Form No. 10-300 (Rev. 10-74)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED JAN 7 1976
DATE ENTERED MAY 3 1976

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Volunteer Park

AND/OR COMMON
Volunteer Park and Water System Historic District

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
1400 East Prospect Street — bounded by Federal Ave. E., 15th Ave. E., E. Galer St., and E. Prospect St. — NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN
Seattle — VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
#1 - Honorable Joel Pritchard

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
Washington	53	King	033

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
X DISTRICT	X PUBLIC	X OCCUPIED	AGRICULTURE	MUSEUM
BUILDING(S)	PRIVATE	UNOCCUPIED	COMMERCIAL	X PARK
STRUCTURE	BOTH	WORK IN PROGRESS	EDUCATIONAL	PRIVATE RESIDENCE
SITE	**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**	**ACCESSIBLE**	ENTERTAINMENT	RELIGIOUS
OBJECT	IN PROCESS	YES: RESTRICTED	GOVERNMENT	SCIENTIFIC
	BEING CONSIDERED	X YES: UNRESTRICTED	INDUSTRIAL	TRANSPORTATION
		NO	MILITARY	OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

City of Seattle (two departmental jurisdictions)

NAME
Department of Parks and Recreation — Seattle Water Department

STREET & NUMBER
610 Municipal Building — 1015 Third Avenue

CITY, TOWN
Seattle — VICINITY OF

STATE
Washington 98104

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.
King County Administration Building

STREET & NUMBER
Fourth and James

CITY, TOWN
Seattle

STATE
Washington 98104

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
Washington State Inventory of Historic Places

DATE
1974 — FEDERAL X STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

CITY, TOWN
Olympia

STATE
Washington 98504

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
__EXCELLENT	__DETERIORATED	__UNALTERED	X ORIGINAL SITE
X GOOD	__RUINS	X ALTERED	__MOVED DATE_____
__FAIR	__UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Volunteer Park is the centerpiece of an extensive park and boulevard system laid out for the City of Seattle by the Olmsted Brothers landscape architectural firm of Brookline, Massachusetts in 1903-1904. Situated on the crown of Capitol Hill, the 40-acre park was specially designed by the firm to take advantage of its incomparable vistas. The principal view, to the southwest, is a panorama of Seattle harbor on Elliott Bay and the Olympic Mountain Range on the far side of Puget Sound. Certain elements of the park design have been modified over the years in the interest of safety and in the course of meeting changing needs, but the park is essentially intact. The most notable alteration was the construction, in 1932, of the Moderne Seattle Art Museum on the site of the original band pavilion overlooking the view terra ce. Owing to its central location in the urban setting, its various recreational facilities and visitation generated by the Seattle Art Museum, the park is subject to exceptional vistor-use pressure. Recommendations set forth in a recent Master Plan Report on Volunteer Park indicate that maintenance and future development are planned to deflect excessive automobile traffic and protect the park's historic landscape characteristics.

Volunteer Park is located in the NE¼ of Section 29, T.25N., R.4E., of the Willamette Meridian. Encompassing 48.37 acres, slightly more than 1/16 of a section of land, the park is bounded by Lakeview Cemetery on the north, East Prospect Street on the south, 15th Avenue East on the East; and, on the west, by 24 residential lots fronting on Federal Avenue East. Surrounding the park is a fashionable neighborhood currently zoned for apartment housing but as yet predominantly composed of single family dwellings, green lawns, gardens, and mature street trees. For approximately four blocks along 14 Avenue East, between Roy Street and the avenue's junction with East Prospect Street, are the stately homes of the once exclusive enclave built by prominent Seattle industrialists around the turn of the century. Access to what was popularly known as "Millionaire's Row", was controlled by a gate on Roy Street until 1924, at which time the City assumed jurisdiction over the street at the property owners' request for purposes of maintaining a main approach to the park.

The Olmsted Brothers design for Volunteer Park has a strong formal element in the principal axis created by the view concourse and two sets of stairs leading down the bedding terraces to the sunken reservoir. The orientation of this element in a southwesterly direction was dictated by the earlier placement of the reservoir and the contours of the site. Far from being rigidly geometric, however, the rest of the park is laid out in a studiously naturalistic fashion, with several major expanses of lawn circumscribed by footpaths and plantings. The lawns slope away from a ridge which traverses the property on a diagonal from south to north. It is the ridge which Olmsted Brothers used as the cross-axial element of the plan. The view concourse sweeps along it in an extended s-curve from the water tower aligned with the 14th Avenue East entrance on the south to the Seward Monument and its greenhouse backdrop on the north. Automobile traffic is confined to the concourse and a partial perimeter drive which, in the original plan, allowed ingress and egress from East Galer Street in the northeast corner, East Highland Drive on the west, and, on the east from 11th, 12th and 14th Avenue.

