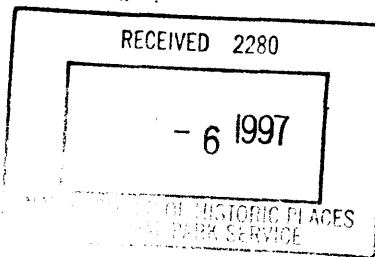


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by Marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Farnsworth, Gen. Charles S. County Park
other names/site number Altadena Park; Davies, William D. Memorial Building, Farnsworth County Park

2. Location

street & number 568 East Mt. Curve Avenue N/A not for publication
city or town Altadena N/A vicinity
state California code CA county Los Angeles code 037 zip code 91001

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Samuel Abeyta Deputy
Signature of certifying official/Title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
Date 12/30/96
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments).

Signature of commenting or other official/Title _____ Date _____
State or Federal agency and bureau _____

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:
 entered in the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 determined to be eligible for the National Register.
 See continuation sheet.
 determined not eligible for the National Register
 removed from the National Register.
 other, (explain:)

Edson H. Beall
Signature of the Keeper
Date of Action 2-7-97

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply) **Category of Property** (Check only one box)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> building(s) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-local | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-State | <input type="checkbox"/> site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal | <input type="checkbox"/> structure |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> object |

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
4	1	buildings
1		sites
7		structures
		objects
12	1	Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

landscape: park
recreation & culture: auditorium
social: meeting hall

landscape: park
recreation & culture: auditorium
social: meeting hall

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

Materials
(enter categories from instructions)

other: rustic

foundations cobblestone
walls wood shingle

roof metal
other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance with the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

entertainment/recreation
social history
architecture

Period of Significance

1933-1946

Significant Dates

1933

1934, 1938

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Kyson, Charles H.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Farnsworth, Gen. Charles S. County Park
Name of Property

Los Angeles California
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 8.5 acres

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	[11]	[395740]	[3784690]
	Zone	Easting	Northing
2	[11]	[]	[]

3	[11]	[]	[]
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	[11]	[]	[]

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Judith P. Triem (Historian) Mitch Stone (Preservation Planner)

organization San Buenaventura Research Associates date 3/20/96

street & number 627 E. Pleasant Street telephone (805) 525-1909

city or town Santa Paula state CA zip code 93060

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

- A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- A Sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Department of Parks and Recreation, County of Los Angeles

street & number 433 South Vermont Avenue telephone

city or town Los Angeles state CA zip code 90020-1975

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (19 U.S.C. 470 et. seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding the burden estimate or any aspect of the form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 1

Farnsworth, Gen. Charles S. County Park, Los Angeles County, California — Narrative Description
[continued]

Summary

Farnsworth Park is located directly north of Pasadena, between Sierra Madre, on the east; the Arroyo Seco on the west and the San Gabriel Mountains to the north. Today the L-shaped park encompasses 14.78 acres. Originally the park comprised 8.5 acres, and it is this acreage that is being nominated. Nestled against the Altadena hillside directly below the San Gabriel Mountains and the Angeles National Forest, the park is defined by its extensive use of native granite stone seen in the walls, curbs, fireplaces and stairways of the tree-lined park. At the northeast corner, built into the hillside, is a massive two-story stone and shingle rustic style recreation building with its massive tapered boulders and battered walls. Below the building is the amphitheater, whose use of stone walls and steps reflects again the organic quality of its setting. Other original features of the park include the five-room ranger's cottage and garage, tennis courts, baseball diamond, horseshoe court, children's play area and picnic areas. The park layout and the recreation building have all retained their integrity of location, setting and design from their period of significance (1933-1946). Only the roofing materials have been changed. The park buildings all appear to be in excellent condition.

There are twelve contributing resources and one non-contributing resource. The four contributing buildings include the recreation building, ranger residence, garage and restroom. The park is one contributing site. The seven contributing structures include the amphitheater, stone wall system, two pergolas, picnic shelter and two stone barbecues. The non-contributing building includes one restroom built in 1954.

Built into a hillside, and rectangular in plan, the 60 by 105 foot, **recreation building** is two stories in height on the northern (downhill) elevation, and one story on the southern (uphill) elevation. The entire building is covered with a medium low side facing gable roof with hip roof sections at the west and east ends. The roof has recently been covered with brick red, standing-seam metal roofing, replacing the original wood shingle roof. Curved brackets are located under the shallow eaves.

The front (northern) elevation is divided into three parts. The center portion is built of native arroyo granite stone and concrete and openings are arranged symmetrically. The east end of the front facade is recessed with stone railing and steps leading up to a separate side entrance covered with shingles. At the west end of the front facade, the building is covered with shingle siding.

The middle stone-covered portion is divided symmetrically with two sets of double doors flanked by stone buttresses and steps. On either side of the entrance are paired windows and an adjacent single window. At the corners are stone buttresses. The windows are deeply recessed with radiating stone lintels and concrete sills. The wood casement windows are divided into three panes each except for the wood casement windows at the east end that have eight and six panes each. The original entrance doors have eight recessed panels each and iron handles. The set of double doors on the west side have been changed from paneled doors to solid doors. The concrete lintel over the entrance contains the name "The William D. Davies Memorial Building" given to it in 1943. The original name is on a the cornerstone to the east side of the entrance and says "Altadena Recreation Bldg., 1934."

