

**Reconciling Conflict over Urban Public Space: Perceptions of
Park Space in Seattle (c. 1960 to present)**

Thesis submitted for the degree of MPhil in American Studies

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Abstract

During the second half of the twentieth century, Seattle's urban form altered, much like many other major US cities. A variety of different land uses competed in the urban realm for space – commercial, transportation, leisure and recreational, to name a few. As the post-industrial city developed in Seattle, a re-examination of park spaces also occurred which often pitted competing visions of space against each other in the pursuit of establishing a place in which people could use, free from the confines of modern life. While often experimental in their form, these spaces continued a long tradition of park creation in the city of Seattle, that first took root in the early plans of the Olmsted Brothers at the start of the twentieth century. This thesis explores the new form that this 'park's culture' took between 1960 and the early part of the twenty first century and attempts to place the 'people' back into the conversation of park developments. Often, the perceptions of urban residents held considerable power and influence over the trajectory such spaces took on their journey from conception to fruition. By looking at three Seattle parks in particular, this thesis will contend that these particular parks represented a novel form of place-making in park spaces, and that the backdrop of a receptive public towards parks in Seattle allowed these places to become integral parts of the public realm in the city.

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Introduction: Tracing a 'park culture' in Seattle

From the Industrial to the Post-Industrial City

In the second half of the twentieth century, Seattle, a city famous for its futuristic urbanism and environmental credentials, entered a period of urban change which redefined traditional meanings of public space. From the 1940s onwards, provoked by the domestic reorganisation of the American nation owing first to the demands of a global war, and then to an accelerated process of urbanisation, cities such as Seattle entered a 'distinct era' of urban growth to become 'national and even international pacesetters.'¹ What occurred in Seattle was mirrored in other cities across the United States. Subsequent to the end of the Second World War, American cities decentralised and suburbanised. Economic and social activity moved away from the metropolitan core to the periphery, along with cohorts of urban residents, typically affluent and middle-class families who sought suburban living, in an era which has since been labelled as 'deindustrialisation'.² As a result, public space design and function evolved too, as American cities transitioned towards a post-industrial age no longer characterised by traditional heavy industry and manufacturing. Operating against the backdrop of this broader change in urban trend and function, our understanding of public space shifted too, with a conceptual conflict arising between accepted and new experimental models of social space.

In suburban communities, new social spaces were created which blurred the divide between public and private, often by embodying the uptake of plazas, park-themed landscaping, and collaborative

¹ Carl Abbott, *The Metropolitan Frontier: Cities in the Modern American West*, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1995), p.xii.

² Two works on the topic of suburbanisation in the United States encompasses two centuries of the process. The latter sections of both Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); and Dolores Hayden, *Building Suburbia: Green Fields and Urban Growth, 1820-2000*, (New York: Vintage Books, 2005), deal with post-Second World War suburbanisation in relation to the American middle class, though moves to 'the suburbs' is by no means limited to this particular social group.

approaches to design planning. The growth of the suburban shopping mall heralded the infiltration of commercial activity into shared social space with such spaces constituting a 'contemporary replacement for the town square' despite being controlled by private entities.³ Similar patterns of public-private redefinition gained apace in the downtown too with the advent of new urban planning approaches which celebrated the bridging of the figurative divide between these two spheres of influence. To reflect these spatial shifts operating across the post-industrial American city in this period, downtown public space assumed new meaning, away from the traditional toward a modernised present.

In Seattle, this meant finding outlets for public space in areas where the 'public' aspect of spatial function had previously been excluded, unwelcomed, or absent. Consequentially, this raised new questions for planners and architects such as, how does public space function in conjunction with an industrial land use, or a derelict city space; and how can public spaces be used as a tool to reconnect divisions created by the construction of mass infrastructure such as Interstate highway expansion? To combat potential decline and decay, architects and planners experimented with public space functions as a mechanism to revitalise abandoned or contested locations in Seattle, and turned these spaces into components which contributed to popular and collective identities of the city. It will be the focus of this thesis to explore how these experimentations proliferated across the city of Seattle, with the intention of teasing out hidden voices, and tracking the shifts in agency and influence. The creation of new and innovative park spaces came about as a result of these spatial contests which were often the first of their kind nationally, or internationally.

³ Lisa Scharoun, *America at the Mall: The Cultural Role of a Retail Utopia*, (Jefferson, SC: McFarland & Co. Inc., 2012), p.88; for a wider summary of the meaning of public space in the context of the North American suburban mall complex, see Naomi Klein, *No Logo: No Space, No Choice, No Jobs* (London: Flamingo, 2001).

Urban Planning in Seattle

Urban planning was by no means a new phenomenon by the mid-point of the twentieth century. Urban theory movements such as the Chicago School, the Garden City Movement, City Beautiful proponents, and the Olmsted family and partners illustrate a complex web of theoretical interest in the urban and built environments during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.⁴ However, a greater appreciation of public space in the urban environment gained greater traction as a result of federal policy stemming from the 1930s. Shifting economic and social attitudes towards the city in the post-war period was accompanied by the continuation of large-scale investment by the federal government, which began under the administration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Up to, and during the Second World War, Seattle's urban economy was rooted in industrial manufacturing, military production and training, and assembly engineering, in addition to a longer history connected to extracting regional natural resource wealth.

One indicator which reflected Seattle's shift towards a post-industrial city was the economy. This industrial trend continued in Seattle for a time after 1945, but deindustrialisation had begun in earnest by the time of the 'Boeing Bust' in the late 1960s. Boeing employed 104,000 workers in 1968, but by 1976, layoffs and cutbacks reduced that number to 55,000 employees mirroring a nationwide trend in the commercial aerospace industry.⁵ Elsewhere shipbuilding and regional extractive industries such as lumber production began to decline. By the 1970s Seattle was diversifying, with high-tech, entertainment, and services industries growing increasingly important to the city economy. The shift

⁴ A comprehensive overview of the Chicago School has been written by Martin Bulmer, *The Chicago School of Sociology*, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1984); The works of leader Chicago School thinkers such as Ernest W. Burgess, Homer Hoyt, and Edward L. Ullman are synthesised in Nicholas R. Fyfe and Judith T. Kenny, *The Urban Geography Reader*, (New York: Routledge, 2005), pp.13-56. For more on the Garden and City Beautiful movements see William H. Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement*, (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1989), and Stanley Buder, *Visionaries and Planners: The Garden City Movement and the Modern Community*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp.133-156, 157-181.

⁵ Roger Sale, *Seattle Past to Present*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1978) p.216, 238. Timothy A. Gibson, *Securing the Spectacular City: The Politics of Revitalization and Homelessness in Seattle*, (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2004), pp.35-58 (37-38).

away from goods-producing industries towards service-providing industries was evidenced by the fact in 1990 the latter outpaced the former by 772,400 employees to 317,400.⁶ By 2000, Seattle's service-producing industries had added 91,700 new jobs, while goods-producing industries employed 2,000 more workers than the sector had a decade earlier. Transformations in Seattle's economy reflect one marker of wider urban trends during the second half of the twentieth century.

Amidst these economic and industrial shifts, Seattle's downtown character, designed in the early twentieth century endured into the 1970s. Thereafter, despite industrial decline, urban renewal projects began to recast the downtown form, providing fertile ground for service and entertainment activities to shape the central business district. Matching nationwide urban policy of the Johnson administration, one such example of renewal was through the work of the 'Forward Thrust Committee', founded by citizen activist James R. Ellis. Ballot Initiatives proposed under Forward Thrust in the late 1960s indicated both a desire by city elites to effectively plan for future growth in Seattle, and also demonstrated an engagement of the city's population in deciding how funds should be allocated.⁷ Forward Thrust propositions were met with mixed results; however the ballot initiatives and the advocates behind them, such as Ellis, captured a city-wide moment when the approach to municipal planning shifted in a bid to rejuvenate the downtown with the active participation of the urban citizenry.⁸ A 'parks culture', to be discussed later, fed off a long history of participatory initiative amongst Seattle residents, which ties with a 'progressive ethos' of Washington state dating back to

⁶ Employment data according to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, <http://www.bls.gov/eag/eag.wa_seattle_msa.htm#eag_wa_seattle_msa.f.P>, [accessed 5 November 2016]. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics defines 'goods-producing industries' for Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, Washington as 'mining and logging', 'manufacturing', and 'construction' sectors, and defines 'service-providing industries' as 'professional and business services', 'trade, transportation, and utilities', 'education and health services', 'financial activities', 'leisure and hospitality', and 'information' sectors of the labour force.

⁷ William H. Mullins, 'The Persistence of Progressivism: James R. Ellis and the Forward Thrust Campaign', *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, Vol. 105, No. 2 (Spring 2014), pp.55-72.

⁸ Mullins, 'Not Quite Big League: The Pilots and Seattle in the 1960s', *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, Vol. 100, No. 4, pp.120-133, p.122.

the turn of the twentieth century.⁹ This thesis will unpick and examine these reform-minded identities in the context of park space and the public experience.

Accompanying this initial focus on urban function, Seattle's population fluctuated. Newcomers to the city had bolstered population growth during the 1950s and 1960s, but the reorganisation of urban functions and the effects of deindustrialisation resulted in job losses and flight to the suburbs in the 1970s. However, Seattle's approach to downtown public spaces, by city government and Forward Thrust fostered an element of renewal which sought to prevent urban decline which accompanied deindustrialisation in other American cities, to which Detroit, Michigan has become a much-used comparative example of the late twentieth century.¹⁰ Deindustrialisation shifts have often escorted identities of decline, dereliction, and decay. In Seattle, inner city initiatives particularly those centred on the function of downtown public space, contributed instead to an identity of progress and renewal. Standard bearers for this positive identity in Seattle range from the 1962 World's Fair, to foresight of individuals such as Ellis, the democratic participation of the city through Forward Thrust, and the advocates of new social spaces to replace outdated land uses.

Seattle Identities through Public Space

Seattle has long been associated with radical ideas towards green spaces, beginning with grandiose plans put forth by the Olmsted Brothers. Areas of the city designated as public spaces had been rigidly separated from industrial spaces prior to this shift and had shaped Seattle's urban character. It is worth now considering how public space had been treated in Seattle during the twentieth century prior to the post-industrial turn of the 1970s and 1980s. By understanding how late nineteenth and early twentieth-century regrading efforts, followed by systematic park planning occupied urban

⁹ Mullins, 'The Persistence of Progressivism,' pp.55-72.

¹⁰ The topic of Detroit's urban and industrial decline in the second half of the twentieth-century has been explored in numerous recent biographical monographs and articles including Mark Binelli, *The Last Days of Detroit: Motor Cars, Motown and the Collapse of an Industrial Giant*, (London: Random House, 2013).

design in Seattle during the period, we can observe the beginnings of a park culture developing in the city during this time. One of the core tenets of this piece argues that such a culture would go on to manifest itself in unique and experimental ways later in the twentieth century. But first, I will sketch an outline of what came before in terms of public space and park identity.

Two prominent factors which account for this underlying awareness of the place of public space in the urban environment concerned the regrading of Seattle's topographical geography, which was then reworked further through the Olmsted Brothers parks system plan. The combination of these two elements in the conception of Seattle's urban environment signalled a foundational interest in reconciling the prerequisites of the urban landscape with the existing natural landscape. The topographical situation was characterised by steep gradients, bluffs and expansive tidflats of Elliot Bay which would later present complications for orderly urban planning. By appreciating the demands of both the natural and the urban, civic planners and advocates fostered a culture of utility within the aesthetic, effectively visualising the city as part of nature. The Olmsted Brothers park system, set out in a 1903 report, envisioned a network of green public spaces, 'a comprehensive system of parks and parkways,' with each space connected by planned boulevards.¹¹ For the Olmsteds, Seattle's park system would provide a model example of harmonious park space as an antidote to the sharper edge of urban expansion, and in turn instil a 'parks culture' within the city for subsequent generations to continue.

Their plan was a visionary, long term projection that Seattle would nurture over the next generation, with aims of incorporating unique natural environment features into the city through characteristic park landscapes. Though the Olmstedian plan for Seattle did not attain complete fruition in accordance with the Brothers' vision, their blueprint continued to influence urban design in the second

¹¹ 'Report of the Olmsted Brothers' in *First Annual Report of Board of Park Commissioners 1884-1904*, (Seattle, WA: Lowman & Hanford Stationery and Printing Co., 1905).

half of the twentieth century. Often this took the form in experimental and novel ways to suit the post-industrialised situation the city found itself in by the new millennium. The land upon which Gas Works Park now stands was identified by the Olmsted Brothers as a site for a 'local park,' due its 'advantages for commanding views.'¹² Today, the park which now marks that location is unique for its meshing of natural and industrial land features. Similarly, the Olmsted's had visions of the park system incorporating the Fort Lawton site as early as 1903, for what would become Discovery Park by the 1970s.¹³ These two parks will be examined in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

The flexibility of the plans catered for the later allocation of recreational facilities into the system, in order to serve the civic needs of leisure and play. Similar thinking informed national park policy during the 1930s and 1940s.¹⁴ The Olmsted Brothers argued that such a system would 'secure and preserve for the use of the people as much as possible of these [natural environment] advantages of water and mountain views,' whilst recognising the 'financial limitations' of achieving the vision in the short term.¹⁵ In total, 37 park plans were designed by the Olmsteds which influenced the creation of many of the parks which are dotted across the city today.¹⁶

Parks, in a traditional sense, are reflections of natural environments as well as being social environments, a place where human interaction occurs. By traditional, I am referring to the designs and vision of park architects such as the Olmsted Brothers, their father, Frederick Law Olmsted, and

¹² 'Report of the Olmsted Brothers', p.47.