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Primary elements which pre-date implementation of the Olmsted Plan for Volunteer Park are the reservoir and the water tower constructed by the Water Department in 1901 and 1906, respectively. The reservoir takes the shape of a triangle with rounded corners, its apex pointed toward the ridge, and its base spreading in the direction of the principal vista. It was this established water feature on which the Olmsted Plan capitalized. In the southerly corner of its base is the valve house, a small, oblong masonry structure with classical exterior detail and shuttered, round-arched openings. The reservoir is presently outlined with a chain-link safety fence. The original fence had decorative iron cresting. A directive of the State Board of Health ultimately may require the City to cover this and all other open reservoirs, but to date no action other than some preliminary design work on a cover has been taken.

The water tower is a steel tank contained within a cylindrical brick masonry shell. Between the tank and the outer wall are two iron stairways which wind from the entrance level to an observation deck sheltered by a bracketed conical roof. Increasing the elevation of the tower is the nodule on which it is sited. The observation deck rises to a height of 75.5 feet above the drive encircling its embankment. The tower's two approaches are aligned with north and south compass points. They include flights of stairs and stone-framed doorways with pediments based on the Doric order of classical antiquity. Contrasting with the light stone trim of doorways, window sills, three belt courses, and a simple frieze is dark red textured brick coursing in which clinker bricks and random projecting headers are used. Narrow, round-arched openings spiral up the wall surfact to light the stairways. The topmost stratum of the cylinder, the observation deck, is lighted by large, round-arched openings, unglazed but covered with grates for safety purposes. From this vantage point, the visitor gains a 360° panoramic view of Seattle and environs: Lake Washington and the Cascade Range to the east, Mount Ranier to the south, Lake Union, Puget Sound and the Olympic Range to the west and north. The copper-sheathed tongue-in-groove conical roof is supported by a truss system on three intersecting steel beams spanning the diameter of the outside wall.

With the exception of several stands of fir trees native to the site, and which were selectively thinned and cleared of underbrush, most of the material used in the planting scheme was nursery stock ordered by the Olmsted firm. The concourse, for example, is lined with horse chestnuts, and black locust, maple, and several varieties of cedar were used throughout. A few of the larger trees lost to storm damage over the years have been replaced, and peripheral rose beads have been replanted with azaleas. The original system of frosted globes on tapered column standards lights the concourse.

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The primary architectural element of the Olmsted Plan was a rustic arcade and band stand aligned with the parterres and reservoir. Arranged along the easterly side of the view concourse, this lineal feature was composed of an oblong, open-air pavilion with a shingled, partially conical roof, the ridge of which was on axis with the principal vista. Extending from either side were long pergolas terminating in square frame pavilions with pyramidal roofs and smaller restroom wings, or extentions. Centered behind the band stand on the easterly side was a bayed area known as the concert grove. This culminating feature on the ridge was promptly augmented by a band shell with some acoustical qualities which was erected on the large lawn north of the reservoir as early as 1915. Popular for a variety of uses, including Easter Sunrise services and musical concerts, the band shell has twice been replaced and was most recently rebuilt this year with a concrete platform.

Among several commemorative monuments located in the park, the Seward Monument on the northerly end of the concourse cross-axis is an original feature of the plan. The full-figure bronze sculptural likeness of William Seward, United States Secretary of State who negotiated the acquisition of Alaska in 1867, was commissioned from New York sculptor Richard Brooks for exhibit in 1909 at the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition on the present site of the University of Washington campus. When the Exposition closed the statue and its high polished-stone pedestal were resited in Volunteer Park.

At once a backdrop to the Seward Monument and a feature which screens Lakeview Cemetery from view is the 200-foot long, iron-framed conservatory erected by Park forces in 1912 for purposes of displaying exotic flowering plants. The central pavilion, or palm house, measures 30 by 50 feet and is on axis with the concourse at the north boundary of the park. Its two-tier, square domed roof rises to a height of 25 feet. Lateral wings with conventional pitched roofs extend from either side of the palm house and terminate in longitudinal pavilions. Unobtrusive maintenance facilities constructed according to plan along the north boundary to the west of the conservatory have been revised as necessary to accommodate the Horticultural Division of the City Park Department which historically has been headquartered at Volunteer Park.