Located at the northeast corner of the sloping hillside park, the recreation building is visually prominent from within the park itself especially when viewed from the path just above the baseball diamond. Here the two-story rear portion of the stone and shingled building projects its massiveness against the hillside with the amphitheater lying directly below it. Arranged in a symmetrical manner, the massive stone chimney divides the building in two vertically with balconies on either side. The building is also divided horizontally by the exterior materials. The lower portion is of stone and the upper portion is covered with wood shingles.

The rear of the building is divided into five parts. In the center is the massive stone and concrete chimney built in an irregular shape, with a large buttress on the west side and a concrete cap at the top. On either side of the chimney are balconies with slatted wood railings and large curved brackets underneath. An iron railing was added at a later date. The balcony openings are recessed and divided into four parts. The two center sections contain multi-paned wood doors flanked by multi-paned wood windows on either side. Transom windows are located above the doors and windows.

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Farnsworth, Gen. Charles S. County Park, Los Angeles County, California — Narrative Description
[continued]

Below the balconies are the first floor recessed entrances. The entrances have three solid wooden doors with transoms above that replaced the original French doors. In addition, there is another single paneled wood door, with glass in the upper portion, just west of the main entrance.

The west end of the rear of the building extends out from the recessed entrance area. On the first floor there are three recessed wood casement windows. On either side of the windows are stone buttresses. On the second floor is a pair of wood casement windows with shutters on either side. At the east end of the rear of the building is a single recessed multi-paned wood window flanked by stone buttresses on either side. A small wood casement window is located on the second floor.

The east elevation contains stone on the first floor and wood shingles on the second floor. A stone stairway and wall leads up the hill to the front of the building. A stone buttress is located at the south corner. Two pairs of wood casement windows are found on the second floor flanked by wood shutters.

The west elevation features a tall tapered stone chimney with a concrete cap at the top. A stairway leads down this side of the building and has a high stone wall and railing. There are several openings on this side of the building. French doors are located just north of the chimney. Another solid door is located just north of these doors. Windows are recessed on the south side of the chimney and are casement with three panes each. A pair of wood casement windows are located at the north end of the west elevation. Above these windows are another grouping of three casement windows under the roofline.

The building's massiveness is apparent particularly in the stonework with its tapered foundation. The building's strong relationship to the earth with the heavy use of stone and wood shingles gives it a rustic Craftsman-like appearance. It is similar to many of the rustic lodges built in the National Parks, only on a smaller scale. The three-part wood casement windows and the shorter eaves, and in some places no eaves, reflect the trend of the 1930s when it was built.

Interior

The interior has retained its original rustic appearance especially on the main floor. As you enter from the front of the building, there is a small foyer with a cloak room to the east and a restroom to the west. A set of French doors opens into the main auditorium. On the south wall is the massive stone fireplace. At the east end of the room is a raised stage. The ceiling is open rusticated beams with notched brackets. The original massive wrought iron chandeliers hang from the ceiling while smaller iron sconces are found along the walls. The floors are hardwood. At the southwest end of the building is a smaller room, originally called the game room, with a lower ceiling and stone fireplace. The kitchen is located at the northwest corner.

On the lower floor, below the auditorium, is a large open room, originally called the assembly room, with a massive stone fireplace. Dressing rooms are located at the east end of the building under the stage area. On the east end, with a separate entrance, is the former caretaker's room, kitchen and storage area. This room now serves as offices for the Parks and Recreation Department employees. The lower floor, in general, appears to retain its original appearance.

The 500-seat **amphitheater** is built into the hillside directly below the recreation building. It was built in 1938 using WPA funds. The long wooden seats are slightly curved and divided into three sections of sixteen rows each facing the small grassy stage area south of the building. The walls and steps are of native stone. Below the amphitheater is another stone wall and a stone lined concrete walkway that leads from the amphitheater through a grassy area to the baseball diamond at the south end of the park.

The original eight and a half acre park is crisscrossed with stone lined concrete paths. The park is divided from north to south with different areas for various functions. The east side of the park contains the recreation building, a grassy area dotted with ornamental trees and a baseball field with bleachers. An asphalt parking lot is located at the far southeast corner.

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 7 Page 3

Farnsworth, Gen. Charles S. County Park, Los Angeles County, California — Narrative Description
[continued]

The center portion of the park contains picnic areas with tables and fireplaces. At the northern end is a covered **picnic shelter** with a large grouping of picnic tables. The covered **pergola** has a long gable roof supported by round wood posts, with brackets, surrounded by concrete and stone at the base. New picnic tables are located inside. It is covered with a new metal roof.

In the center portion lies the original **stone barbecues** and massive picnic tables built by the L.A. County Forestry Department. Their insignia cast in concrete with a bear above a shield enclosing a pine tree can be found embedded in the stone fireplaces and at the base of the picnic tables. Adjacent to the picnic area is an original **restroom** of concrete and stone. The stone is located on the lower half of this rectangular shaped gable-roofed building. Directly below this area is a more modern concrete block restroom (1954) with a shed roof.

On the west side of the park, from north to south, is located the former ranger's residence and garage, horseshoe court, the tennis courts, children's play area and a pergola/picnic area.