¹³ Ibid., p.46.

¹⁴ It was during the 1930s and 1940s that National Recreation Areas were first planned and opened by the National Park Service (with the U.S. Bureau of Land Reclamation). Lake Mead National Recreation Area in Arizona and Nevada opened in 1936 to the public with the intention not only to preserve environmentally important landscapes, but to also offer leisure and recreational opportunities to visitors. The 'Virtual Museum' of Lake Mead National Recreation Area contains photographs illustrating this new civic leisure purpose during this period: *National Park Service*, [online] <<https://www.nps.gov/features/lake/museum/historic-recreation.html#1004>> [accessed 30 December 2019].

¹⁵ 'Report of the Olmsted Brothers'.

¹⁶ Don E. Sherwood lists the various parks, boulevards, and avenues which were created (at least in part) from designs proposed by the Olmsted brothers in, 'Interpretive Essay on The History of Seattle's Parks & Playgrounds' (13 July 1979), included within the Don Sherwood Parks History Collection, Record Series 5801-01, <<http://archiveswest.orbiscascade.org/ark:/80444/xv19503>>, [accessed 27 February 2016].

others such as Calvert Vaux, and James Oglethorpe, the latter an earlier architect credited with the utilitarian design of Savannah, Georgia which incorporated the use of park squares into early American urban planning.¹⁷ The two – natural and social – combined in a park space to bring rural elements into American urban life. As such, classic American parks would be both beautiful and scenic, yet provide societal utility in urban life by providing moral uplift and democratic function through unrestricted public access.

The encouragement of park usage in the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries symbolises a clear break with the parks which came before. These earlier incarnations of the park often comprised of fenced off country estates in the urban vicinity, for the exclusive use of well-to-do citizens and groups. In the United Kingdom, Richmond Park to the west of London typified this escapist and elitist form of park space.¹⁸ Similarly, ornamental gardens and country parks were lined with walls, hedgerows and gates, providing enclosure for private consumption. As the function changed in the twentieth century, the park came to represent both a public space and a private space, though often through less overt signposting.

However, parks implicitly exude both the public and the private. On the one hand a park has come to be interpreted as a place for collective recreation and enjoyment, but also as a site of individual solitude. Numerous individuals roam through parks, passing one another, at times interacting, but parks are often the place of collective or individual private activity. Our understanding and definition of contact is reworked in this sense as parks bring people together, but not always in an interactive

¹⁷ Thomas D. Wilson, *The Oglethorpe Plan: Enlightenment Design in Savannah and Beyond*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012).

¹⁸ 'Richmond Park: Landscape History' The Royal Parks, <<https://www.royalparks.org.uk/parks/richmond-park/about-richmond-park/landscape-history>>, [accessed 28 December 2019].

form of social convention.¹⁹ The concept of the park as a conflicted space will be explored in greater depth subsequently.

To return to the point of parks being both 'natural' and 'social' places, in Seattle, this combination of carefully arranged natural scenery within public spaces entrenched a park culture in the city which would continue throughout the twentieth century and to the present. Later twentieth-century examples of public spaces which are the subject of this thesis represent a new stage of urban spatial design experimentation through which experiential use would shape unique parkscapes in the downtown and neighbouring sections of the city. The Olmstead's vision of park space in Seattle was perceived as prescribing an antidote to the industrial-economic functions of a growing American city, akin to the temporal setting in which they lived. Despite their desire for connected park space, strict definitions of urban function fragmented city space into places of work, leisure, and residence. Later in the twentieth century, the question of public space functions resurfaced as Seattle sought to reconcile place-based conflicts in a deindustrialising era.²⁰ Prior separation of spatial functions was reconsidered and repackaged, and this is evident in the unique designs of park spaces which were created across the city. Later decades of the twentieth century in Seattle witnessed militarised space become open public space and attempts to remedy the dislocation wrought by policies of inner-city highway construction using park designs.

Following on from the Olmsted brothers' vision of Seattle, the parcelling out of spatial functions can further be seen through the reach of New Deal agencies. Certain New Deal programmes influenced public space planning, and their resonance was reflected through new parks and recreational grounds creation in Seattle during the 1930s and 1940s. Largely directed through the Works Progress

¹⁹ Lyn H. Lofland explores the idea of social conventions in public spaces in her research. For example, see *The Public Realm: Exploring the City's Quintessential Social Territory* (New York: Routledge, 2017).

²⁰ Earlier theory on the decline of public spaces was led by Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (New York: Random House, 1961) and Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man: On the Social Psychology of Capitalism* (New York: Random House, 1977).

Administration (WPA), cities across the country received federal funding for urban projects which led to an increase in urban public space provision. Nationally, the WPA oversaw 125,110 projects between 1935 and 1943.²¹ These projects distributed a total of \$10.1 billion federal dollars on the construction or improvement of smaller, municipal works such as the building of parks and playgrounds, schools and hospitals, gymnasiums and libraries among other civic uses which reached almost every community in the United States.²² The WPA programme, aligned towards state and city policy was complemented by the Public Works Administration which allocated federal resources towards large, national infrastructure projects such as dam works, road and bridge building, and airport construction.²³ In Seattle, a number of recreational and park projects were undertaken with the backing of the WPA, resulting in the physical creation of some of the Olmsted designs. Total WPA spending in the city totalled \$1.4million by 1938, and continued into the early 1940s.²⁴ Galen Craz has characterised this era of park planning as fulfilling 'recreational facility', in which public park spaces served to meet increasing demands of a growing population, and citizens desire to participate in outdoor leisure pursuits within the city.²⁵ Rather than being instructed on what was good for them by authority elites, the public took it upon themselves to be active in their public spaces, and the provisions were made accordingly within cities such as Seattle. This sense of an 'active public' in park spaces can be observed subsequently, in particular during the contest over place-making that took place at Seattle's Discovery Park.

²¹ George H. Field, 'Letter of Transmittal', *Final Report on the WPA Program, 1935-1943* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1946), p. III-IV.

²² *Ibid.*, p.III; a further \$2,837,713,000 was provided by 'sponsor contributions' between 1935 and 1943, according to Field's *Report*.

²³ Robert D. Leighninger, 'Cultural Infrastructure: The Legacy of New Deal Public Space,' *Journal of Architectural Education*, Vol. 49, No. 4, (May 1996), pp.226-236.

²⁴ Seattle Park Department Progress Report on WPA Projects, June 30, 1938. "WPA Projects," Box 63, Folder 3. Don Sherwood Parks History Collection, 5801-01, Seattle Municipal Archives. Totals spent by 1938 according to this report are \$1,182,856.91 with a further \$235,428.20 allocated by the WPA.

²⁵ Galen Craz, *The Politics of Park Design*, (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1982), pp.103-120.

The universality of urban parks was no longer a luxury or ‘uplift’ mechanism. Parks came to be considered as ‘necessary parts of every town and city.’²⁶ The physical expansion of park systems within cities responded to population growth, and the perception that the United States was moving toward an era of increased leisure time.²⁷ The allocation of park space was carefully managed by park planners, and funding for their operation came from public sources. These spaces created specifically for leisure were, at this time, strictly of a different construction socially to spaces turned over for industrial, economic, or military purposes. Work took place in one space, while recreation occupied another, and in the case in Seattle, this often dated back to the initial Olmstedian park plans of the early twentieth century.

Public Space and the Changing Urban Landscape of the Post-War Era

Urban renewal gained momentum following the Second World War. The Eisenhower administration ushered in a programme of federal investment in infrastructure planning during the 1950s, which led to the construction of a network of interstate highways to take one example. Criss-crossing the country, the interstate programme created a ‘web of roads which carr[ied] the life of the nation,’ connecting American cities across a vast continent.²⁸ For John Updike, the Eisenhower’s interstate project epitomised an era in which Americans were infatuated with a ‘romance of consumption.’²⁹ In the urban environment, these conduits of mobility altered the cityscape by dissecting cities in the

²⁶ Raymond C. Morrison, and Myrtle E. Huff, *Let’s Go to the Park* (Dallas: Wilkinson Printing Company, 1937), p.3.

²⁷ Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design*, p.103; On increased leisure time, see Irving Bernstein, *Promises Kept: John F. Kennedy’s New Frontier*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp.21-22; Bruce Bliven, ‘Using Our Leisure Time is No Easy Job’ *New York Times*, April 26, 1964, p.18-19, 114-115; David Dempsey, ‘Myth of the New Leisure Class’ *New York Times*, January 26, 1958, p.12, 23-24. Longer trends of leisure time were explained through changes in labour, increased technology by Martin H. Neumeyer and Esther S. Neumeyer, *Leisure and Recreation: A Study of Leisure and Their Sociological Aspects*, 3rd edn. (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1958), pp.39-44, 77-97.

²⁸ Tom Lewis, *Divided Highways: Building the Interstate Highways, Transforming American Life*, 2nd edn. (New York: Cornell University Press, 2013), p.xiii.

²⁹ John Updike, ‘When Everyone was Pregnant,’ in *Collected Early Stories* (1971, repr. New York: Library of America, 2013).

quest to drive economic growth, while also facilitating the connection between downtown and suburban America.

The Interstate system, initially heralded as both a beacon of modernity, and also as a remedy to the country's 'mounting traffic problem' and dangerous highway network, came under scrutiny in the 1960s and 1970s.³⁰ Questions surrounding environmental degradation and pollution, as well as the continued role of the federal government as a tool of financial incentive entered the frame and offered new perspectives on the interstate system. However, in American cities, the promise of integration and mobility coincided with the removal and partition of urban public space, thus raising another problem concerned with spatiality and the urban landscape. The de-industrialising Seattle attempted to reconcile this spatial conflict between a physical public space and the advance of transportation corridors. Highways characterised as consisting of individual private spaces embodied by the personal automobile came into contact with the public space of parks. In Seattle, a series of parks were planned that layered a public space over the top of a largely private space of the interstate highway. First, Freeway Park was constructed over Interstate 5 in the 1970s, and later the Interstate 90 'lid' (renamed the Sam Smith Park in 1998) built in the late 1980s, followed the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park in the 2000s. In these examples, public space is reconsidered in order to reunite, or 'knit' the cityscape back together, moving toward a resolution of spatial conflict between two types of space which each possess a different definition of accessibility.

Elsewhere in Seattle, urban renewal was dealt with experimentally through the creation of public space on derelict inner-city industrial sites. Gas Works Park reutilised factory architecture to reimagine the relationship between a working landscape and a park space. The continuity between different temporal periods in land use and the history of a specific place coalesced at Gas Works. Contentious

³⁰ Lewis Paul Todd, Merle Eugene Curti, Mark M. Krug, *Rise of the American Nation*, (San Diego: Harcourt, 1972), p.608.

in its formative years, sites like Gas Works Park reconfigured conceptual understanding of public space to rejuvenate a blighted area which had the potential to take on an abandoned identity in the wake of downtown deindustrialisation. Inner city urban decay, due to the flight of jobs and the closure of manufacturing plants left visible scars on countless urban environments across the United States. Seattle was innovative in renewing its industrial spaces, which by the 1960s and 1970s had run their course as places of work, and turned them into new social spaces, which reshaped both theoretical and physical construction public space.

Briefly drawing upon these Seattle-based examples indicates that public space was being reconfigured and also recreated into new places during this period, in forms to which it had hitherto been accustomed to both in physical and conceptual terms. The definition and appreciation for public space in the city shifted considerably between the start and close of the twentieth century, and the marked shift of the later decades will be investigated in greater detail throughout the case-study examples of this thesis. Linking this to park culture, Cranz tracks this trajectory, arguing that the era of the 'Reform Park', which sought to uplift the health and wellbeing of city citizenry had ended during the New Deal years, and had been replaced by a standardised system which viewed parks as essential and universal factors of urban life heading into the post-war period.³¹

Standardisation in park spaces continued into the 1950s and 1960s, in cities across the nation. The post-war era of economic expansion, urban decentralisation, and highway proliferation that followed meant that public spaces, such as parks faced struggles for downtown land plots, where allocation for their provision was more universal earlier in the century. In response to concerns of government overreach through federal planning and funding, budget pressures, as well as housing demand, and Johnson-era urban renewal projects placed a further squeeze on public spaces in American cities.

³¹ Cranz defines four eras of park design and history – 'The Pleasure Ground: 1850-1900', 'The Reform Park: 1900-1930', 'The Recreational Facility: 1930-1965', 'The Open-Space System: 1965 and After' in *The Politics of Park Design*.

Intellectuals and commentators debated the future of public space in the wake of these nationwide adjustments to American urban life. Carl Abbott has argued that between 1955 and 1970, Seattle and its Oregon neighbour Portland faced the same economic environment. However, Abbott adds that it was Seattle that 'acted with greater flexibility and initiative' which informed civic enterprise and the political culture of the city.³² Seattle's 'flexibility' came in part due to its innovative approach to urban planning and appreciation of public space.