The Olmsted Plan included two separate playground areas for children on the park periphery. On the east end of the conservatory is a play space into which all playground equipment has subsequently been consolidated. The original wading pool in this area has been upgraded. An area abutting residential properties between East Highland and East Prospect Streets on the west boundary of the park initially was set aside for a gravel playground with swings, climbing bars and other equipment. Tennis courts have been located discreetly in recent years between the perimeter drive and the northwest corner of the park.

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The change of greatest magnitude which has occurred in 65 years since the park's completion was the construction, in 1932, of the Seattle Art Museum on the imposing site formally occupied by the pergola-flanked band pavilion. Designed by the eminent local architectural firm of Bebb and Gould in the Moderne Style, the museum is faced with light-colored Wilkeson sandstone. Thoughtfully integrated into the park design, the building was calculated to present an elongated facade similar to the lineal feature provided by the band stand and its rustic arcades. At either end of the museum's long blind facade are fluted semi-circular niches, and at the center is a high, bayed entrance pavilion on axis with the reservoir vista. Olmsted Brothers recommended against the intrusion of a state art museum into the landscape of Volunteer Park which had been proposed in 1910. Twenty years later, however, when Mrs. Eugene Fuller and her son, Dr. Richard E. Fuller, offered to donate an art museum to the city, City officials accepted the museum's placement in Volunteer Park. Four additions were made to the rear, or easterly face of the building between 1947 and 1968. Further expansion has been proposed, but since the privately-operated museum has developed a branch facility in downtown Seattle, other alternatives are under consideration.

In 1969 a major sculptural element was added to the principal axis when "Black Sun", a black Brazilian granite sculpture by Isamu Noguchi was permanently installed on the apron of the concourse overlooking the formal garden. A Wilkeson sandstone platform was constructed for the sculpture, and some alteration of the terraced garden was made. The cross-axial path linking lily ponds at either end of the parterres was adjusted to form a crescent in response to the re-banked apron, and the terraces were replanted.

A capital improvement program which earmarked $419,000 for Volunteer Park was recently carried out with grant assistance. The program included improvement of the irrigation system, completion of pathway surfacing with asphalt, and upgrading of lighting. For lack of funds, a new service building proposed for the park is not expected to be constructed as planned. In conformance with the current Master Plan which states a policy of preserving the characteristic landscape qualities of the Olmsted design, no major adjustments in planting are anticipated. It is proposed that automobile traffic and parking be prohibited on the concourse, and a cohesive pedestrian space -- a "plaza", is to be created in front of the Art Museum to reinforce the Olmsted plan of axis.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
__PREHISTORIC	__ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	X COMMUNITY PLANNING	X LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	__RELIGION
__1400-1499	__ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	__CONSERVATION	__LAW	__SCIENCE
__1500-1599	__AGRICULTURE	__ECONOMICS	__LITERATURE	X SCULPTURE
__1600-1699	X ARCHITECTURE	__EDUCATION	__MILITARY	__SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
__1700-1799	__ART	X ENGINEERING	__MUSIC	__THEATER
__1800-1899	__COMMERCE	__EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	__PHILOSOPHY	__TRANSPORTATION
X 1900-	__COMMUNICATIONS	__INDUSTRY	__POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	__OTHER (SPECIFY)
		__INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1903-1912 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Olmsted Brothers, Landscape Architects, Brookline, Massachusetts

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Volunteer Park is significant to Seattle and the State of Washington as the most widely-known and best-preserved component of a great system of urban parks and playgrounds interrelated by tree-lined boulevards and scenic drives. A product of the progressive, nationwide Parks and Recreation Movement, the system was carried out in the years before the First World War according to plans by Olmsted Brothers, Landscape Architects. Of numerous projects designed by the distinguished Boston firm in various parts of the state, the Seattle Park and Boulevard System, even though never wholly completed, is among the premier examples because of its scope and state of preservation. Volunteer Park was named in honor of Seattle citizens who volunteered for service in the Spanish-American War in 1898. Although the basic property acquisition had been made by the City as early as 1876 and certain improvements followed after 1887, formal development of the park is marked from 1903 when a landscape plan was first advanced by Olmsted Brothers in the form of recommendations to the City. The Olmsted Plan for Volunteer Park appears to have been implemented most intensively between 1908 and 1910. The park was complete with its conservatory by 1912.