The **ranger's residence and garage** were also built in 1934 by the CCC from the Earl Canyon Camp. The CCC also built the picnic tables, benches and stoves. The residence is a one story cottage, with a steep pitched side-facing gable roof and a shed roof portion extending over the porch. The porch is supported by three chamfered wood columns and an open wood railing. The north side is enclosed. A wing extends west from the rear of the house, creating an L-shape. The cottage is covered with wide tongue and groove wood siding. Windows, arranged in pairs, are one over two with wood casings. The house rests on a concrete perimeter foundation. The metal roof is punctuated with a brick chimney. Both of these elements appear to be recent additions. Behind the house, facing north to the road, is a two-car garage designed in a similar style and materials as the house. The house is surrounded by an open horizontal wooden fence and contains a few trees, shrubs and lawn.

Directly below the ranger's house is the horseshoe court followed by four large tennis courts surrounded by stone walls. These courts have been terraced into the hillside in order to establish a flat playing area. Below the tennis courts is the asphaltic concrete paved hardcourts with an adjacent stone columned **pergola**. Below this area is the children's play area and at the far southwest corner of the park is a second wooden **pergola** covered with vines. The south entrance to the park is located on Concha Street, where a **stone wall** extends across the entire southern boundary of the park. At the entrance are curved stone walls leading into a narrow palm lined road with stone curbs that runs north and south through the park. There are a large number and variety of trees and shrubs scattered about the park. It is uncertain how many are from the original planting plan. The majority of trees are pines and palms.

The park has retained its basic layout from the time it was established between 1934 and 1938. All of the courts, picnic areas, and play areas are still in their original places. The only major changes to the buildings have been metal roofs that were added during the 1980s. A brick chimney may have replaced a stone chimney at the same time although no information is available at this time. The children's play equipment has been modernized over the years, the courts have been resurfaced, and additional picnic tables have been added.

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Section number 8 Page 4

Farnsworth, Gen. Charles S. County Park, Los Angeles County, California — Narrative Statement of Significance [continued]

Summary

Built between 1933 and 1938, the 8.5 acre Farnsworth Park and the William D. Davies Memorial Building are eligible under Criterion A for their historic association with the Altadena community and its role in the establishment, development and management of the park for recreation/entertainment purposes as well as for promoting the use of work relief programs established under the Roosevelt administration during the Great Depression. Farnsworth Park continues to play an important role as the major recreational facility in Altadena. The 8.5 acre park reflects a combined effort of public works programs including the labor of local men hired under the CWA and WPA programs, the young men of the Earl Canyon CCC camp, and the contribution of the park and building designs from the County Forestry Department and the County Parks and Recreation Department.

In addition, the recreation building is also eligible under Criterion C because it is a distinctive and rare example of the rustic style typical of lodges and recreation buildings once found throughout the nearby Angeles National Forest. The ranger residence at Farnsworth Park is also a rare local example of federal work program construction built during the Depression era of the 1930s. The park itself is important because of its extensive use of stonework found in walls, barbecues and amphitheater.

Period of Significance

The period of significance is based on the property's continuous use as a park and recreation facility from 1933 to 1946. Although the park continues to serve in this capacity today, no exceptional events have occurred within the last fifty years to justify a more recent period of significance; therefore the period of significance ends at 1946.

Recreation/Social History Context

Farnsworth Park and the William D. Davies Memorial Building have a dual association as a recreation/entertainment facility as well as an important example of social history through both community and government involvement. These two areas of significance developed together so they will be discussed together in the following paragraphs which trace the chronological development of the park and recreation center, the involvement of the Altadena community and the role played by the work relief programs.

Park development

The eight and a half acre site, known today as Farnsworth Park, was originally leased by Los Angeles County Forestry Department in 1916 for use as a reforestation nursery. Seedling incense cedar and Coulter pines were grown on the site with water obtained from the nearby Las Flores Water Company. In 1921 the county purchased the site from Christopher and Mary Gordon, and by 1927 had also established an ornamental nursery on the grounds. During the period it served as a nursery (1916-1929), approximately one million trees were raised, and planted in watershed areas throughout Los Angeles County. By 1929 both the reforestation nursery and the ornamental nursery were moved to more suitable and larger sites at Henninger Flats and Pacoima, and the Board of Supervisors began consideration of the property's future.

Several Altadena citizens, noting the vacant property, began to visualize a park on this hillside setting at the very northern edge of Altadena at the base of the San Gabriel Mountain foothills. In June 1932, members of the community, under the leadership of General Charles S. Farnsworth, contacted Supervisor Henry Wright, representative of the district, to ask if the former nursery grounds could be used for picnics. The county authorized its Department of Forestry, on October 31, 1932, to begin plans for development of a park, although no funds were available at the time. A formal petition in favor of park development was then sent to the Board of Supervisors by Altadena citizens in January 1933, and the Board authorized appropriations to begin development of Altadena Park in March of that year. However, funds to complete the park were still scarce, and it would take funding from the federal work programs authorized by the United States Congress under the Roosevelt administration to finally complete the park.

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Continuation Sheet

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Farnsworth, Gen. Charles S. County Park, Los Angeles County, California — Narrative Statement of Significance [continued]

CWA workers, some 300 strong, began working on the park development on December 15, 1933. Trees and plants were furnished by the county under a plan developed jointly by the County Recreation Department and the County Forestry Department. By March 22, 1934, the park was three-fourths completed. The improvements covered eight acres and included lawns, trees, picnic tables with fireplaces, pergolas, tennis courts, children's playgrounds, a baseball diamond and other facilities. The construction began on the recreation building in March and was completed by September 1934.