The examples of Freeway Park, and Gas Works Park, were not the only physical results of conceptual contests taking place but also about a re-understanding of public space in the post-war era. During this time of transition, the contention over public space which played out across the Seattle downtown restructured the rights and control over the city. Prior to this transition, spaces in the cities such as Seattle were occupied by activities which clearly defined their usage. Manufacturing occurred in an industrial space, defence and training took place at a designated naval base or on military land. Meanwhile recreational interests and public interaction transpired in park space, markets, and squares. Work was separated from leisure, and clearly defined places in which these factors of life operated were established. Drawing on a series of case studies, this thesis will investigate specific cases in Seattle when the idea of established spaces such as the above examples were redesigned and reimagined to integrate them with a public purpose. Spatial confrontations occurred in Seattle, when concepts such as industry and nature, military and civilian, and freeway and walkway were unified and reconciled through public space creations, rather than keeping their functions separated.

This division of space in the urban realm was by no means unique to Seattle. Across North America, and particularly in the United States, public space reflected societal norms in the eyes of planners, which in turn dictated the way these spaces looked, who used them, and how they should function in

³² Carl Abbott, 'Regional City and Network City: Portland and Seattle in the Twentieth Century', *Western Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (Aug., 1992), pp.293-322, (p.295).

a downtown setting. The triumph of the automobile, and the celebration of individualism it represented, took predominance over public places in cities nationally, further shaping and separating functions around what became an 'established tradition'. In other words, public places were seemingly at the whim of urban alterations, relegated to a position below that of private redevelopment and highway expansion in cities across the United States. The element of study which makes Seattle worth investigating is that this Pacific Coast city played host to a range of spatial conflicts. These flashpoints questioned preconceived notions of public space during this period, and set a trend for other cities in the United States and beyond to follow in the way it reconciled imagined and physical skirmishes. The examples explored here will further highlight the agency of the public in their reorganisation as opposed to purely being creations of the city's urban elite.

This established tradition would soon become an 'established past' as cities such as Seattle moved towards a post-industrial era in the wake of urban, economic and social restructuring in the post-war period. A trend which was occurring nationally, from industrial to post-industrial, was realised earlier in Seattle, and its citizens embraced this change in city functions ahead of other metropolitan areas in the United States.³³ The citizens involved in spatial conflicts over public space came from different class and backgrounds, forming coalitions which associated themselves with specific movements and places across Seattle. One of the results of these alterations to public space and the conflicts which accompanied them was to furnish Seattle's with a renewed identity centred about ideal living and the embracing of modern lifestyles. An active involvement of Seattle citizens weighed in on the debate over the meaning of public spaces, contributing to a redefinition of their physical existence as well as their conceptual and experiential understanding. This constructed image of an affirmative and progressive Seattle in which citizens took a vested interest in their urban environment and found roots

³³ This early take up of civic and urban development in Seattle from the 1960s onwards has been recognised within the academic debate. See Abbott, 'Regional City and Network City', *Western Historical Quarterly*, p.317; also, Mark R. Bello, 'Urban regimes and downtown planning in Portland, Oregon and Seattle, Washington, 1972-1992' (Ph.D. diss., Portland State University, 1993).

within specific places within the city, and this thesis will focus on a selection of them in the public sphere. Such a portrait went beyond the economic changes occurring in the city, and incorporated socio-political and environmental movements into both place, and identity-making endeavours.

These movements, I will argue, placed Seattle citizens at the heart of the contests over public space, who would go on to exercise their power over park space design and function. This result of this helped foster a narrative which on the one hand constituted a resistance to the sharp top-down authority of nationwide urban renewal projects. It also equipped the debates surrounding public space with a human, grassroots element by incorporating a wide cast of actors from across Seattle into the discourse. Other Seattle-based studies concerned with spatial conflict investigate the situation at Pike Place Market whereby a coalition of public users triumphed in saving the Market from the unflinching wrath of proscribed urban renewal.³⁴ While Pike Place Market will not be covered here, the contests over the future of the Fort Lawton military installation site in the 1970s will feature. A collection of perspectives on the meaning of place at the site can form as history of Discovery Park when focusing on the viewpoint of each group in turn. Such an observation undercovers the weight of individual public agency and park's interest groups in the making of place both at this park, and at other places across Seattle.

As this sweeping assessment begins to unpack, the post 1960s timeframe with which this thesis is concerned with is a transitional one and a contested one too. Some of these examples are of primary concern to this thesis which aims to tie physical, historic examples of human experiences with public space, to changing definitions of social space concepts on a theoretical level. They also weave place-making processes into a broader set of demands of park spaces that are raised through time. Through

³⁴ See Judy Mattivi Morley, *Historic Preservation and the Imagined West: Albuquerque, Denver, and Seattle* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 91-126; Alice Shorett, Murray Morgan, *Soul of the City: The Pike Place Public Market* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007); Sohyun Park Lee, 'Conflicting élites and Changing Values: Designing Two Historic Districts in Downtown Seattle, 1958-73,' *Planning Perspectives*, 16 (2001), 243-268.

a series of place-based examples, I further intend to highlight the agency of the public in the shaping of attitudes and experiences onto the physical locations under study in this thesis. Having situated this timeframe of enquiry into a wider, historical urban and national context which backdrops the evolution of public space in Seattle specifically, I will now turn to the examples upon which I shall focus, and the conceptual debates which this thesis relates to.

A place-based study of Seattle

The first spatial conflict this thesis will unpack is the conversion of a former industrial landscape into open access park spaces within the downtown of Seattle. In the 1970s, Gas Works Park championed the incorporation of industrial architecture into park surrounds, becoming one of the first parks of this kind in North America.³⁵ At Gas Works Park, visitors can engage in recreational pursuits as well as explore the site's spatial history of a place of work in a waterfront space which combines open green fields and derelict gas boilers. The legacy of the past persists in the park, as authorities and local groups continue to grapple with ongoing environmental issues such as soil toxicity resulting from energy production which occurred on the site in the first half of the twentieth century. The history of this park also informed later park creations of a similar nature, such as the Olympic Sculpture Park, opened in the 2000s, that sought to erase landmarks of prior industrial waterfront usage.

Continuing from this initial examination of conceptual contention, the centrality of the civilian experience and social interpretation takes precedence in the development of Freeway Park, my second case study. This 'green-lid' project was intended to provide a spatial antidote to the separation and divide wrought by the construction of the I-5 highway through central Seattle. Interstate highway expansion into inner city locales at the mid-point of the twentieth century proliferated nationwide. Freeway Park reconnected downtown districts through its contrasting use of concrete and flora, the

³⁵ Richard Heyman, 'Postindustrial Park or Bourgeois Playground? Preservation and Urban Restructuring at Seattle's Gas Works Park,' in *The Nature of Cities: Ecocriticism and Urban Environments* ed. by Michael Bennett, and David Warfield Teague, (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2006), pp.111-134 (111).

man-made and the 'natural.' The second chapter of this thesis will focus on this example of spatial re-appropriation, with analysis too of other parks linked to the highway network. Like Gas Works Park, Freeway Park represented a site of experimentation influenced by its *in-situ* location. However, the experiential history of the park during the 1980s and 1990s altered the perception of its physical ability to reconcile conflict. Criminal acts and fears surrounding civilian safety influenced collective identities attached to the park, which in part are a product of the park's spatial design. Similar to the 'industrial to nature' theme of the first chapter, Freeway Park's design was innovative and ground-breaking during its 1960s conception. Its continued importance in Seattle's park system is testament to its adaptation through the decades to the present. The legacy of Freeway Park filtered through to the present, and its trajectory provides a contextual background for the study of subsequently created park spaces in the city. The I-5 Colonnade Bike Park, a reclaimed space underneath an elevated section of highway for the use of cyclists and enthusiasts, and also the Sam Smith Park, a second interstate 'green lid' project to the south of the downtown drew on the precedent set by Freeway Park.

The theme of contention over Seattle's public spaces is then picked up in the third chapter through a park that was slowly converted from land based on military use, to a civilian open space. Discovery Park, which now encompasses the former Fort Lawton site, has been the subject of much conflict amongst Seattle residents in the post-war period. Following on from visible disputes by Native American communities, explored through Jeffrey Craig Sanders study of the Battle of Fort Lawton, the site became a symbol of protest in Seattle, perhaps only eclipsed by the World Trade Organisation protests of 1999.³⁶ This particular space, in effect, became the crucible upon which contesting spatial visions could manifest. Spanning several decades, local residents in neighbouring city districts, as well as city-wide planners and interested parties contested the future of the Fort Lawton site. Concurrently, a battle over meaning was also playing out. Should the decommissioned base relinquish

³⁶ Jeffrey Craig Sanders, *Seattle and the Roots of Urban Sustainability: Inventing Ecotopia*, (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010), pp.99-130.

its physical markers to its military past and embrace a re-wilding effort in the vision of an urban wilderness? Or instead, should the importance of the Fort Lawton military base be forever remembered by preserving it as a Historic District? This was the backdrop to a central question over the meaning of park space at the site – open space urban wilderness versus an environmental exercise in historic preservation. The legacy of historical land use loomed large Discovery Park, and together the perceptions and lived experience of their users informed the design of those now public spaces.

Following this investigation into three different types of socially constructed urban space within the city of Seattle, I shall bring together the findings and draw conclusions over how the lived public experience can offer fresh insights into the way parks and public places can be interpreted and utilised in the modern American city. Further to this, the unique park environments which will have been examined in this thesis point toward the entrenchment of a park culture among Seattle residents, based upon personal and collective experiential involvement. I intend to explore this park culture by a method which centres on a series of place-based examples. These examples show how the creation of each case study park progressed over time through a series of adaptations and reworkings of initial plans. The social construction of public space in Seattle can be witnessed over the post-war decades to the present, across a variety of different types of physical spaces which relate to industry and nature, military and civilian, public and private. This approach is useful as it allows for a holistic and inclusive investigation into the various groups of individuals involved on the ground and beyond the city boardroom, as well as providing a touchstone to theorists and conceptual models proposed on a non-physical level to be appreciated and experimented with.

Chapter I: Place-making the Post-Industrial: Seattle's Gas Works Park and the Transformation of an Industrial Landscape.

'Originally the work of these towers was to generate oxygen gas and separate tar. Now Haag's vision would generate a local controversy that separated citizens between those who thought this proposal a macabre joke and those who saw in these towers an iron Stonehenge or a hanging garden of metal.'

Paul Dorpat, writing retrospectively about Gas Works Park in the *Seattle Times*, 12 June 1983³⁷

'The existing structures on the city park site at the north end of Lake Union have virtually no historic or aesthetic values...In our opinion, the park site as it now stands possesses the nostalgia of a well-rusted junk heap.'

An editorial from the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 15 January 1971.³⁸

Over the past century, Seattle's urban landscape has changed considerably in terms of topographical and architectural form. These alterations reflect shifts in economic production and focus from an industrial to a post-industrial society. Originally geared towards the extraction of regional resources, during the twentieth century, the city became a manufacturing hub, first in shipbuilding, and later in aeronautics, with Boeing becoming a major employer. In the closing decades of the twentieth-century and into the new millennium, Seattle experienced a process of deindustrialisation where these industries and others, such as in the sector of energy production, began to decline. By the start of the twenty-first century, new technology companies comprised largely of software, bio-medical, and internet-based firms, coupled with a growing service sector, supplanted old industries. With deindustrialisation, Seattle entered a stage in societal development now commonly labelled 'post-industrial'. Across the city, and mirrored in urban centres across North America, as industry retreated, derelict and abandoned spaces replaced former hubs of production.

³⁷ Paul Dorpat, 'Gas Works, A Garden of Metal', *Seattle Times*, 12 June 1983, p.28.

³⁸ Editorial, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 15 January 1971.

Gas Works Park, located on the northern banks of Lake Union, typified this exit of industry, as it was crafted out of the former Seattle Gas Light Company gasification plant. The Park went through the process of changing land uses, from working environments, characterised by the development of industrial units and transport conduits, followed by the desertion of industry and dereliction, before being reimagined and renovated into an accessible public park. The spatial history of the sites has been categorised historically as a place first of untouched nature, then as a place of work and productivity, followed by neglect and decline, and more recently as a site of recreation and enjoyment.

Gas Works Park represents both space and place, when we consider each stage of land use transition, which on a conceptual level, reflects the thinking of Yi-Fu Tuan. In terms of space, the site can be categorised as an industrial space, derelict space, and public space. However, ongoing in this cyclical process of spatial production, is also the creation of place. The applied distinction between space and place, outlined by Tuan, is that local citizens derived from these sites their own meaning, unique to their situation.³⁹ Prior to dereliction, Gas Works Park, then a gasification plant for the Seattle Gas Light Company was a place of work, energy production, and fuel shipping. It operated in stark contrast to the natural surrounds of King County, and the residential districts nearby. At this point, the subtext for place-making was that the space represented a site of employment and production, pollution and noise. When Seattle Gas Light was abandoned in 1956, the site became a derelict space. Derelict, former industrial spaces are often viewed negatively in the popular conscience wherever they manifest in the urban environment.⁴⁰ But again, we can identify the element of local place-making to

³⁹ Tuan has theorised that 'places are centers of felt value' and are therefore different to 'space'. See Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), p.4.

⁴⁰ For detailed dates regarding the closure of the Seattle Gas Light Company gasification plant at Lake Union see Alan Michelson, 'Seattle Gas Light Company, Gas Plant, Brown's Point, Seattle, WA', <<http://pcad.lib.washington.edu/building/3312/>>, *Pacific Coast Architectural Database*, [accessed 4 January 2017]; for similar details relating to the Unocal Terminal at Elliot Bay, see 'Former Unocal Marketing Terminal-Seattle Art Museum Olympic Sculpture Park Site', *Washington State Department of Ecology*, (January 2003), available at <<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/publications/SummaryPages/0309003.html>>, [accessed 4 January 2017].

