registered mail and a copy filed with the ~~village/town~~/city clerk s office for public inspection. The Commission s decision shall state the reasons for granting or denying the hardship application.
 - f) An applicant for a certificate of appropriateness dissatisfied with the action of the Commission relating to the issuance or denial of a certificate of appropriateness shall have the right to appeal to the City Council within thirty (30) days after receipt of notification of such action. The City Council shall give notice, follow publication procedure, hold hearings, and make its decision in the same manner as provided in the general zoning ordinance of the city.

Section 12. Enforcement

All work performed pursuant to a certificate of appropriateness issued under this ordinance shall conform to any requirements included therein. It shall be the duty of the (building inspector or other official) to inspect periodically any such work to assure compliance. In the event work is not being performed in accordance with the certificate of appropriateness, or upon notification of such fact by the Commission and verification by the (designated employee), the (designated employee) shall issue a stop work order and all work shall immediately cease. No further work shall be undertaken on the project as long as a stop work is in effect.

Section 13. Ordinary Maintenance

Nothing in this ordinance shall be construed to prevent the ordinary maintenance and repair of any exterior architectural feature of a landmark or property within a historic district which does not involve a change in design, material, or outward appearance. In-kind replacement or repair is included in this definition of ordinary maintenance.

[Note: Color may be included as ordinary maintenance if not part of that regulated in Section 7.]

Section 14. Demolition by Neglect

No owner or person with an interest in real property designated as a landmark or included within a historic district shall permit the property to fall into a serious state of disrepair so as to result in the deterioration of any exterior architectural feature which would, in the judgment of the Commission, produce a detrimental effect upon the character of the historic district as a whole or the life and character of the property itself.

Examples of such deterioration include:

- (a) Deterioration of exterior walls or other vertical supports.
- (b) Deterioration of roof or other horizontal members.
- (c) Deterioration of exterior chimneys.
- (d) Deterioration or crumbling of exterior stucco or mortar.
- (e) Ineffective waterproofing of exterior walls, roof, or foundations, including broken windows or doors.
- (f) Deterioration of any feature so as to create a hazardous condition which could lead to the claim that demolition is necessary for the public safety.

Section 15. Penalties

Failure to comply with any of the provisions of this ordinance shall be deemed a violation and the violator shall be liable for a misdemeanor charge, and be subject to a fine of not less than TWENTY FIVE DOLLARS nor more than TWO THOUSAND DOLLARS for each day the violation continues.

[Note: Penalties should conform to the penalties provided for in the existing zoning ordinance. The Municipal Zoning Authority authorizes imprisonment as well as a civil penalty. It also should be noted that if a violation occurs or is about to occur, the municipality is authorized to bring action to enforce the ordinance. See Sec. 211.012 of the Municipal Zoning Authority.]

Figure Credits:

E. N. Requa and His Playground.

Figure 1: 'Views 10 Years Apart Show City's Downtown Growth Rate', *San Antonio Express*, October 29, 1929, Dedication Number-Part III, p. 1.

Figure 2: 'Index Map', *Goodrich Route Maps of Texas*, Goodrich National Touring Bureau, B. F. Goodrich Rubber Company, 1915-16, p. 64 & 65.

Figure 3: 'Route 10: Scenic Loop out of San Antonio', *Goodrich Route Maps of Texas*, Goodrich National Touring Bureau, B. F. Goodrich Rubber Company, 1915-16, p. 24.

Figure 4: 'San Antonio', *Goodrich Route Maps of Texas*, Goodrich National Touring Bureau, B. F. Goodrich Rubber Company, 1915-16, p. 13.

Figure 5: 'Babcock Road Paving to Give Short Scenic Loops', *San Antonio Express*, July 20, 1930, p. B2.

Figure 6: *San Antonio, Reflections of the Last Two Hundred Years*, San Antonio Board of Realtors, 1976, p.4.

Figure 7: 'Rest, Quiet, Recreation, Homes in New Scenic Loop Playground', *San Antonio Express*, March 3, 1929, p. C1.

Figure 8: Subdivision Plan for the Scenic Loop Playground, Unit 1, recorded in Bexar County May 13, 1929

Figure 9: 'First Public Offering', *San Antonio Express*, April 7, 1929, p. D21.

Figures 10, 11, 15 & cover page: Requa, E. N., *Scenic Loop Playground Promotional Brochure*, ca. 1935.

Figure 12: Subdivision Plan for the Scenic Loop Playground, Unit 2, recorded in Bexar County March 24, 1930.

Figure 13: 'Rock Houses Built in Loop Playground', *San Antonio Express*, November 30, 1930, p. C9.

Figure 14: 'Proposed Clubhouse for Scenic Loop Playground', *San Antonio Express*, May 20, 1934, p. C1.

Wilderness Recreation and Naturalistic Design.

Figure 16: From engraving by W. H. Bartlett, ca. 1845 in Meyer, Richard E., ed., *Cemeteries and Gravemarkers, Voices of American Culture*, Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1989, p. 296.

Figures 17 & 19: Gilborn, Craig, *Adirondack Furniture and the Rustic Tradition*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1987, p. 34 & 41.

Figure 18: Jackson, Kenneth T., *Crabgrass Frontier, The Suburbanization of the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985, figure inset p. 4.

Figure 20: Kaiser, Harvey H., *Great Camps of the Adirondacks*. Boston: David R. Godine, Publisher, 1982, p. 76.

Figure 21, 23, 31, & 32: Barnes, Christine, *Great Lodges of the National Parks*. Bend, Oregon: W. W. West, Inc., 2002, p. 16, 105, 117, & 137.

Figure 22, 24, 25, & 26: Grattan, Virginia L., *Mary Colter, Builder upon the Red Earth*, Grand Canyon, AZ: Grand Canyon Natural History Association, 1992, p.47, 15, 28, & 33.

Figure 27 & 30: Carr, Ethan, *Wilderness by Design*.
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131.

Figures 28, 29, & 33: Berke, Arnold, *Mary Colter,
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Figures 34 & 35: Good, Albert H., *Park and Recreation
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Part III, p. 51.

A Scenic Playground.

Figures 36, 38-41, & 43-55: Photographs by the author.

Figure 37 & 42: Base plan from Tangum, Richard R.,
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Antonio: The University of Texas at San Antonio, 1980.

Preserving the Playground.

Figures 56, and 58-60: Photographs by the author.

Figure 57: San Antonio Planning Commission, *Major
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Cleta Boehly, long time resident, May 14, 2005.

Nancy Butler, City of Grey Forest Secretary, January 12, 2005 & November 17, 2006.

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David Myron Bentley was born in Lake Charles, Louisiana on December 24, 1953. He entered the School of Architecture at the University of Texas at Austin in January 1974, graduating in December 1976 with a Bachelor of Architecture Degree. He entered the Graduate School in January 1977, and was awarded a Bachelor of Arts, with a major in Psychology, in December 1976 and a Masters of Architecture in December 1982. He became a Research Associate at Trinity University in San Antonio in June 1979 and an Instructor in the Homebuilding Department from September 1980 until May 1984. After completing his apprenticeship under E. B. Flowers in San Antonio, he passed the professional exam and was registered as an Architect in the State of Texas in 1985. Since September 1985, he has been a partner, with his wife Elizabeth Churchill, in a private architectural practice on Nantucket Island, specializing in the preservation and rehabilitation of historic structures and the design of new construction appropriate to the historic character of the Island. In September 2003, he returned to the Graduate School at The University of Texas at Austin in pursuit of a Masters of Science in Historic Preservation.

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