Title: Indianapolis Parks Department Landscape Architectural Records

Creator: Indianapolis Parks Department

Inclusive Dates: 1898-1988

Extent: 50 cu. ft.

Containers: 24 rolled drawings boxes, 5 OVB boxes, 1 OVC box

Language of Materials: Materials entirely in English.

Preferred Citation: Indianapolis Parks Department Landscape Architectural Records, Drawings and Documents Archive, Archives and Special Collections, Ball State University Libraries

Biographical Note:
Early efforts at creating city parks in Indianapolis can be traced back to the early 1860s. As the city grew, citizens grew concerned over the loss of recreational areas and urged the city council to set aside land for public parks. The city council was suspicious of this movement in the beginning, but by the 1870s public momentum spurred them to acquire several properties. For the next two decades, private citizen involvement joined forces with the city to improve these few parks with plantings and playgrounds.

In 1895, the city council created a public park commission to develop a public park system for Indianapolis. Several nationally prominent landscape architects were consulted to guide the development of the parks, including John C. Olmstead and George E. Kessler. In the first decade of 20th century, over 1,100 acres of land were purchased to implement park plans. Much of the land from this purchase is today part of Riverside Park. Although both World Wars and the Great Depression slowed the progression of development, the city parks services grew to accommodate a wide variety of recreational facilities such as wading pools, community club centers and playgrounds.

The Indianapolis Department of Parks and Recreation was created in the 1970s. It is organized
into five divisions: Administration, Eagle Creek, Golf, Parks Management and Recreation. They now claim over 73 properties, 16 community recreation centers, 13 pools and 12 golf courses. Eagle Creek Park and Nature Preserve, covering 4,500 acres and one of the largest municipal parks in the United States, attracts almost 300,000 visitors each year.

Scope and Contents:
Approximately 50 cu. ft. of drawings, presentation panels, "Damage Assessment Rolls," and other records for over 200 Indianapolis parks, parkways, golf courses, bridges, boulevards, playgrounds, stadiums, and other public facilities managed by the Indianapolis Parks Department, 1898-1988. Well documented are Brookside Parkway, Fall Creek Boulevard, Kessler Boulevard, Garfield Park, and Pleasant Run Parkway.

The drawings are typically oversized and stored rolled, around supportive internal cores.

Conditions Governing Access:
This collection is open for research.

Copyright Notice: Legal title, copyright, and literary rights reside with Drawings and Documents Archive, Archives and Special Collections, Ball State University Libraries, Muncie, IN. All requests to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted to Drawings and Documents Archive.

Custodial History:
The Indianapolis Parks Department Landscape Architectural Records were received by Drawings and Documents Archive as a donation from Don Colvin, President, Indianapolis Department of Parks and Recreation in 1998.

Accruals: No additions are expected.

Processing Information:
Collection processing completed
Finding aid created 2005/4/28 by Daniel Hartwig; revised 2011/11/1 by Julie Edwards; revised 2012/2/21 by Carol Street.

Arrangement:
The Indianapolis Parks Department Landscape Architectural Records are arranged chronologically.

Controlled Access Headings:
- Park (recreation area)
- Indiana State Parks
- Streets
- Sidewalks
- Two-way Streets
- Indianapolis (Ind.). Dept. of Parks and Recreation
- Golf courses
Arch bridges
Bridges
Parkways
Parkways Indiana
Playgrounds
Playgrounds—Design and construction