Seattle and the vicinity in which the site is located when we explore the transition of the Brown Point site from derelict land use, to park environment.

This chapter will mainly focus on the latest land use, reimagining them from an industrial landscape into a publicly accessible park space. However, the previous incarnations of land use cannot be discounted and remain instrumental in the understanding of the park space it represents today. As we will see, former land use at Gas Works Park has been central to place-making in its current form. This chapter will explore how at Gas Works Park, the transition from industrial, to derelict, to park space illustrated both the continuous process of spatial production, and the reconciliation of spatial conflict which arose from the shifting meanings attached to place. Public perception and conception are integral to understanding the transitions undertaken at these locations, and this aspect of place-making will be discussed later in the chapter. Embedded into the place-making of Gas Works Park over the course of the twentieth century to the present is the notion of both 'industry' and 'nature.' It is contended here that the two are understood separately until the space was reconfigured and reimagined as a public park. With the creation of Gas Works Park the distinctions between the two as binaries is challenged. By extension, the physical traits of industry and nature are separated at these sites during their earlier uses compared to current forms.

Using Gas Works Park as a specific place-based case study located within downtown Seattle, in this chapter I intend to elucidate the relationship between industry and nature in the post-industrial period which has enveloped the city. I will argue that the relationship between industry and nature in an urban setting can be reconsidered through the lens of the park, and how park designers, notably Richard Haag, approached the concept of place-making, in order to fix Gas Works Park with a sense of place. To do this I will begin by breaking down how the concepts of industry and nature have been understood and how they are applied to place at Gas Works Park. The malleability and definition of

these two constructs will be questioned and discussed through closer analysis of conceptual themes, and physical elements present within the park itself.

To do this, the focus will turn to the history which has surrounded the Gas Works Park site with regards to the efforts to preserve industrial markers, in the face of hostile and varying perceptions of how industry and nature relate to one another within a recreational space. Here, the issue of how the resulting Gas Works Park has paid homage to both post-industrial experimentations with park design (through the retention industrial features for examples) and to earlier twentieth-century pastoral landscape visions of the Olmsted Brothers will be discussed. The concerns surrounding the adaptive reuse of industrial features will then be examined in relation public perception and experience. Linked to these debates is the continual conflict of opinion over how best to deal with the hangover of industrial production at the site and the presence of environmental legacy. It is my intention to demonstrate how public and media perceptions, through use, experience, and understanding, have denoted a level of public agency in place-making, which ought to be considered alongside designers' plans, political proceedings, and bureaucratic management of park space. In short, the voice of the people helped shape the legacy of the Park itself.

On the labelling of 'industry' and 'nature'

The labels industry and nature as social constructions in the human mind have often been conceptualised as being diametrically opposed ideas. Daniel Bell observed in his work *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* that existentialists, those who view the individual as making rational decisions about their surroundings, have sought to 'understand', 'confront,' and 'master' the forces and environment around them since 'man's existence.' As such, Bell describes the first, and continuing,

confrontation is with that of nature.⁴¹ Human attempts to fashion a living in the world have continually been interpreted through the prism of mastering nature. In terms of rhetoric within historical precedent in the United States, the idea of mastering nature has been romanticised if we consider narratives relating to frontier expansion and American ingenuity over the continent's geography.⁴² From this starting point, nature is separated conceptually by illustrating how human activity acts upon it. Through these narratives and conceptualisation, control and agency is taken away from nature, and gravitates towards human endeavour, of which one element is the pertinence of industry. Bell goes on to state that 'to rework nature, to make fabricated things,' such as through industrial production of more recent centuries, 'was to enhance man's powers.'⁴³ From this early juncture, nature is then separated out from human activity, which by extension places industry and nature into two separate categories.

Taking this division further, typically industry and nature have both been viewed in positive and negative, idealised and undesired perspectives. Polarising the labels in this light has served to accentuate the differences between the two, rather than to explore how industry and nature coalesce or meet. Taken at face value, the two labels have become strangely comparative as binary concepts. In the case of the industry, or rather industrial ruin, Dylan Trigg has noted that within the urban landscape, 'the ruins of contemporary society... simultaneously invoke reactions of repulsion and sublimity.'⁴⁴ Feelings toward nature, and the force of it, can illicit similar responses. Natural disasters which wrought the destruction of human communities are viewed negatively and with a pessimism which is also observable when considering sentiments towards the excesses and legacies of industrial

⁴¹ Daniel Bell, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting*, (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p.487.

⁴² Numerous classic works allude to the mastering of nature in relation to American industriousness and expansion. Notable examples include what has come to be known as the 'Turner Thesis' delivered to the American Historical Association in Chicago in 1893, see Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*, (1893, repr. London: Penguin, 2008).

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p.488.

⁴⁴ Dylan Trigg, *The Aesthetics of Decay: Nothingness, Nostalgia, and the Absence of Reason*, (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2009), p.xxvi.

production. Both are undesirable in the popular mind despite the binary approach taken to nature and industry. Examples of these can be seen in reactions towards the devastation witnessed through natural disasters such as the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, or Hurricane Katrina in 2005. Similar negative responses follow man-made calamities such as declining air quality as a result of industrial production in American cities throughout the twentieth century, the Deepwater Horizon oil spill in 2010, or the Flint water crisis more recently in 2016.⁴⁵

Conversely, at various points in human history, overlapping and continuous today, natural and industrial elements of the urban and non-urban environment are cherished, romanticised, and fawned over. One gateway for understanding the crossover of industry and nature can be through the understanding of the sublime. Both the Grand Canyon, and the damming of the Colorado River through the construction of the Hoover Dam on the same river downstream in the Black Canyon provide spectacular visual examples of this human sentiment toward the sublime, both natural and non-natural. In an urban setting, the skyscraper and the brawn required to build it, particularly earlier examples such as the Chrysler or Empire State Buildings in New York have evoked similar awe-inspired commentary within the urban setting. Indeed, the topic of the sublime is relatable to the discussions of this chapter, and particularly whether the sublime operates in a post-industrial context such as through the rusting towers, known as ‘cracking’ towers, which dominate Gas Works Park. The romanticising of the American landscape and the conflict of eighteenth and nineteenth-century pastoralism with the advent and swiftness of industrialism relates to the sublime and has been explored in Leo Marx’s classic work, *The Machine and the Garden*.⁴⁶ Marx does not provide a solution to the conflict, turning instead to argue that it is the responsibility of the community, through politics

⁴⁵ Much has been written about these two environmental crises. See *Black Beaches and Bayous: The BP Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill Disaster* edited by Lisa A. Eargle, Ashraf Esmail (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2012), John Wills, *US Environmental History* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012) pp.142-145; Anna Clark, *The Poisoned City: Flint’s Water Crisis and the American City*, (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2018).

⁴⁶ Leo Marx, *The Machine and the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964, repr. 1978).

rather than art, to establish reconciliation with nature. The realisation of this re-joining manifests itself more overtly in a post-industrial setting, in which the accepted predominance of industry over nature is challenged.

However, as the above examples show, the combining of industry and nature through the context of the sublime occur prior to the post-industrial turn. The fluid interpretation and application of the sublime within the context of the United States experimented with the definitions of industry and nature, and what is considered 'natural' or 'man-made', with examples within both categories eliciting an ability to astonish, inspire, or captivate the viewer. David Nye writes of how American forms of the sublime in this context of 'natural' and 'man-made' are 'culturally inflected,' as by the nineteenth century, 'natural places and great public works became icons of America's greatness' in popular appreciation.⁴⁷ From the outset, the industrious symbols of American ingenuity began to take on a unique quality which fed into national character and American strength, in a similar way that natural features of the continental landscape invokes a sense of awe.

The combination of the two - the natural sublime, and the technological sublime - is most visible in non-urban settings. Architectural and technological achievements such as the Hoover Dam on the Colorado River, and by extension its visibility in production or domestic power can be treated within the same regard of admiration and inspired curiosity as features of the natural environment, such as the Grand Canyon, or Niagara Falls. The technological sublime offers power in both an aesthetic sense but also through utilitarian power. David Nye has written at length on the reaches of the sublime as a concept, with others such as Claudia Bell and John Lyall, and Finis Dunaway picking up on themes of the technological sublime in landscape contexts.⁴⁸ The relationship between industry and nature at

⁴⁷ David Nye, *The American Technological Sublime*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), p.16, 33.

⁴⁸ Nye, 'Remaking a "Natural Menace": Engineering the Colorado River' in *Technologies of Landscape: From Reaping to Recycling*, ed. by Nye, (Boston, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 97-116 (111-112). See also Claudia Bell and John Lyall, *The Accelerated Sublime: Landscape, Tourism, and Identity*, (Westport CT:

this level is considered on comparable terms, particularly within the American context. The idealising of industry and nature as interwoven and not diametrically opposed labels has been applied to late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century industrialism. However, the link between industry and nature in this context can also be extended to post-industrialism of the later twentieth-century. It was in this later juncture that the challenge to the binary approach to industry and nature as separate concepts enveloped into new forms relating to environmental legacies, heritage, and co-existence.

Contrary to the view and examples of non-urban combinations of the natural and technological sublime, if the city were considered an intrinsic part of nature, then a city such as Seattle which incorporates the Olympic Mountains, Mount Rainier, and Elliot Bay into its skyline would be a strong contender for epitomising this interrelationship. When the sublime is scaled down, and contextualised for the urban environment, it is sites such as Gas Works Park which hold a degree of transcendent resonance. An insight into the sublimity of Gas Works Park was evident within the 1971 Master Plan for the site, which referred to the resilience and scale of the abandoned, rusting 'cracking' tower structures. The Master Plan states that 'vandalism to these structures is minimal owing to their scale and materials which are indestructible by human hands.'⁴⁹ The aesthetics of combining industry and nature will be investigated later on in this chapter, but for now, it is worth bearing in mind that an understanding of the sublime can offer an insight into how experiential perspectives of the sublime operates in both urban and nonurban environments, and in the context of both the natural and the technological. The complexities of these interrelationships manifest itself notably in the post-industrial setting.

Greenwood Publishing, 2002); and Finis Dunaway, *The Power of Images in American Environmental Reform* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), xviii-xix, 62-63, 106.

⁴⁹ Richard Haag Associates, 'A Report Sustaining The Master Plan for Myrtle Edwards Park,' (April 1971), p.17.

Gas Works Park has been identified as the first park space of its kind in North America as early as 1971 by city officials, when architect Richard Haag's plan for the site became known.⁵⁰ Richard Heyman has argued that the Park attained its post-industrial character when the legacies of 'the toxic nature of industrial capitalism became undeniable' in the mid-1980s, referring to investigations into polluted soils which were conducted at that time.⁵¹ In relation to how the industry and nature binary, this chapter will go on to explore how this operates conceptually and physically in Gas Works Park. For now, it is worth considering the binary in the abstract, investigating how nature and industry interrelate at this specific park.

In abstract terms, Gas Works Park represents an artificially created form of nature which co-exists with an industrial past, evident through the retention of industrial architecture, for the function of public enjoyment and recreation. It is artificial in the sense that it draws upon tenets of nature which have been propagated through long-standing approaches to park design, and how parks the world over presents a form of simplified nature for human consumption and use, as well as an antidote to the built environment.⁵² Gas Works Park's use by the public for leisure pursuits also exhibits traditional park functions by acting as space for the user to retreat to from the bustle of urban life. In parks terms, the figurative rhetoric of parks as acting as, and to quote oft-used phrases, the 'lungs of the city' or a 'social tonic' from industrial and urban life are comparable here when we consider that Gas Works Park, since its creation, has been intended for use by the public and for their recreational needs.⁵³

⁵⁰ Eric DeLony letter to Victor Steinbrueck, 15 April 1971. *Gas Works Park Case Study, Library of Architecture and Urban Planning*, University of Washington.

⁵¹ Richard Heyman "Postindustrial Park or Bourgeois Playground: Preservation and Urban Restructuring at Seattle' Gas Works Park', in *The Nature of Cities: Ecocriticism and Urban Environments*, ed. by Michael Bennett and David W. Teague (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1999), 111-134 (p.131)

⁵² For a greater study of how nature has been constructed and is a product of culture, see Alexander Wilson, *The Culture of Nature: North American Landscape from Disney to the Exxon Valdez*, 3rd edn, (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1998).

⁵³ The label 'lungs of the city' has been attributed to Hyde Park in London by William Windham during a House of Commons debate in 1808, according to P.D. Smith, *City: A Guidebook to the Urban Age*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2012), p.285, and to Central Park in New York by Frederick Law Olmsted during the 1850s, a phrase he repeated later in his 1892 Report on parkway plans for the city of Boston. The label has

Further to this, Gas Works Park is situated within an urban environment which is itself the product of industrialisation. Seattle, like most cities in the industrialised world, expanded because of industrial activity and manufacturing processes. That same process of industrialisation, the general argument goes, was an agent in the destruction of a natural environment as the city grew. Seattle's early growth came on the back of the exploitation of surrounding natural resources such as timber, and fish, as well as through physical expansion in which natural barriers such as hills and water courses were levelled and channelled. These activities altered the natural environment of the Puget Sound region as it had been prior to Euro-American settlement in the mid-nineteenth century.