Joining the unemployed workers hired by the CWA, were young men from the nearby Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp at Earl Canyon. These boys were hired to build a ranger's residence/station, garage, business office, picnic tables and stoves. The supervisor of the CCC camp was H.A. Kerton, who was also a member of the Los Angeles County Forestry Service.

A number of Altadena citizens representing a variety of local organizations were influential in the development of the park and recreation building. General Charles S. Farnsworth played a key role in promoting the idea of the former nursery as a park in his role on the park committee of the Altadena Citizens' Association, and by working with the supervisor for the Altadena district to convince the county of the need for a park at this site. He also apparently helped supervise the grading, landscaping and construction activities in the park. General Farnsworth, a native of Pennsylvania, retired to Altadena in 1925 after 42 years of service in the military. His military credits included service as the Chief of Infantry under three U.S. presidents, and as a member of General Pershing's staff during World War I. He became very active in a large number of Altadena organizations and was highly regarded as a civic leader. Altadena Park was renamed Farnsworth Park in his honor at a special dedication ceremony held on June 3, 1939.

Recreation Center Development

The concept of building a recreation center at Altadena Park was initiated in August of 1933 by the Recreation and Building Committee of the Woman's Circle of Altadena, formed during the park's development. Mrs. Walter D. Thurber, chairperson, and Mrs. C.W. Baker, chair of building construction, were the persons most responsible for initiating the project and obtaining funds. Apparently the clubwomen were seeking funds not just for a new recreation center, but for a project that would put unemployed Altadenans to work. Private funds of \$46,000 had been raised in the Altadena community between 1931 and 1933, providing general work relief for 650 men and 250 women, but these were exhausted by late in 1933. Precisely how these private funds were spent is presently unknown. An application for federal monies, then becoming available from Harry Hopkins' Civil Works Administration (CWA), was filed in August 1933. Funds totaling \$30,500 for construction of the recreation building were approved on December 7, 1933.

The stated purpose of the building was to provide Altadenans with a "family play center." The Woman's Circle was responding to the moral issues surrounding the Great Depression. According to an article in the *Altadena Press* for December 7, 1933,

Steps must be taken at once to offset the temptations brought about by lack of adequate liquor control and to train both youth and adults for a wise and happy use of leisure time which seems to be on the increase.

The building is to be a two-story boulder construction with a large auditorium and stage seating 500 people. Game room, dressing rooms, etc. will be provided. This will be a beautiful building, one of which Altadena will be proud.

Wide stone terraces will surround the building, the site of which will be at the northwest corner of Altadena Park, Lake and Concha street. A beautiful and unobstructed view of the mountains is to be had.

The recreation building will be placed adjoining and overlooking the beautiful natural Greek amphitheater, which is to be constructed of natural green hedge walls sculptured to form artistic boundaries as is so successfully done in European cities, especially in Florence, Italy.

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 6

Farnsworth, Gen. Charles S. County Park, Los Angeles County, California — Narrative Statement of Significance [continued]

The new Altadena Recreation Building was dedicated on October 28, 1934 with approximately 940 citizens attending the opening ceremony. General C.S. Farnsworth conducted the cornerstone laying portion of the ceremony with William D. Davies as general chairman of the dedication committee. Following introductory statements of congratulations from a number of dignitaries, Dr. Theodore Soares, pastor of the Neighborhood Church and professor of ethics at Cal Tech, dedicated the building to seven purposes. Among these were "human and civic betterment" (Pasadena Evening Post, 10/29/34, p. 5).

An article that appeared in the *Altadena Press* for April 1, 1937 highlights the activities at the new Recreation Building three years after its opening.

Altadena Recreation Building has had a prominent part in the recreational, cultural, moral and educational advancement of the community... it has been a center for meetings, assemblies, dances, entertainments or exhibits for civic, social, educational or other suitable purposes.

Outstanding among the activities carried on in the recreation building are soirees, held monthly, Theater Americana and the Friday night dances held the first and third weeks of each month.

The Theater Americana began in 1934 as a small community theater in the new recreation building, and continued to use the facilities to produce four plays annually until fairly recently.

On August 31, 1943, the Recreation Building was renamed the William D. Davies Memorial Building, to honor Mr. Davies posthumously for his work in the organization of the Board of Control and his work in the establishment of the park, along with General Charles S. Farnsworth. The long-term lease agreement between the county and the Board of Control expired in 1954, and the Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation Department took over the management of the Memorial Building. In 1973 the county acquired approximately 5.86 additional acres to the west of the original site, bringing the total acreage of the park to its present 14.78 acres.

Following the completion of the new building, a Board of Control was incorporated on September 13, 1934, as a non-profit corporation responsible for "equipping, furnishing and operating the building, supplying the janitor service, lighting, heating and water" (Ives, 1938: 276). The Board of Control was comprised of one representative from each of twenty-three local organizations. The County of Los Angeles leased the building to the Board of Control who supervised the operations. The Altadena Woman's Circle and the Altadena Woman's Club together with several individual citizens, raised \$5,000 to furnish and equip the recreation building.

Between March 1937 and early 1938, numerous improvements were completed in Altadena Park. During this time, 100 Works Progress Administration (WPA) workers constructed walls, excavated and built the amphitheater and dressing rooms, graded for the baseball diamond and bleachers, constructed concrete walkways, an irrigation system and additional landscaping.