The 40-acre parcel which was to become Volunteer Park was acquired by the City for "municipal purposes" in 1876. One of the city's earliest such acquisitions, it was purchased from J. M. Colman for $2,000. In 1885 the tract was utilitzed for the first time for gravesites relocated from a cemetery in the heart of town which was vacated to become Denny Park. At this stage the Capitol Hill tract was known as Washelli Cemetery, and it contained the graves of a number of Seattle's most prominent pioneers. Two years later, in 1887, the gravesites were moved again to an adjoining parcel on the north, and the tract was renamed Lake View Park. By 1893 the City Park Department had cleared about six acres on the tract. A nursery was planted, a greenhouse added, and a three-room cottage was contructed for a caretaker. By the turn of the century the park, still with an abundance of timber, had been improved with footpaths, some areas of lawn, picnic tables, and children's swings.

The first major improvement in the park was a consequence of settlement gradually making its way up Capitol Hill and the Water Department's development of the Cedar River water system. The triangular-shaped high-pressure reservoir was constructed in the southwesterly corner of the park in 1901. It was during this period that the park was renamed for the final time to honor Seattle's volunteers in the Spanish-American War.

Betwen 1900 and 1904 the Seattle Park Board evolved from an advisory body directed by the City Council to a working board of more independent status. During a regular election in the spring of 1904 citizens voted an amendment to the charter which

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Data sheets and historical notes on Volunteer Park compiled by Don Sherwood, Historian, Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation.

Dictionary of American Biography. Vol. VII, Park 2 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1934). Frederick Law Olmsted, pp. 24-28; John Charles Olmsted, pp. 29-30.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 48.37 acres

UTM REFERENCES

	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
A	10	551740	527546
B	10	551740	527530
C	10	551280	527530
D	10	551280	527546

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Elisabeth Walton Potter, Historic Preservation Specialist

ORGANIZATION — DATE

Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission — November 1975

STREET & NUMBER — TELEPHONE

P. O. Box 1128 — (206) 753-4116

CITY OR TOWN — STATE

Olympia — Washington 98504

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X STATE ____ LOCAL ____

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE Arthur M. Skolnik

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer — DATE December 19, 1975

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Acting — DATE 1/31/76

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST: — DATE 3-3-76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

GPO 892-453

delegated jurisdiction over fixed revenues to the Park Board and gave it a basis for action similar to that of park boards in metropolitan centers elsewhere. Thereafter, city park development was dramatic.

Meanwhile, Olmsted Brothers had been retained by the Board of Park Commissioners to "devise and recommend a comprehensive park system for Seattle." As early as October 19, 1903, the City Council adopted a lengthy report by the firm addressed to Board Chairman E. F. Blaine. Among comments pertaining to the existing Volunteer Park were suggestions on grading and an admonition to expand park holdings to the nearest streets on the south and west. Some additional land was acquired on this advice. The firm foresaw that even though the park was sited on a high hill, it was not sufficiently elevated above the surrounding neighborhood to maintain its openness when residential properties were developed and street trees shut out distant views. The firm suggested that an observation tower be erected at the summit of the park. Such a feature was fortuitously provided when the Water Department constructed its tower in 1906. Once complete with its architectural shell, the tower was maintained as an observation tower as well as a standpipe.

Recommendations advanced in the Olmsted Report of 1903 set the tone for future development of Volunteer Park by pointing out that because it was to be "surrounded by a highly finished style of city development" it would be best to adopt a harmonious, "neat and smooth style of landscape gardening throughout." Such treatment would be in contrast to the outlying parks of the system and those with rugged topography. For the latter parks Olmsted Brothers advised "a wild style and greater respect for the preservation of natural forest undergrowth."