However, by returning to the concept of nature in Seattle, accompanying the conception of Gas Works Park and its subsequent use, the city has crafted an urban identity which has embraced the idea of nature both beyond and within the city. This 'closeness to nature' is then reciprocated through culturally embedded environmental identities associated with that city. The result of this has been, and as this thesis contends, the coming to fruition of a parks culture both within the framework of urban identity, and within the urban psyche. At Gas Works Park, Haag attempted to link this underlying park's culture with the industrial heritage of the city's recent past by recasting the image of deindustrialisation. In doing so, Haag's designs for Gas Works Park tacitly acknowledged an in situ need to both retain industrial markers, and return the site to a semi-natural state.

Traditionally, the markers of deindustrialisation, such as the dereliction of industrial plants, have been associated with individual and collective feelings of loss and disdain, as well as wider societal concerns over legacy, and abandonment. Tim Edensor draws upon these assumptions clarifying the notion that industrial ruins, such as at Gas Works Park represented 'formerly hubs of dense activity,' now

subsequently become common currency as an off-hand way of referring to how parks offer a distinctive environment and perceived beneficial quality to public health in relation to the urban locale in which they are situated.

recognised as mere 'scars on the landscape'.⁵⁴ Popular sentiments toward former factory sites and derelict places feed into social notions that such spaces are unsafe, dirty, locations of undesirable and criminal acts. As such, often the removal of such markers of the industrial memory is considered as one solution. In the context of industry and nature, attempts that are made that champion the 'restoration' of nature to sites which are perceived to lack natural world characteristics, is seen as an alternative solution to the continual presence of wasteland sites, though issues of what form of nature, and how much 'nature' are brought into the discussion.⁵⁵ The concept has more widely been considered by John J. Berger who placed the process of nature restoration into the context of a 'damaged environment.'⁵⁶ When some of the aforementioned sentiments towards deindustrialised spaces are considered, particularly that of 'scars on the landscape' the thoughts of Berger's 'damaged environment' label can be useful when considering why a reversion of a landscape to a more 'natural' state is preferred assumptively.

This line of thinking draws upon a collective understanding relating to the appeal of the natural world. Since the dawn of the industrial era, nature has been seen as the antidote to urban environments, the latter a product of industrialisation. Nature as a prescriptive remedy to toiling and demanding urban lifestyles held, and continues to hold currency among writers, thinkers, and physicians. In studying these nineteenth and early twentieth-century views around nature as an antidote, Lynn Ross-Bryant has explored the relationship between nature and industrial society in terms of the spiritual harmony that nature can bring, and industry lacks, focusing on the National Park System.⁵⁷ Ross-Bryant writes that the psyche of this belief denotes that in order to make sense of and understand an industrialising

⁵⁴ Tim Edensor, *Industrial Ruins: Spaces, Aesthetics, and Materiality* (Oxford: Berg, 2005), p.21.

⁵⁵ Catherine Heatherington summarises the 'industrial to nature' approach and its concerns in, 'Buried Narratives', in *Urban Wildscapes*, eds. Anna Jorgenson and Richard Keenan, (Abington: Routledge, 2012), p.175.

⁵⁶ John J. Berger, *Restoring the Earth: How Americans are Working to Renew our Damaged Environment*, (New York: Alfred A Knopf and Doubleday & Co, 1987).

⁵⁷ Lynn Ross-Bryant, *Pilgrimage to the National Parks: Religion and Nature in the United States*, (New York: Routledge, 2013).

United States, Americans would 'turn to the "other"' which 'very often in the [National] parks, a turn to the simple life, the rustic life, a life in nature, away from the complexities and overindulgence of urban society.'⁵⁸

While this is complex and problematic, for the moment, it serves to illustrate the separation of industry and nature in the collective conscience, diverging from the closure of the gap between the two when considering American industrial and natural sublimines. Within cities, however, the urban park operates as an island of nature within a sea of sprawl, activity, and excess, linked to industry and consumption. Therefore, the example of Gas Works Park, the design of which showcases its industrial features rather than omitting them acts as an alternative example for how both industry and nature are fashioned in the park environment collectively, but at the same time does not shun the public health qualities which previously only nature could provide within that relationship.

However, the post-industrial is of primary concern in this chapter, and in terms of this thesis, that label is intrinsically linked to the urban environment. The industry and nature binary have not only been separated in terms of conceptualising intellectual and popular understanding in the mind, the separation has also been physical in terms of distance. In short, industry has been associated with the city, and from the city, nature features on the periphery, at a distance and in its truest idealisations, away from the reach of the urban realm. But nature is part of the city, and inversely, the urban is part of the natural environment. During the 1990s, historians grappled with the debate over the city in the discipline of environmental history and caught up in this were discussions of the interrelationship between city and nature in terms of the environment. Martin Melosi, in response to a round table discussion within the March 1990 issue of the *Journal of American History*, pushed the debate on by arguing that 'the city has a place in such a definition [of environmental history].'⁵⁹ Melosi adds that

⁵⁸ Ibid, p.77.

⁵⁹ Martin V. Melosi, 'The Place of the City in Environmental History', *Environmental History Review*, 17, 1, (Spring 1993), 1-23, (p.5); Melosi points to Donald Worster, 'Transformations of the Earth: Towards an

‘isolating the “natural world” in such an unnatural way denies the powerful holistic quality of environmental history which demands inclusion more than exclusion.’⁶⁰ Joel A. Tarr, and Christine M. Rosen bolstered Melosi’s standpoint by claiming that ‘the built environment... is intimately related to the history of the nonhuman natural world,’ and by extension ‘is part of earth’s environmental history.’⁶¹ Tarr and Rosen’s position served the purpose of defining the fledgling field of urban environmental history, although it also was accompanied by a slew of publications which sought to reconcile the industry (or urban) and nature binary.⁶²

It is from this theoretical and historiographical basis which we can depart and investigate the concept and presence of a post-industrial park in the American city. Attention will now turn to the process by which Gas Works Park came to fruition.

Locating Gas Works Park

Located within the Wallingford district of Seattle, Gas Works Park is situated on the northern shore of Lake Union, formerly known as Brown Point. The Park derived both its name and elements of its design from its prior land use as a coal and oil gasification plant which began operations in 1906. Initially, the gas plant, overseen by Seattle Gas Light Company, formed an integral part of serving the city’s energy needs by means of coal gas for municipal use. In 1937, Seattle Gas Light switched to manufacturing gas from oil product, with the conversion hallmarked by the construction of two oil-to-gas generators and the dismantling of the moribund coal-gas equipment.⁶³ The existence of the ‘cracking’ towers

Agroecological Perspective in History,’ *Journal of American History*, 76 (March 1990), 1087-1106, and the responses to that piece in that issue.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p.4.

⁶¹ Joel A. Tarr, and Christine M. Rosen, ‘The Importance of an Urban Perspective in Environmental History,’ *Journal of Urban History* 20, 3 (May 1994), 299-310 (p.306-7).

⁶² Numerous scholarly works have dealt with this cross-over including William Cronon, *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1992), Matthew Klinge, *Emerald City: An Environmental History of Seattle*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008).

⁶³ Michelson, ‘Seattle Gas Light Company, Gas Plant, Brown’s Point, Seattle, WA’, *PCAD*, [online] <<https://www.pcad.lib.washington.edu/building/3312/>>, [accessed 13 September 2017].

from this process of energy production would outlive that of the life of the plant itself, and go on to form an integral part of landscape architect, Richard Haag's park design. Gas manufacturing continued at the site until 1956, after which the site became derelict and natural gas became the preferred energy of choice, rendering the oil-to-gas process at Brown Point redundant. Following the ending of gas production at Brown Point, the site lay derelict for a number of years until the land was purchased by the City Council in 1962. Through the 1960s, musings on the development of a Park at the abandoned gas works murmured alongside discussions over the site's future. This aspect of Gas Works Park's history will be explored shortly.

As highlighted in Haag's 1971 Master Plan for the site, the park was opened to the public in five phases between 1973 and 1976.⁶⁴ It was during the initial years of development and opening in the late 1960s and early 1970s that the park's experimental character engaged an urban constituency over the project's design, function, and meaning. Questions and discussion on these factors continued in the decades that followed with the park being subjected to a process of labelling, as urban planners, architects, and citizens alike attempted to ascribe meaning to the space. A retrospective look at this type of reimagined space alludes to the post-industrial park as becoming 'a space for leisure, adventure, cultivation, acquisition, shelter and creativity,' as opposed to being merely a 'space of waste.'⁶⁵ But that perspective is not complete, and does not consider the shifting meanings and viewpoints which have been attached to the Gas Works site over time. Scepticism, disdain, confusion, and curiosity over Gas Works Park from its conception to the present have counter-balanced a view that the site's transformation to a recreational leisure space has been uncomplicated and straightforward. This layering of meaning and understanding of the park has been observable at crucial moments since the park's conception in the early 1970s, through the opening and use, as well as the environmental challenges faced in the mid-1980s and again in the late 1990s. The layering of

⁶⁴ Thaïsa Way, 'Landscapes of industrial excess: A thick sections approach to Gas Works Park', *Journal of Landscape Architecture*, 8, 1 (Spring 2013), 28-39 (p.30).

⁶⁵ Edensor, *Industrial Ruins*, p.21.

experiential perception will be explored subsequently, but it is worth pausing to examine how Gas Works Park came to pass, and how its unique design blends a mixture of approaches to park design and use which have a longer history in Seattle.

Co-Existence: Post-Industry and Olmstedian Nature

Richard Haag was selected by the city to design a park on the derelict gas plant site following design competition interviews in the spring of 1972.⁶⁶ Haag had long been interested in redeveloping the gas plant site, and as early as October 1962, his landscape architectural firm Richard Haag Associates submitted a proposal to civic leader Richard J Block.⁶⁷ Seattle's landmark world's fair, the Century 21 Exposition, closed that same month, of which one of the leading advocates and lobbyist was Block, who was involved with the non-profit Allied Arts of Seattle. Allied Arts was, and continues to be, a non-profit organisation which champions public art, civic projects, and urban improvement.⁶⁸ After the World's Fair, the city mood was buoyant and forward-looking, mirroring the core themes of the Exposition. As such, the ground was fertile for urban regeneration projects such as one at the abandoned gas works.

Applicants for the design competition, and earlier musings during the 1960s on the site's future envisioned a variety of spatial trajectories which ranged from 'passive' natural designs for picnicking and minimal recreational features, to the building of a 'ship museum', to suggestions of a 'marine park' with boat launches.⁶⁹ One *Seattle Times* reader suggested that Gas Works Park should embody

⁶⁶ No author, Interview schedule notes, 7 April 1972, Box 27, Folder 7, Don Sherwood Park History Collection, Record Series 5801-01, *Seattle Municipal Archives (SMA)*.

⁶⁷ Richard Haag, *Letter to Robert J. Block*, 22 October 1962, Box 27, Folder 7, Don Sherwood Park History Collection, Record Series 5801-01, *SMA*.

⁶⁸ Walt Crowley, 'Allied Arts of Seattle', *HistoryLink*, 2 February 1999. [Online] <<http://www.historylink.org/File/2212>> [accessed 7 July 2017].

⁶⁹ No author, Interview schedule notes, 7 April 1972; Jim Braman, *Letter to Mayor Wes Uhlman*, 4 March 1970; Lightship Relief Guild and Puget Sound Maritime Historical Society suggested a broader 'marine park' for the site incorporating the waters of Lake Union, Steve Cowan, *Letter to Wing Luke*, 2 March 1963, and expanded

that of an 'amusement park' as an alternative to the 'ill-conceived' Seattle Center, referring to the planned alterations to be made at the 1962 World's Fair site.⁷⁰ Haag's winning design integrated existing industrial features into the parkscape, and the architect made his intentions for a post-industrial public space clear from an early stage.⁷¹ Prior to the design competition, Haag expressed a desire to create 'Seattle's most significant park' on a space which had by that time lost its primary function as a place of work, and a place of industry, encapsulating instead, the shifting tide of industrial technology and approach to energy production.⁷²

Coinciding with the plant closure in December 1956, the completion of the Pacific Northwest Pipeline signalled an industrial shift from city-produced energy in Seattle, to external sources beyond the state of Washington.⁷³ Natural Gas could be piped from New Mexico, and later Canada, and this moment of change symbolised a move towards a post-industrial era, as a fledging form of industrialism outpaced Seattle's gas works. Trigg highlights this trend in relation to the cyclical re-production of space and capitalism, pointing out that while new industries displace old industries, what 'entails [is] a reworking of space in which disorder and mutability are suppressed.'⁷⁴ At the gas works site, the disorder associated with prolonged dereliction was offset by the desire to create a 'most significant' park space.

upon in Frederick Lemere's meeting notes by the Technical Advisory Committee on Lake Union Park 23 July 1963, Box 27, Folder 7, Don Sherwood Park History Collection, Record Series 5801-01, SMA.

⁷⁰ John I. Ingle, 'Gas Works Area is Place for Amusement Park', *Seattle Times*, 24 February 1963, Box 7, Folder 11, Ben Evans Recreation Program Collection, Record Series 5801-02, SMA.

⁷¹ Haag's post-industrial vision first noted on 25 June 1970, discussion notes, Box 67, Folder 15, Planning, Construction and Maintenance Records, Record Series 5804-05, SMA.