The park and recreation building were important for the role they played locally as the major center for recreational, cultural and social activities. As an unincorporated, and primarily residential community lacking local government, Altadena had few public meeting places and no recreation areas until Farnsworth Park was established and the recreation building was constructed by Los Angeles County. The only other public buildings constructed in Altadena during this time period were the Altadena Public Library, built in 1936 and the Eliot Junior High School built in 1931, whose 600 seat auditorium was used for citizens' meetings and concerts over the years. The library building (2366 North Lake Avenue) is no longer in use as a library, and has been altered. The recreation building served as the main community meeting hall used by clubs and organizations for cultural and social events and amateur theatricals. The park served as the major recreation facility for Altadena.

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Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 7

Farnsworth, Gen. Charles S. County Park, Los Angeles County, California — Narrative Statement of Significance [continued]

In addition to its recreational uses, a variety of cultural activities have been held in the park over the years. Special events sponsored by local clubs included the annual Easter Sunrise Service and parade, the Altadena Country Fair, a summer Shakespeare festival, a Black History festival, and a Halloween celebration and bonfire. Schools held their annual fund raising carnivals and senior citizens held dances. Outdoor movies, sponsored by merchants, were held during the summer months. During Arbor Days, trees were planted.

Architectural Context

The Recreation Building (William D. Davies Memorial Building), was constructed in 1934 using funds from the CWA. The building was designed by Charles H. Kyson, a Los Angeles architect, who was apparently employed by the Los Angeles County Forestry Department during the time the building was constructed. The plans for the building, park and amphitheater were all prepared under the auspices of this county department.

The recreation building is a distinctive, late example of the rustic style, characterized by the prominent use of native arroyo stone and wood shingle siding. Local antecedents for the rustic style can be found in the great number of lodges, hotels, camps and tourist attractions built in the nearby Angeles National Forest from the 1880s through the 1930s. While these buildings often incorporated elements of the simultaneously-occurring Victorian, Colonial Revival, California Bungalow and period revival styles, rustic style buildings can be differentiated from these others by the conspicuous use of "found" materials, such as local stone for foundations, chimneys and walls, peeled or split logs, and hand-hewn materials. These woody character-defining elements were typically carried indoors in a deliberate effort to produce a naturalist, un-citified informality. A carefully defined and respectful relationship between the building, site and landscape treatments are usually emphasized.

The rustic style has been written about in some depth by U.S. Forest Service historian Gail Throop in her Multiple Property National Register Nomination for USDA Forest Service Administrative Buildings in the States of Oregon and Washington. She summarizes the style in the following manner,

The rustic style represents an early twentieth century movement in American architecture. Based on a philosophy of nonintrusiveness, it was particularly appropriate to rural environments. It was picturesque, romantic architecture that recalled the American past, was wholly integrated with the landscape and responsive to the environment. The idiom was developed as a solution to the problem of providing facilities for the public, in National Parks and Forests, and in state parks that did not compete with natural or scenic values. Rustic helped to create an image, and to convey an ethic of conservation. It strongly influenced public expectations about the appropriate character and appearance of recreational and administrative buildings in parks and forests. In the eloquence of its expression and its divergence from the trend toward functionalism in urban architecture, rustic made an important contribution to twentieth century American architectural thought (Throop, 1986: E-8).

The rustic style is closely identified with the American Arts and Crafts style (e.g., California Bungalow and Craftsman Bungalow), but can be seen to both predate and survive it. The Arts and Crafts-inspired architectural styles played a particularly important role in the San Gabriel foothills region after 1905. Even as the Arts and Crafts style was diminishing in importance after 1920, however, the park rustic style persisted at least into the 1930s. Notable local examples of the rustic style include Switzer's Camp in the Arroyo Seco (mid-1880s and later), Sturtevant's Camp in Big Santa Anita Canyon (1893 and later), Ye Alpine Tavern on Mount Lowe (1896), Mount Wilson Hotel (1905) and Hanson's Lodge in Big Tujunga Canyon (circa 1910). All of these buildings have since been destroyed by fire or flood.

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Farnsworth, Gen. Charles S. County Park, Los Angeles County, California — Narrative Statement of Significance [continued]

The rustic style building tradition was continued well into the 1930s by the United States Forest Service, with the construction of vast numbers of ranger station buildings in National Forests throughout the West. These cottages and utility buildings, while generally modest in scale and often somewhat modern in design, nevertheless clearly represented an awareness of the park rustic style building conventions. The persistence of the style is even more clearly portrayed in the designs of numerous buildings constructed in the western National Parks during the first four decades of the century, including the Yellowstone Inn (1902), the Paradise Inn on Mt. Rainier (1917-26), the Ahwanee Hotel in Yosemite (1926), and Timberline Lodge on Mt. Hood .

The William D. Davies Memorial Building exhibits many of the characteristic design elements associated with the rustic style. The massive, asymmetrical boulder chimney provides the primary visual focus of the southern elevation. This detail, along with the boulder first floor walls, and a similar exterior chimney on the western elevation, establish the intended rustic and informal effect. The stone walls constructed throughout the park, but particularly in proximity to the building, serve to further anchor the building into its setting. The building's interior features heavy, timber ceiling joists with a distressed (burnt) finishes, hammered wrought iron light fixtures, and large stone fireplaces.

