

CITY PARK INFORMATION

Over 120 years ago, City Park was located on a windswept prairie when the notion of a public park was considered still considered a new idea. Since its original development in 1886, the park, it serves not only the 8 neighborhoods immediately adjacent to the park, but the entire metropolitan area. The park is within a 5-mile radius to 85% of all Denver residents. City Park is home to the Denver Zoo, the Museum of Nature and Science; and the City Park Golf Course. It encompasses 320 acres of developed parkland including 15 athletic fields; 14 tennis courts; 4 picnic areas; 5 ornamental fountains including the popular interactive water feature; 3 lakes, paddle boat rentals; 2 playgrounds, 5 formal gardens; over 3500 trees representing over 40 different species; 9 historically significant monuments and structures including the Bandstand and the City Park Pavilion; and, spectacular panoramic views of the Rocky Mountain range.

Although Henry Meryweather (*not a typo, this is the actual spelling of last name*) prepared the original park layout plans in 1882, the park encompasses several generations of designers and planners through its history including Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr, Edward Bennett, George Kessler and S.R. DeBoer,

GENERAL PARK HISTORY:

- Land Acquired: 1878 - 1882
- Formally created in 1882
- Acquired 320 acres of prairie for \$56,000
- 1896: park development

Acreage: 320 park total (esplanade: 7 A., zoo: 80 A., Golf Course: 130 A)

Key Features:

City Park Pavilion and Bandstand

The original Pavilion was built in 1896. It was replaced in 1929 by the current structure designed by William Fisher and John J. Humpheries. It was restored in 1988 as a special event venue. The Pavilion is operated by KM Concession for weddings, private parties, boat rentals and food service. City Park Jazz provides 8 free, Sunday concerts during the summer at the Bandstand. The bandstand originally built in 1929 was reconstructed in 1984 in its original location.

Electric Fountain

Built in 1908 and designed by Fred Darling, electrical engineer, the fountain is located in the middle of Ferril Lake. Its design was based on a similar fountain in Mexico City which was admired by Mayor Robert Speer. Speer commissioned the fountain to showcase during the Democratic Convention held in Denver in 1908. The fountain produced a colored lights and water show in ornate fountain structure and designed to coordinate the fountain displays with concert music played in bandstand. It threw 4400 gallons of water a minute creating spray effects produced from 2100 nozzles and patterns of blended colors were keyed to coordinate the displays with music. Reconstruction is underway.

Ferril Lake

Built in 1896 and named after poet laureate Thomas Ferril (1896-1988). The lake was historically fed by City Ditch, the first irrigation ditch constructed for the City of Denver in 1864 to bring water from Cheesman Reservoir to irrigate city trees and parks. Today, City Ditch now flows with water provided by the Denver Water Recycled Water Treatment Plant and still uses its original course from Washington Park to City Park and beyond to its outfall at Sand Creek. Water is used to irrigate of most areas of the park. Approximately 4000 gallons of water per minute are pumped out of the lake for irrigation between April and September. Ferril Lake is used for recreational fishing, stocked by Colorado Division of Wildlife with bluegill, rainbow trout, catfish, croppie, chad. Boating has been a popular pastime on the lake since 1896.

Thatcher Fountain:

This monumental fountain is a favorite Denver landmark. Built in 1917 the female figure represents liberty (central) with symbols representing loyalty, love and learning surrounding the base.

McClellan Gateway

The granite stone gateway commemorates Councilman William McClellan who used his life savings of \$13,700 as an example of civic giving in 1903. Originally located at 18th & York, it was moved to 21st & York in 1957.

Sopris Gateway

The 1912 red sandstone structure was designed by Frank Edbrook to honor Richard Sopris, mayor and 1st superintendent of parks. Originally the structure was a trolley stop and now serves as neighborhood pedestrian access into park.

Sullivan Gateway

Located along Colfax Avenue the gateway served as a grand entry into the park. The 1917 glazed terracotta tile structure includes two sculptured figures representing pioneer man and woman.

Burns Memorial & Sopris Garden

The Robert Burns statue was donated in 1904 and erected at the site of the park's first flower garden established in 1878.

The Sopris Garden includes flower beds, pool, small statue of a boy & sundial built in 1925. The gardens are frequently permitted for weddings and receptions.

Graham-Bible House

The 1892 gingerbread clapboard house was originally a private residence for the first park superintendent. Interior renovations were completed in 1999 and the building is currently occupied by the Outdoor Recreation staff offices.

City Park Greenhouse

Historic glass houses have been located in the park since its earliest period in 1895. The current greenhouses were built in 1941 and were updated in 2005 to 2010. The facility grows over 330,000 plants and flowers (50 different varieties) for the flowerbeds in parks citywide.