⁷² Edward J. Johnson (Superintendent of Parks), *Letter to Richard Haag*, 20 November 1962, Box 27, Folder 7, Don Sherwood Park History Collection, Record Series 5801-01, SMA; Richard Haag, *Letter to Edward J. Johnson*, 30 April 1965, Box 27, Folder 7, Don Sherwood Park History Collection, Record Series 5801-01, SMA.

⁷³ Organised by the Pacific Northwest Pipeline Company, for a timeline of events marking the shift from local to inter-regional natural gas production see Table 1.14 'Penetration by Natural Gas: Growth of American Pipelines' in Allen W. Hatheway, *Remediation of Former Manufactured Gas Plants and Other Coal-Tar Sites*, (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2011), 43-44 (p.44).

⁷⁴ Trigg, *The Aesthetics of Decay*, p.121.

With the end of production in 1956, the abandoned plant became a site of dereliction for over a decade. Thoughts on siting a park on the northern shores of Lake Union were discussed by Seattle's Parks and Recreation department, as well as some media commentators in the early 1960s.⁷⁵ However, early editorials and commentaries on the site interpreted the landscape through contemporary perspectives, drawing on the industry and nature binary referred to earlier. Journalist Robert Schulman identified the obvious lack of a park space on the shores of Lake Union, observing instead 'the blackened shape of the old gas plant... typical of what has been Lake Union's fate.'⁷⁶ During the late 1950s and into the 1960s, Lake Union remained a working environment. The landscape was characterised by an industrial shoreline and still seen as a conduit for business. But the Lake was not immune from deindustrialising trends which began to take root in cities across North America. Concurrent with these transitional trends was an upturn in interest regarding the recreational value of the location.

Once the City of Seattle acquired the site in 1962, notions that the former Gas Works would be transformed from a derelict factory site into an open park space quickly followed.⁷⁷ Robert J. Block was appointed as a consultant to redesign of the site by Waldo J. Dahl, chairman of the Board of Parks Commissioners, a voluntary group advising the Mayor, the City Council, and the Parks Department.⁷⁸ In June of that year, reports surfaced of city intentions to acquire the Gas Works and locate a 'scenic park' on the site, acting upon recommendations put forth in the 1957 Seattle Planning Commission.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Cassius 'Cash' Beardsley, *Letter to Edward J. Johnson*, 7 September 1962, Box 27, Folder 7, Don Sherwood Park History Collection, Record Series 5801-01, SMA.

⁷⁶ Robert Schulman, *KING TV editorial*, 16/17 March 1960, Box 27, Folder 7, Don Sherwood Park History Collection, Record Series 5801-01, SMA.

⁷⁷ Michelson, 'Seattle Gas Light Company, Gas Plant, Brown's Point, Seattle, WA', *Pacific Coast Architecture Database (PCAD)*, [online] <"<https://www.pcad.lib.washington.edu/building/3312/>">, [accessed 13 September 2017].

⁷⁸ 'Park Aide to be Hired For Gas-Plant Site', *Seattle Times*, 20 September 1962, Box 7, Folder 11, Ben Evans Recreation Program Collection, Record Series 5801-02, SMA.

⁷⁹ Trudy Weckworth, 'City to buy gas plant; park planned on site', *North Central Outlook*, n.d., Box 7, Folder 11, Ben Evans Recreation Program Collection, Record Series, 5801-02, SMA; regarding the 1957 Seattle Planning Commission it was reported in the summer of that year that the north Lake Union shoreline would be zoned for 'public or semipublic' use, see Douglas Willix, 'Seattle's Plan for Tomorrow', *Seattle Times*, 25 August 1957, 13-14.

Commentary here alludes to the dualistic perceptual approach, resulting from the industry and nature binary, with the dilapidated industrial Gas Works painted as the undesired current situation, and the ‘scenic park’, akin with nature, as the desired future for the site.

The underlying perception that the shores upon which the former gas plant was located would provide an ideal opportunity for a public park were discussed both during the site period of abandonment, and earlier in the twentieth century. The First Annual Report of the Board of Park Commissioners in 1904 earmarked the shores ‘between the northeast and northwest arms of Lake Union’ in a citywide park plan, due to the site’s commanding views over the lake.⁸⁰ While the authors of that report, the Olmsted Brothers firm, went on to design and landscape numerous plots and parks across Seattle, the promontory land north of Lake Union was turned over for industrial use instead. However, when placing the Olmsted Brothers remarks in a wider context of national recreation and park thinking, this vision for a park would not be solely for open aesthetic space, as had dominated park design in the nineteenth century. Dualistically, the site would provide recreational functions too, with the Board recommending boating uses, and the construction of a playground.⁸¹ Galen Cranz highlighted this approach to park design and urban planning as the period of ‘moral uplift’, and ‘reform parks.’⁸² Cities across the nation began to develop playground architecture to serve a municipal purpose, and the Board’s plans, drawing upon the consultancy of the Olmsted Brothers adhered to nationwide trends in outlook.⁸³

⁸⁰ ‘Report of the Olmsted Brothers’, p.47.

⁸¹ Ibid, p.47.

⁸² Galen Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982), 61-99.

⁸³ In 1906, the Playground Association of America (which would later become the National Recreation and Parks Association) was formed, a moment which ‘marked the institutionalization of the play movement and the recognition that the public realm was taking responsibility for the activity of children’, see Susan G. Solomon, *American Playgrounds: Revitalizing Community Space*, (Lebanon, NH: University of New England Press, 2005), (p.8); The creation of numerous playground spaces in small parks in cities across the United States took hold during the opening decades of the twentieth century, and publications such as *The Playground*, and later *Playground and Recreation*, capture the intensity to which they related to the parks movement, and urban policy; The Olmsted plans for Seattle were also set against the backdrop of the City Beautiful Movement which sought to beautify cities across the United States, see William H. Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement*, (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

However, as the subsequent industrial trajectory came to pass during the first half of the twentieth-century, the parks system and boulevards which typified the Olmstedian tradition in park planning, did not reach fruition north of Lake Union at that time. Instead, what can be taken from this historical precedent is the beginnings of a 'parks culture' approach to Seattle's urban planning. When the gas plant ceased production at the mid-point of the twentieth-century, the city and the Parks Department drew upon earlier images of the park ideal outlined by the Olmsted Brothers as a way of curtailing dereliction and the problems associated with deindustrialisation. In other words, we can trace the spatial history of the Gas Works Park site to an earlier period in which nature was conceptualised at that location, whilst also acknowledging the park's industrial character which Haag fought to retain.

As is often the case, the antidote to dereliction and decline, specifically in the industrial sense, is a return to nature. Prior to interventionist attempts to redesign such spaces, nature typically begins to 'reclaim' such spaces and thus holds a degree of agency over the derelict space which was not visible during times prior to industrial departure. Plants begin to creep up through concrete, or weave their way up tall pillars of metal. Often plants are considered 'weeds', and typical labels such as 'overgrown' or 'invasive species' are deployed. In terms of fauna, the derelict landscape may also play host to animal species such as foxes, mice, or bats, along with avian life. In contrast to the carefully controlled nature within park spaces and manicured gardens, nature in this context is considered wild or untamed. Nature in this form, interwoven into an abandoned landscape are classified as signifiers of decay and decline. Sentiments towards the site in its abandoned state confirm these assumptions. A *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* piece from 1963 about the northern shores of Lake Union and the disused Seattle, Lake Shore, and Eastern Railroad which runs adjacent to the Gas Works, remarked that the area is 'weed-infested' and an 'eyesore', which is 'blighting this entire section of waterfront.'⁸⁴ Feelings

⁸⁴ Dan Coughlin, 'Rezoning to Beautify Lake Urged', *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 30 August 1963, Box 7, Folder 11, Ben Evans Recreation Program Collection, Record Series 5801-02, SMA.

towards the Gas Works site continued in this vein throughout the 1960s, with one commentator remarking that an 'ugliness' clung to the lake which was 'battl[ing] for survival'.⁸⁵

From this juncture, the antidote metaphor of what a park could provide takes on an additional remedying function – to revitalise a derelict space, and to regain control over this form of unwanted nature. Re-introducing nature to the gas plant site, alongside plans to adaptively reuse elements of industrial architecture, served both aesthetic functions in line with the designers vision, but also utilised nature which served environmental ends through the treating ground pollution. Environmental improvement of toxic soils, a lasting by-product of gas production, would be derived from the same landscape features which received negative commentary during the site's period of dereliction.

In this light, the park provides an urban utility for the public, as well as serving a reconciliatory function over competing spatial forms at various times during the site's history. Transforming the derelict space within Haag's post-industrial vision attempts to reconcile this myriad of spatial situations at the Lake Union site, by bringing together the numerous elements which the site signified by the early 1970s. Encapsulated within Haag's 1971 Master Plan is a concoction of industrial features in their abandoned form, open and natural green space, and a degree of recreational facility. The state of the industrial architecture at the time of the development of Gas Works Park is important when we consider the temporal constructs that operate within the park boundaries. This chapter will now turn to detailing the industrial aesthetic which has been mentioned prior, before moving onto understanding both Haag's and later the public's attachment to a unique post-industrial park vision during the 1970s.

⁸⁵ Marc Krasnowsky, 'The Proposed Lake Union Park: Lake Battles for Survival', *North Central Outlook*, 2 July 1969, Box 7, Folder 11, Ben Evans Recreation Program Collection, Record Series 5801-02, SMA.

Gas Works Park's Industrial Aesthetic and Undertaking Adaptive Re-use

As has already been alluded to, but not explored in detail, Gas Works Park's design centred on the retention, rather than the removal, of a significant portion of the abandoned industrial machinery and buildings left over at the site after the plant's closure in 1956. Such remnants of an industrial past were recast from their intended purpose and reimagined either as aesthetic landmarks for the park, or for public use. The former boiler house was converted into a sheltered area with picnic tables and space for the staging of entertainment events. Adjacent to the boiler house, a former exhaust-compressor building was repurposed as a 'play barn', with mechanical parts made safe and painted bright colours to invite sensory engagement from younger park patrons.

However, the standout features of the Park are the six largely intact gas generator towers, known as 'cracking' towers, an instrumental part of the gasification process which took place there earlier in the century. Situated in a central location of the Park the collection of tower-like structures was in active use when the gasification plant was operational. Six of these towers were originally synthetic natural gas generator towers, with an oil absorber, and an oil cooler located between the generators and the 'play barn' structure.⁸⁶ By the late 1960s, photographs show the tower structures as having a rusting colour of dark red and brown. Over the course of the past half-century, the towers continued to rust and by the start of the twenty-first century, some of the structures have become the canvas for graffiti artists. Despite their ruined appearance, the structures stand stoic and are symbolic reference points for the park's design and place.

⁸⁶ Further details on the technicalities of how the six generator towers worked in relation to the rest of the plant can be found within the 1971 Master Plan. See, Richard Haag Associates, 'A Report Sustaining The Master Plan for Myrtle Edwards Park,' (April 1971), p.22.



1. Aerial photograph of the Gas Works site, April 1966.⁸⁷

At the northern end of the park site the Seattle, Lake Shore and Eastern Railway (later Burlington Northern Railroad) passed adjacent to the gas plant. The disused line was later repurposed as the Burke-Gilman trail for pedestrians and cyclists, providing a recreational conduit into the park between neighbouring Ballard, Fremont, and University Districts. Retained within the park are the concrete trestle structures from a short spur of track, which carried coal product into the plant site for processing into gas fuel. Aerial photography indicates that by 1973, the short length of track into the gas works has been removed, in line with the 1971 Master Plan. The trestles serve as a reminder of the wider interconnectivity the gas plant site had with the surrounding community and region, and are high enough to encourage users to walk underneath and between them.

⁸⁷ 'Gas Works Park', 29075, April 4, 1966. 5801-01: Don Sherwood Parks History Collection, Courtesy of the Seattle Municipal Archives.



2. Remains of track trestles. April 2016. ⁸⁸

To the southwest of the Gas Works Park site is an artificial mound, which has subsequently been named Kite Hill. The 1971 Master Plan highlights now this '50 [foot] high mound of subsoil fill', caps rubble and exotic industrial wastes.⁸⁹ Thaisa Way wrote that 'Haag set aside the most polluted soil, and the construction rubble that could not be recycled, placing it into a large pile to form the base of the Great Mound or Kite Hill.'⁹⁰ The active hydrocarbons concentrated in this section of the park create a 'dynamic process' in the breaking down of the cocktail of pollutants beneath the clay top soil of the mound. Subsequently, a large sundial feature was added to the top of the mound, and spot proved popular for recreational kite-flyers, earning its namesake title. The retained plant structures, the trestles, and the mound weave together a collection of icons which form the post-industrial narrative at Gas Works Park.

⁸⁸ Remains of track trestles at north end of Gas Works Park. Own photograph taken April 2016.

⁸⁹ Richard Haag Associates, 'A Report Sustaining The Master Plan for Myrtle Edwards Park,' (April 1971), p.12.

⁹⁰ Way, 'Landscapes of industrial excess', 28-39, (p.35).