The building plans for the ranger residence and garage were apparently very similar to plans produced for use in the national forests of California during the Depression-era building program. Many very similar ranger cottages were built by the CCC in the Angeles National Forest using one of three general plans produced for the San Francisco district office. A perusal of national forest photographs of ranger buildings has turned up two that are quite similar to the ranger cottage at Farnsworth Park. One is located at the Mineral Ranger Station in the Lassen National Forest and the other is on the Rincon Ranger station in the Angeles National Forest. The main design characteristics are the wide tongue and groove siding and the distinctive one-by-two over two-by-two double hung windows, which were used frequently for ranger residences located on Angeles National Forest administrative sites. The plan is a typical five-room ranger residence: I-shape with a high gable roof and intersecting rear gable (SBRA, 1993: II-29; Supernowicz, 1989:Appendix F, #305816).

This cottage is a rare, intact example of a ranger's residence from this era. Of the numerous examples constructed in the Angeles National Forest, only one is known to remain largely intact. As a result, the ranger residence at Farnsworth Park constitutes one of the best surviving examples of the class of federal work program construction built during the Depression era of the 1930s.

The park was designed by the Los Angeles County Department of Forestry working in cooperation with the Parks and Recreation Department. The requirements of the local residents for recreation services were accommodated in the park plan. A somewhat difficult site because of its steep slope, certain areas had to be excavated. The tennis courts, the recreation building and amphitheater were all excavated in order to obtain level sites. Other areas were terraced for a children's play area and and group picnic areas. The center of the park was left open and sloping for picnic tables and fireplaces. A baseball diamond is located at the southeast corner of the park. The park was carefully planned with the recreation areas and buildings around the periphery and the center left open for strolling along stone-lined paths or picnicking at individual tables.

Charles H. Kyson, architect

Born in California on May 17, 1883, Charles Kyson (nee, Kysor) was the son of pioneer Los Angeles architect Ezra F. Kysor, whose firm of Kysor and Morgan designed the Pico House and St. Vibiana's Cathedral in Los Angeles. Kysor, a native of New York, opened his Los Angeles practice in 1868. Kysor's son Charles had apparently changed his name to Kyson by the 1920s.

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Farnsworth, Gen. Charles S. County Park, Los Angeles County, California — Narrative Statement of Significance [continued]

Charles Kyson attended Throop Polytechnic Institute in Pasadena followed by the Columbia School of Architecture in New York. Following his education, he spent two years in Paris and Rome studying architecture. In 1911 he opened an office in the Wright and Callendar Building in Los Angeles. Between 1911 and 1913 he worked with Frederick Noonan and Charles H. Biggar, specializing in hotels and apartment buildings. In 1912 Kysor and Biggar designed a shingle-clad Craftsman residence for Dr. Allen Winter at 2762 Visscher Place in Altadena. One of Kyson's most notable buildings was the Tudor Revival style administration building he designed for Forest Lawn Memorial Park in Glendale in 1918. He was appointed architect of the American Historical Review and Motion Picture Exposition held in Los Angeles in July 1923, and placed in charge of the design and building development. He was also named president of the Motion Picture Art Directors Association in 1923 and president of the Hollywood Architects' League in 1926. By the 1930s, Kyson appears to be working for the County of Los Angeles Forestry Department. During this time, he designed the recreation building for Farnsworth Park. After 1934, no further buildings were identified as having been designed by Kyson, and no specific date was given for his retirement. He died in Los Angeles in 1954 and is buried at Forest Lawn in Glendale.

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Farnsworth, Gen. Charles S. County Park, Los Angeles County, California — Major Bibliographic References [continued]

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Pasadena Evening Post, 8/4/33; 1/14/34; 10/29/34

Pasadena Star News, 3/22/34; 4/25/54; 12/20/55

Southwest Builder and Contractor, 11/16/11, p. 9; 2/16/23, p. 35; 2/5/26, p. 47; 2/9/34, p. 56.

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**Farnsworth, Gen. Charles S. County Park, Los Angeles County, California — Verbal Boundary
Description [continued]**

The eight and a half acre park is bounded on the north by Mt. Curve Avenue, on the east by Lake Avenue, on the South by Concha Street and on the west by the 5.86 acre park addition and a residential lot. The park measures 473.61' on the north, by 648.71' on the east, by 648.70' on the south, by 622.60' on the west.

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Farnsworth, Gen. Charles S. County Park, Los Angeles County, California — Boundary Justification
[continued]

The boundary includes the original 8.5 acre park established in 1933 including the buildings and park features and stone walls that have all been historically part of Farnsworth Park. The adjacent 5.86 acres west of the park has been excluded because it was not acquired until 1973.

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Farnsworth, Gen. Charles S. County Park, Los Angeles County, California — Photo Log [continued]