The Board of Park Commissioners outlined an ambitious schedule of acquisitions and improvements to implement the Olmsted System of Parks, Boulevards and Playgrounds, and Seattle citizens responded generously by voting several million dollars in bond issues over the six-year period between 1906 and 1912. The Board had studied park and recreation facilities of large cities across the country and was satisfied that the Olmsted system demonstrated the practicability of the small park ideal which was to provide a park or playground within a half-mile of every home in the city. The related boulevard plan projected a 50-mile chain of drives to connect many of the parks as it skirted shores of lakes or followed high ridges overlooking the water and mountains. The Olmsted system and the Park Board's successful implementation of a majority of it caused Seattle to be ranked with Chicago, Kansas City and Minneapolis among progressive American cities. Seattle's playground acreage exceeded that of any other city of the West Coast in this period, and its park area of some 1,260 acres was equaled only by that of San Francisco. It was frequently pointed out that Seattle's park area had the advantage of wide distribution with a number of tracts easily accessible to all. By 1912 Volunteer Park was one of 25 improved parks. The city also claimed 12 unimproved park sites.

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During several decades before and after the turn of the century, the Olmsteds planned a number of projects for public and private clients in the State of Washington. Among the earliest of these was the unused plan which Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903), the firm's founder and guiding spirit, prepared for the City of Tacoma in 1873. The Drumheller Fountain axis, an important feature of the plan which Olmsted's successors provided for Seattle's Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition of 1909, has been preserved in subsequent development of the University of Washington campus. Notable among private commissions were the firm's landscape plans for the Seattle Golf and Country Club and the country estate of Chester Thorne at American Lake near Tacoma. The firm's work east of the Cascades included Spokane parks and elements of the campus plan for Whitman College in Walla Walla. The firm also did work in nearby Portland, Oregon, including designs for the Lewis and Clark Exposition of 1905.

Frederick Law Olmsted, named chief architect of New York's Central Park in 1868, had been responsible for a pioneer enterprise in municipal planning. Through a great many projects in various parts of the country between 1865 and 1895, ranging from residential development and exposition layout (Chicago World's Fair, 1893) to park system design and campus planning, Olmsted and his associated laid the foundations of American landscape architecture and made the public park an integral part of urban life. It was F. L. Olmsted's stepson, John Charles Olmsted, who exerted the greatest influence upon the Seattle Park and Boulevard System. Roland W. Cotterill, Secretary of the Seattle Park Board, reported to a convention of the American Association of Park Superintendents in Boston, August 12, 1912, that J. C. Olmsted spent "Many weeks during the winter of 1903-1904" climbing the city's hills, studying its topography and scenic assets. Olmsted visited the city intermittently thereafter as work on several concurrent projects in the region progressed. J. F. Dawson was the firm's representative on the scene. Original drawings and other records pertaining to Volunteer Park are still held by present day members of the firm.

John Charles Olmsted evinced an early aptitude for the work of his stepfather. He received his primary education largely from private teaching as a result of his family's travels around the country. He was graduated from the Sheffield Scientific School at Yale, where his father, John Hull Olmsted (d. 1857) had studied. Upon graduation John Charles entered the landscape office of his stepfather in New York and within a few years was given a financial interst in the practice. He was noted for his business ability and the capacity to keep a large number of project in progress. It was due to J. C. Olmsted's efforts that the firm's professional practice was established on a sound basis. In 1884 the office was removed to Brookline, in the vicinity of Boston, and at this time he became a full partner in F. L. and J. C. Olmsted. Following his stepfather's retirement

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in 1895, John Charles became the senior partner in the firm which, after 1898, was called Olmsted Brothers. He shared responsibilities with his half-brother Frederick Law, Jr., and other later partners until his death in Brookline in 1920. John Charles Olmsted is credited with an immeasurable contribution to the young science of city planning by his solutions to problems connected with park system design and by his interpretation of design matters to civic leaders. Olmsted served as first president of the American Society of Landscape Architects, the professional society founded in 1899.

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Interview, April 17, 1975: Gerard A. Friesen, Manager, Capital Development Projects, Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation.

"Report of the Olmsted Brothers", Annual Reports of the Board of Park Commissioners, Seattle, Washington, 1884-1904. (Seattle, 1905), pp. 44-85. The report was submitted to the City Council and adopted October 19, 1903. Recommendations pert. to Volunteer Park, pp. 76-78.

Scrapbook on Seattle Parks, Seattle Museum of History and Industry. Contains clippings from local newspapers and professional journals pert. to Volunteer Park, including several articles ranging in date from 1911 to 1913 by Roland E. Cotterill, Secretary of the Seattle Park.

Volunteer Park Master Plan Report prepared for the City of Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation by Richard Haag Associates, Inc., Seattle, Washington.