3. View from Kite Hill, Gas Works Park, overlooking Lake Union and Downtown Seattle in the background, April 2016. ⁹¹

The aesthetics of industrialised landscapes has been understood and interpreted as complex.⁹² At times romanticised through the sheer power and heft associated with it, in the context of deindustrialised, the same landscapes have been classified as symptoms of urban decay. Nostalgic memories of places which instilled fulfilling, and necessary work, the flipside view emphasises the exhaustion, pollution, and labour of industrial employment. At Gas Works Park, Haag's proposed plan of adaptive reuse of industrial features encountered these complexities and he himself acknowledged that the process of understanding how the public would react to such a design would garner varying opinion. In a 2008 interview, Haag recalls how he 'turned the worst building which was the blacksmith's shop, into our office' and explain his vision for the site by 'teach[ing] through demonstration.'⁹³ Haag further explained his philosophy of overcoming the gulf between those who were hostile to the idea of adaptive reuse and those with more moderate, accommodating opinions,

⁹¹ View from Kite Hill, Gas Works Park, overlooking Lake Union and Downtown Seattle in the background. Own photograph taken April 2016.

⁹² Tim Edensor, *Industrial Ruins: Space, Aesthetics and Materiality* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2005), p.95.

⁹³ Interview with Richard Haag, interviewed by Vaun Raymond, 9 October 2008, transcript available at <http://www.lakeunionhistory.org/Transcript,_Gasworks_Park.html> [Accessed 11 July 2017]

through a conversation he had with a colleague. His colleague, Adrian Ziegler argued that ‘you’ll never get people to buy into this unless you bring them to the site.’⁹⁴

The concept of ‘industrial nature’ has come to the fore over the past two decades, and an understanding of this provides a bridge from abstract theory to the case study parks analysed. A trend of adaptive reuse symbolises a shift from binary perspectives and reimagines an industrial past as a recreational present. By extension, post-industrial relics within park space redefine our understanding of industry’s relationship with nature. By way of another nod to the Olmsted’s vision, we can observe a more rooted attempt to wed temporal and spatial meaning into place-making. In the 1903 Olmsted Plan for the city of Seattle, the Olmsted brothers remarked that ‘every advantage should be taken of differing conditions to give each one a distinct individuality of its own.’⁹⁵ While turn of the twentieth-century notions of ‘individuality’ of the site differed from the site composition in the 1960s, Haag was intent on achieving a sense of uniqueness by drawing upon an industrial past. As highlighted earlier, the Olmsted Plan also recommended a degree of openness to any park located on the northern shores of Lake Union as to take advantage of ‘commanding’ vistas over the Lake.⁹⁶ Gas Works Park adhered to this earlier recommendation through its prudent approach to tree-lines and topographical relationship with Lake Union. Haag’s design for the site respected both his own vision to retain elements of the site industrial past, as well as adhere to the Olmsted Brothers suggestions for the area as outlined in 1903.

Haag had ‘concluded that it would neither be possible to remove all the underground piping and existing soil from the site’ and thus developed a design plan around this which adhered to the specific concerns and nature of the site.⁹⁷ “‘Traditional’ park design’, it was noted, was not possible, designs

⁹⁴ Interview with Haag, by Raymond.

⁹⁵ ‘Report of the Olmsted Brothers’.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.47.

⁹⁷ No author, ‘History of Park Development’, undated, p.2, Box 66 Folder 12, Planning, Construction and Maintenance Records, Record Series 5804-05, SMA.

that permitted the ‘growth of large trees’, and as a result a more ‘selective program of site preparation and restoration’ was proposed.⁹⁸ Contemporary and in situ factors relating to prior use therefore had a direct effect on how the park would be designed. Discussions over the aesthetic value that industrial features possessed, and could be remodelled for the purposes of ‘industrial’ heritage were counter-balanced by financial realities, despite the availability of Forward Thrust funds for urban redevelopment plans, between 1968 and 1975.⁹⁹ In 1968, County Proposition 6 was passed by the electorate of King County, incorporating Seattle and its immediate vicinity, which apportioned \$118 million to Parks and Recreation. This figure represented the largest bond issue ever passed in the United States for the purposes of Parks and Recreation, further symbolising the significance of park spaces in urban planning.¹⁰⁰

Perceptions of Industry and Nature on a Practical Level

However, the debate over whether industrial features left over at the site after the 1956 plant closure should be reused in the proposed park was not confined to Haag’s architect’s office. Hans A. Thompson, Park Superintendent during the early planning stages of transforming the derelict gas works into a park space, was quoted in 1968 as saying that ‘no expense should be spared to develop this park to its full potential’, a sentiment echoed by the unique designs put forward by Haag to the City at this time.¹⁰¹ In private correspondence, Thompson, when confronted with the view of retaining some of the industrial architecture in order to ‘produce a giant sculptural form’, remarked that the suggestion was both ‘very interesting and challenging.’¹⁰² The suggestion resonated with the

⁹⁸ Ibid. p.3, Box 66 Folder 12, 5804-04, SMA.

⁹⁹ The Forward Thrust programme represented a series of ballot initiatives which put to Seattle voters the question of funding a variety of urban and civic redevelopment projects. See Roger Sale, *Seattle, Past and Present*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1976), 227-237.

¹⁰⁰ William H. Mullins, ‘The Persistence of Progressivism: James Ellis and the Forward Thrust Campaign, 1968-1970’, *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, 105, 2 (Spring 2014), 55-72.

¹⁰¹ Hans A. Thompson, quoted in, ‘Lake Union Park Plan in Future’, 26 September 1968, Box 7, Folder 11, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, Ben Evans Recreation Program Collection, Record Series 5801-02, SMA.

¹⁰² Thompson, *Letter to Vincent Lyons*, 18 September 1969, Box 27, Folder 7, Don Sherwood Park History Collection, Record Series 5801-01, SMA.

Superintendent as he referred the idea onto the 'Master Planner,' presumably referring to the team determining who to award the design contract to, though this remains unclear.¹⁰³ Further to this, Thompson's vision for the Park in this regard remains consistent when he lobbied in 1969 and 1970 that the ongoing demolition at the site be halted.

The idea of adaptive reuse became clear by October 1969, when Thompson requested that the Washington Natural Gas Company negotiate with the Parks department over any future demolition plans, as 'certain portions of the existing superstructure of the gas works be retained and integrated into the design of the park, perhaps as a form of industrial sculpture.'¹⁰⁴ At this time, Washington Natural Gas Company and the City of Seattle were still in the process of finalising payments and transfers relating to the derelict site. From this stage in the planning and development process at Gas Works, the intention to create a recreational park with an industrial aesthetic appears mainly to be superficial. It would be over the course of the next two to three decades that the industrial character of the park would transcend merely visual qualities and come to instil a sense of history and place within the park environment.

Thompson made renewed calls during June 1970 for the retention of industrial features and the halting of demolition plans, showing a link between Haag's designs and a further interest in the design of a unique park environment.¹⁰⁵ Occurring simultaneously was the first reference to the 'post-industrial' presented by Haag to the Parks department. Haag proposed the utilisation of certain existing features, to which 'the Commission [Parks department] felt that Mr. Haag should be given as

¹⁰³ Thompson, *Letter to Vincent Lyons*, 18 September 1969.

¹⁰⁴ Thompson, *Letter to W.P. Woods*, 29 October 1969, Box 27, Folder 7, Don Sherwood Park History Collection, Record Series 5801-01, SMA.

¹⁰⁵ Specifics around which sections of industrial components should be retained in relation to Haag's designs are outlined in Hans A. Thompson, *Letter to Bernard T. Poor* (President of the Washington Natural Gas Company), 16 June 1970, Box 27, Folder 7, Don Sherwood Park History Collection, Record Series 5801-01, SMA; Adrian Arnold (Arnold, Arnold, and Associates, consulting engineers) *Letter to Richard Haag*, 10 June 1970, Box 27, Folder 7, Don Sherwood Park History Collection, Record Series 5801-01, SMA.

much freedom as possible to develop this area.¹⁰⁶ At this point, Haag had begun to convince institutional officials of his post-industrial vision, which proved to be a vital step towards the creation of Gas Works Park.

Demolition at the site represented a stalled process, with correspondence between Washington Natural Gas Company and the City highlighting delays and indecision.¹⁰⁷ According to correspondence in 1971, Washington Natural Gas Company agreed to demolish the abandoned structures on site in order to reap 'sufficient salvage value from the material removed to offset the cost of demolition and removal.'¹⁰⁸ In a letter to Mayor Wesley Uhlman in May 1971, Washington Natural Gas Company outlined how they had planned to 'all structures to ground level prior to giving the city full possession' in March 1973, the date at which final payments and transfers would be completed.¹⁰⁹ At the same time, the Company points out that during the transition process of the site transferring from their ownership to the City, 'some demolition [had] already taken place'.¹¹⁰ Concerns over demolition plans during the park design and early developmental period, came down to financial, design, and safety considerations. By September 1971, the City, Haag, and the Parks and Recreation Department were still considering the extent of demolitions required at the proposed park site in accordance with the 'economic feasibility' of Haag's plans which had included the 'partial demolition' of some, mainly dangerous, structures.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁶ Discussion notes, 25 June 1970, Box 67, Folder 15, Planning, Construction, and Maintenance Records, Record Series 5804-05, SMA.

¹⁰⁷ Bernard T. Poor, *Letter to Hans A. Thompson*, 30 September 1970, Box 27, Folder 7, Don Sherwood Park History Collection, Record Series 5801-01, SMA.

¹⁰⁸ Bernard T. Poor, *Letter to Mayor Wesley Uhlman*, 21 May 1971, Box 92, Folder 7, Wesley C. Uhlman Subject Files, Record Series 5287-02, SMA.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, Poor, *Letter to Uhlman*, 21 May 1971.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Poor, *Letter to Uhlman*, 21 May 1971.

¹¹¹ David J. Buchan, *Letter to Hans A. Thompson*, 16 September 1971, Box 27, Folder 7, Don Sherwood Park History Collection, Record Series 5801-01, SMA.

Haag's design focused on the retention of existing industrial structures for aesthetic purposes and for some to be adaptively reused, such as the boiler house for public use. This design approach fed directly into the process of place-making at the site. Instilling a sense of place in Gas Works Park centred around the presence of in situ industrial pieces. Industrial features were thus detached of their assigned function as items of 'work' and were instead reimagined and reassigned for purposes of aesthetic park use. This process reflects Alice Mah's idea of the 'ruination.'¹¹² Mah outlined succinctly that industrial ruins 'are never static objects, but are in a constant state of change across space and time.'¹¹³ This conceptual notion played out through Haag's design vision for Gas Works Park, as the architect re-appropriated industrial symbols and fused them into the essence of the park's design.

¹¹² Alice Mah, *Industrial Ruination, Community, and Place: Landscapes and Legacies of Urban Decline*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p.3.



4. Cooling towers retained at Gas Works Park, 1976. ¹¹⁴

The retention of disused railroad track, to the north end on the Gas Works Park site was based more upon cost rather than on an adherence to an industrial aesthetic the proposed park. As early as 1966, discussion notes show that in the interests of budgetary concerns, ‘working the design concept around it [the railroad tracks]’ would be encouraged.¹¹⁵ This early suggestion is also accompanied with a further suggestion to ‘screen’ off the tracks.¹¹⁶ Resistance to the idea of incorporating industrial, or non-natural designs into the Gas Works Park plan run adjacent to the innovative steps taken by Haag and others, and instances such as this one, to screen or erase these unwanted features, are more in-

¹¹⁴ ‘Gas Works Park’, 178833, 5802-10: Department of Parks and Recreation Photographs, Courtesy of the Seattle Municipal Archives.

¹¹⁵ Discussion notes, 20 October 1966, Don Sherwood Park History Collection, Box 27, Folder 7, Record Series 5801-01, SMA.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

line with conventional park design thinking of the time. Existing parks across the city, such as the older Volunteer Park, Seward Park, and Washington Park Arboretum, encapsulated a more Olmstedian, or traditional line of park form. Haag stands out as the preferred candidate during the discussions in 1969 and 1970 however, and his designs draw heavily on the concept of reusing industrial architecture.¹¹⁷ When the financial cost of what to do about the disused railroad tracks, and underground piping are considered, Haag's designs for adaptive reuse at the site are more in step with both budgetary concerns, and Parks Department thinking, as expressed by Superintendent Hans A. Thompson during the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Caution over the costs of retention arose again when finances were discussed between the Parks department and Haag. Thompson urged Haag to consider his designs for the Park as first phase costs ran at approximately \$980,000, with funding needed for further stages of development at the site.¹¹⁸ In the same letter to Haag, Thompson appears to be more hostile to the idea of retaining some of the industrial components outlined in Haag's plans, as the Superintendent argued for 'realistic' evaluations in relation to 'extravagant approach[es]' to structures.¹¹⁹ While not wholly turning his back on the idea of an industrial-themed park space, Thompson's concerns at this juncture illustrated a need to balance idealism with reality. In the process, the concept of a park designed around its industrial character and heritage again appeared to be more of an idealistic aesthetic quality, rather than a rigorously considered approach to place-making and the social construction of space during the site's transformation. Eventually, the city apportioned \$1.75 million for the acquisition and development of the first two phases of the park's development.¹²⁰ By 1974, when the first phase had

¹¹⁷ Frank R. Ray, *Letter to Hans A. Thompson*, 26 February 1970, Box 27, Folder 7, Don Sherwood Park History Collection, Record Series 5801-01, SMA;

¹¹⁸ Hans A. Thompson, *Letter to Richard Haag*, 11 September 1970, Box 27, Folder 7, Don Sherwood Park History Collection, Record Series 5801-01, SMA.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ 'Board May Sponsor Contest for Lake Union Park Design', *North Central Outlook*, 23 January 1969.

been completed, it was noted that a further \$3 million, yet to be allocated, would be needed to complete phases three, four, and five.¹²¹

Later in 1970, Frank R. Ray, the then Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Planning, raised the issue of popular support for such a design and outlined that for him, his 'biggest concern is for community support and city support which I feel we need to develop as rapidly as possible.'¹²² Ray's concerns here are vague, but when considered against the backdrop of financial pressures, and media commentary over the 'ugly' nature of the site's condition, it is not too reaching to suggest that perceptions over industrial characteristics played into the Parks department concerns, and its remit to deliver an accessible recreational space for the community.