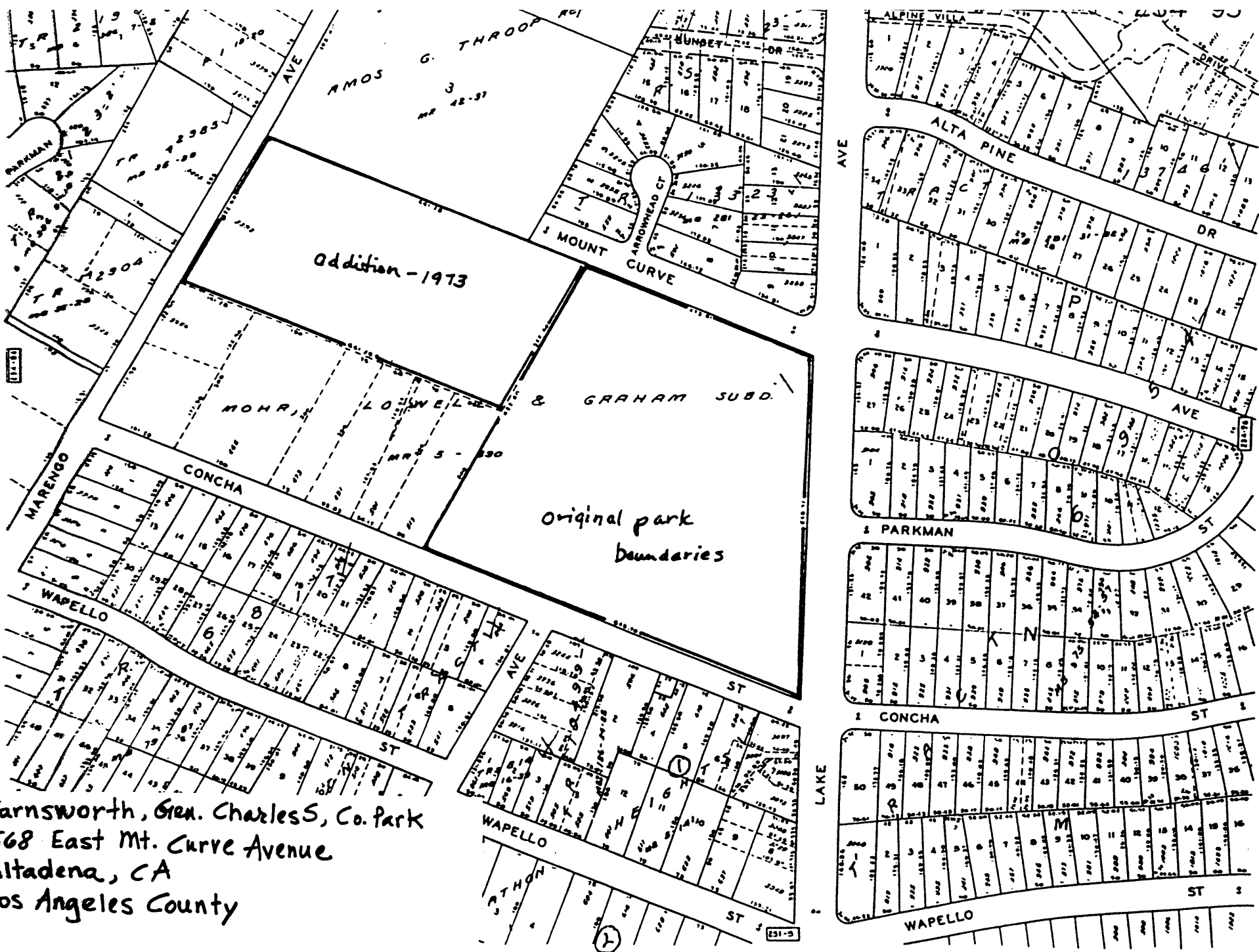
Farnsworth Park
Altadena
Los Angeles County, CA

Photographer: Herbert Herr

Date of photographs: April 20, 1996

Location of negatives: Altadena Heritage, P.O. Box 186, Altadena, CA 91003

- 1 Recreation Building, north elevation (main entrance), looking southwest
- 2 Recreation Building, east elevation, looking west
- 3 Recreation Building, south elevation, looking north
- 4 Recreation Building, close-up of south elevation, looking northwest
- 5 Recreation Building, west elevation, looking southeast
- 6 Recreation Building, close-up of west elevation, looking east
- 7 Recreation Building interior, auditorium, looking east
- 8 Recreation Building interior, auditorium, looking south
- 9 Amphitheater, looking north
- 10 Ranger residence, east elevation, looking southwest
- 11 South entrance to park, looking north
- 12 South entrance to park, looking north
- 13 Children's play area with tennis courts beyond, looking northwest
- 14 Horseshoe pitching court, looking southwest
- 15 Group picnic area, looking northwest
- 16 Picnic table, close-up, showing shield of L.A. County Forestry Department, with restroom building beyond, looking west
- 17 Strolling area and individual picnic table, looking north
- 18 Picnic area with pergola, north side of park, looking northwest



Farnsworth, Gen. Charles S, Co. Park
 568 East Mt. Curve Avenue
 Altadena, CA
 Los Angeles County

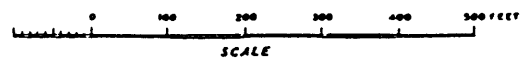
MAP BY HATFIELD

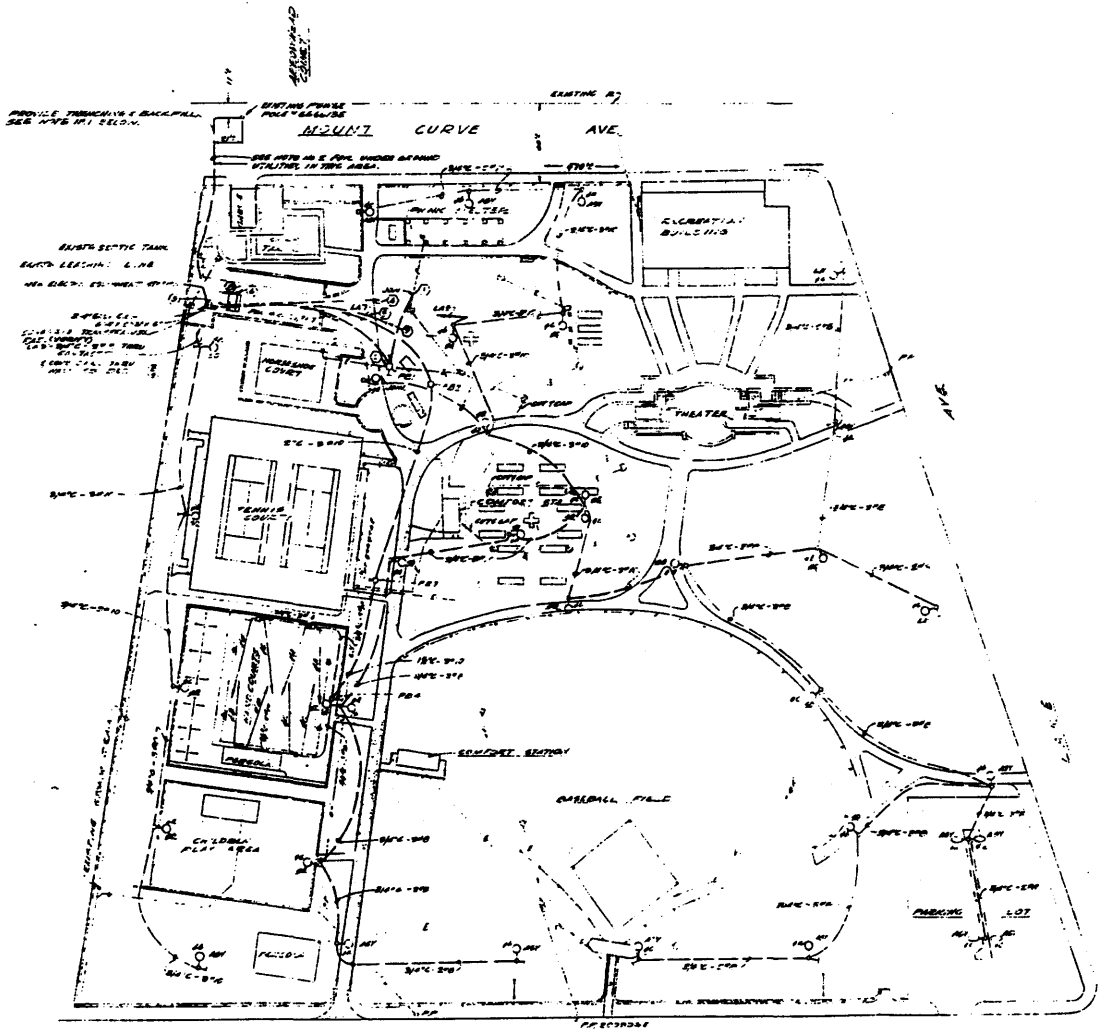
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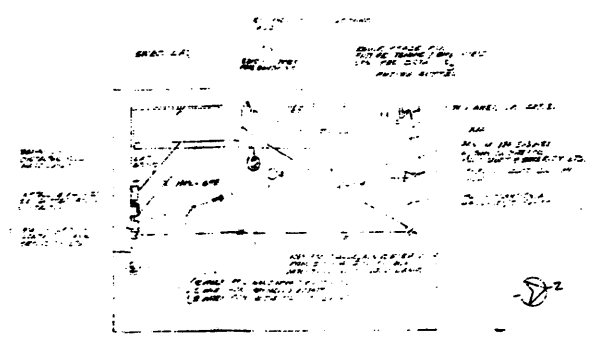
PROVIDE TERRACING & BACKFILL
SEE NOTE #11 BELOW

RECREATION BUILDING
SEE NOTE #11 BELOW

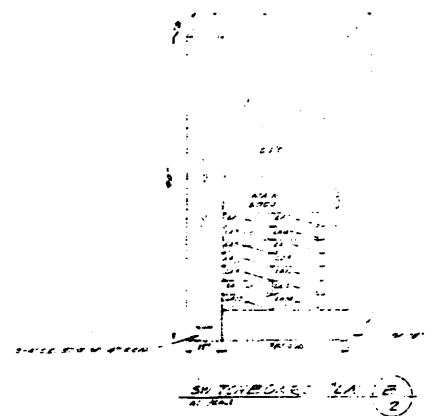
SEWER SYSTEM TANK
SEE NOTE #11 BELOW

CONCHA

PLOT PLAN
SCALE 1" = 40'-0"



ELECTRICAL SYMBOLS
SEE NOTE #11



SEE NOTE #11
SCALE 1" = 40'-0"

- NOTES
1. CONSTRUCTION SHALL BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CITY OF ALTADENA SPECIFICATIONS AND ALL CITY ORDINANCES. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR OBTAINING ALL NECESSARY PERMITS AND APPROVALS FROM THE CITY OF ALTADENA AND THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR OBTAINING ALL NECESSARY PERMITS AND APPROVALS FROM THE CITY OF ALTADENA AND THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS.
 2. ALL UTILITIES SHALL BE LOCATED AND DEPTH MARKED PRIOR TO CONSTRUCTION. THE CONTRACTOR SHALL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR OBTAINING ALL NECESSARY PERMITS AND APPROVALS FROM THE CITY OF ALTADENA AND THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS.
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Farnsworth, Gen. Charles S., Co. Park
568 East Mt. Curve Avenue
Altadena, CA
Los Angeles County

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
ELECTRICAL DIVISION
GENERAL CHARLES S. FARNSWORTH
COUNTY PARK