Other city officials, notably Robert Hintz in the Planning Department, raised their disagreements with Haag's conceptual design in 1971, while others debated economic feasibility.¹²³ Hans A. Thompson presented the case for Haag's designs, against a 'conventional plan' to the city's Office of Management and Budget's Woody Wilkinson in November 1971. The report suggested that Haag's hopes of retention of industrial structures would be more beneficial than constructing an entirely new 'conventional' design, and adhered to the funding limits allocated by the Forward Thrust program.¹²⁴ Forward Thrust funds for Parks and Recreation was intended for development of 11 new parks across King County, as well as apportioning funds for swimming pools and an aquarium. With that imperative, both the Parks Department and the Office of Management and Budget could not allow redevelopment costs of the gas works site to spiral. Thompson's report recommended the adoption of Haag's plan for

¹²¹ 'Park Dept. Hopes for Gas Plant Park Funds', *University of Washington Daily*, 25 January 1974.

¹²² Frank R. Ray, *Letter to Richard Haag*, 22 December 1970, Box 27, Folder 7, Don Sherwood Park History Collection, Record Series 5801-01, SMA.

¹²³ 'Bob Hintz, who openly disagrees with Haag on the park design itself...' in Bryce A. Ecklein, *Letter to Frank R. Ray*, 5 November 1971, Box 27, Folder 7, Don Sherwood Park History Collection, Record Series 5801-01, SMA; Hans A. Thompson, *Letter to Woody Wilkinson*, 3 November 1971, Box 27, Folder 7, Don Sherwood Park History Collection, Record Series 5801-01, SMA.

¹²⁴ Ibid. Thompson, *Letter to Woody Wilkinson*.

the gas plant site, and for only the partial demolition of the existing structures, with construction on the park commencing in March 1973, and estimated completion of the first phase in March 1974.¹²⁵

By breaking the development and opening of the Park into definable phases, Haag's 1971 Master Plan hoped that 'interim improvements [would] begin [a] community relationship with future park patrons while displaying the site and our [architect's] concepts for future development.'¹²⁶ Haag's motives here correlate with a process of place-making which sought to include, rather than exclude the surrounding community amidst the site's transition. By fostering good public relations from the start of physical developments and construction, Gas Works Park as a public space evolved from a site of dereliction and devoid place, into an accessible and inviting area imbued with a sense of place, particularly once the park form had been experienced by users upon its opening.¹²⁷

It remained for Haag and the design's advocates to further convince the Parks department, and the local community that industry and nature could be reimagined within the park surrounds and exist harmoniously. Once construction was approved and plans were finalised, a slew of opinions were exchanged by design critics, local media, and the public. In 1972, Haag's concept of a post-industrial recreational, open space at the former gas plant began to be put to work against a backdrop of oppositional views in terms of both aesthetics, and environmental concerns, which will now be explored.

An experiential level of industry and nature

Having explored the practicalities and scope of the adaptive reuse of industrial structures at the park site during the planning and developmental years, this chapter will now move onto examine experiential viewpoints of Gas Works Park from the perspective of the public and local media

¹²⁵ Ibid. Thompson, *Letter to Woody Wilkinson*.

¹²⁶ Richard Haag Associates, 'A Report Sustaining The Master Plan for Myrtle Edwards Park,' (April 1971), p.27.

¹²⁷ Tuan, *Space and Place*, 6, 8-18.

commentary. This aspect of discussion over the aesthetic, function, form, and use of Gas Works Park sheds light on how an alternative, and more contentious narrative, formed alongside the official proceedings of the architect and city officials. By exploring both contingent voices, a more rounded understanding of how a sense of place developed at the park, and became instilled both physically through iconography and practical use, and conceptually through perception and thought.

An industrial park was not totally welcomed by the local community [or similar] A *North Central Outlook* newspaper report highlighted that Haag's 'master plan received the most criticism,' at a community hearing event in 1971, prior to construction commencing, 'for the idea of retaining the six generator towers once used in gas production.'¹²⁸ A myriad of negative connotations were attached to the site, and the proposed continued presence of some of the gas plant architecture. A piece in a December 1971 edition of the *Seattle Times* sarcastically observed that the 'unsightly, blackened structures at the old Lake Union gas plant,' would 'perhaps win an award or two from cultural journals,' but would 'remain as they are today, civic eyesores.'¹²⁹ At one Wallingford Community Council meeting, the daughter-in-law of councilwoman Myrtle Edwards, whose name the planned park was originally to be named after, recounted, 'those towers terrified me when I was young.'¹³⁰ Adding to the chorus of opposition, other local citizens in attendance put their views to Haag, described the park as 'a pile of junk,' raising objection to the 'honky tonk' commercialism that was feared would accompany the new space, and one resident pointedly asking the architect if he was 'really serious' about the proposal.¹³¹ Others at the same meeting praised the 'imagination and thinking' of the design, labelling it 'very creative'.¹³²

¹²⁸ Karen West, 'Gas Plant Park Hearing Tonight', *North Central Outlook*, n.d. (c.1971).

¹²⁹ 'Eyesores Stay In Park Plan', *Seattle Times*, 27 December 1971.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

Ruth Welch, columnist for the *Seattle Times*, put across her view on the proposed Gas Works Park in January 1972 in blunter terms, stating that ‘it stinks.’ Welch called on her readership, and those ‘whose windows face Myrtle Edwards Park [Gas Works Park]’, to ‘tell the Park Board what their wishes are.’¹³³ The family of Myrtle Edwards withdrew their support for the naming of the planned park after the late councilwoman during the summer of 1972. Edwards name had been linked to the gas works plans following her years of park promotion in the city, and her advocacy of city beautification. Initially some commentators, including Welch attributed Myrtle Edwards’s name to the cause against the park, but her family later clarified that while a more ‘conventional’ park should be named after her, the withdrawal represented ‘no... criticisms of the park at the gasworks site.’¹³⁴ Coincidentally, the shoreline park north of Olympic Sculpture Park, on Elliot Bay was eventually named after Edwards in 1976. Criticisms continued throughout the formative years of Gas Works Park’s development, with one North Seattle resident chiding in 1975 that he ‘cannot imagine what thinking went through the minds of city councilmen when they decided to retain the old gas plant.’¹³⁵ Media commentaries, newspaper ‘letters to the editor’ sections, and voiced community concerns were divided over whether the retention of the rusting industrial architecture was a good thing. For some it was ugly, and even unsafe, for others it provided a pocket of imaginative thought, on a waterfront where nature and industry both existed. The word around which much of the negative media and citizen commentary coalesced around was that of an ‘eyesore’.¹³⁶

The bulk of these concerns were raised publicly prior to and during the initial phases of construction, which began in 1973, but continued throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The relics of the gas plant invoked memories of an industrial past, that for some, they would have rather left behind.

¹³³ Ruth Welch, ‘Since When Has Junk Been Pretty?’, *Seattle Times*, 16 January 1972.

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Russell Thayer Mowry, ‘Times Readers Have Their Say: Youngsters Will Tear Park “Junk” Apart’, *Seattle Times*, 27 June 1975.

¹³⁶ ‘Editorial: A Historic Eyesore’, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 15 January 1971; see also ‘Get Rid of Ugly Gas Plant’, *Seattle Times*, 6 July 1971.

Washington based author and novelist, Earl Emerson alluded to the gas plant in his 1988 novel *Black Hearts and Slow Dancing*, writing that ‘A rust brown smudge ballooned over Seattle... it grew dirtier every minute.’¹³⁷ Industrial iconography, and the lingering presence of ground pollution, as William S. Saunders and Elizabeth K. Meyer point out, came to be ‘associated with danger and trauma as much as regeneration and healing,’ as Haag and his team had sought.¹³⁸ One 1997 letter exclaimed that ‘only people with a Picasso-like sense of distortions, and lack of beauty, would insist and advocate that it [the industrial features] should remain,’ and called for Seattle to be ‘liberate[d] from this ugly image!’¹³⁹ In addition to commentary on industrial aesthetics, questioning later arose over environmental issues and safety relating to soil toxicity levels, which led to temporary park closures in the 1984-85, 1997, and 2015.

Haag’s invitation to the public and media to visit the site during its early developmental phases, as outlined earlier, suggest a more open and public approach to park-making rather than confining its development to the corridors of City Hall.¹⁴⁰ Throughout the development of the park site, and subsequently over the past decades, Haag took a key role in leading public tours of the site. An Environmental Impact report published in June 1974 recognised that while the retention of industrial features sparked ‘major controversy... during public review of the Master Plan,’ their future had been secured by that time.¹⁴¹ Nonetheless, commentary their place in the park, accompanied by their perceived aesthetic values and the safety of the structures remained a topic of contention.

¹³⁷ Earl Emerson, *Black Hearts and Slow Dancing* (New York: William Morrow, 1988), in Elizabeth K. Meyer, ‘Seized by Sublime Sentiments’, in *Richard Haag: Bloedel Reserve and Gas Works Park* eds. William S. Saunders and Meyer, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), p.6.

¹³⁸ Meyer, ‘Seized by Sublime Sentiments’, in *Richard Haag: Bloedel Reserve and Gas Works Park* eds. Saunders and Meyer, p.7.

¹³⁹ Ernie Beck, *Letter to Council Member Susan Donaldson*, 8 January 1997, Box 95, Folder 7, Sue Donaldson Subject Files, Record Series 4623-02, SMA.

¹⁴⁰ Interview with Richard Haag, interviewed by Vaun Raymond, 9 October 2008, transcript available at <http://www.lakeunionhistory.org/Transcript,_Gasworks_Park.html> [Accessed 16 November 2019]

¹⁴¹ ‘Final Environmental Impact Statement’ (19 June 1974), Doc. 127, *Department of Parks and Recreation, City of Seattle*, Published Collections 2091, SMA, p.1.

Once opened, the park continued to receive criticism. Safety concerns put the disused cracking towers back in the spotlight during the summer of 1975, when part of the park was open to the public, after a child was ‘injured critically following a fall.’¹⁴² The boy had scaled one of the remaining gas towers and fell from a height. The incident sparked debate over whether the envisaged post-industrial park was a safe place for children to play with some citing a lack of secured fencing.¹⁴³ In response, the incident and media coverage relating to it, the Parks Department released a press release soon after emphasising both efforts to secure potentially dangerous elements of the retained industrial features at Gas Works, as well as highlighting the Park’s ability to stir ‘the imagination and challenge the mind.’¹⁴⁴

In line with that design intention, during the late 1990s, plans were proposed by the Friends of Gas Works Park group to establish a ‘camera obscura’ at the site.¹⁴⁵ The idea of a camera obscura would engage visitors and tourists in a visual and sensory exploration of the Seattle cityscape through pinhole slots in the Park’s retained cooling towers. The proposed use of the towers went beyond their initial park function as architectural pieces. Vistas of the surrounding landmarks – Lake Union, the Space Needle, and the expansive urban skyline – it was argued, would ‘attract the attention of tourists and the public,’ by allowing the scanning of a ‘360-degree sweep’ of the surrounding area.¹⁴⁶ The camera obscura at Gas Works Park failed to come to fruition, and though not directly cited, the hazardous nature of the retained tower structure was likely the reason behind this.

¹⁴² ‘Boy, 9, Hurt In Fall at Gas Works’, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 9 August 1975; ‘Parks chief orders elimination of hazards at Gas Works Park’, *Seattle Times*, 25 July 1975.

¹⁴³ David Suffia, ‘Gas Works: Place to play or peril to children?’, *Seattle Times*, n.d.

¹⁴⁴ ‘Press Release’, *Seattle Parks and Recreation*, 31 July 1975, Box 27, Folder 11, Don Sherwood Parks History Collection, Record Series 5801-01, SMA.

¹⁴⁵ Ed Mannery, ‘Camera Obscura’, *Friends of Gas Works Park (FoGWP) Newsletter*, Vol 1, 1 (Winter 1997), Box 95, Folder 7, Sue Donaldson Subject Files, Record Series 4623-02, SMA.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

Since the Park's opening, a handful of park users have been injured whilst physically interacting with its industrial features and its environment. In 1991, a lawsuit followed an accident which left a man requiring 'emergency medical care' after he was 'gored by a steel reinforcement bar while sledding' at the park.¹⁴⁷ More recently, a 19 year old man died after falling from an abandoned fuel tank, while two individuals survived separate falls in 2014 and 2015.¹⁴⁸ Incidents such as these, which have taken place throughout the Park's existence explain to some extent while negative perceptions over the safety of post-industrial park persisted. Negative perceptions also ran alongside continual and lengthy environmental issues relating primarily to soil toxicity, which will be discussed shortly.

Renaturing and Haag's Master Plan

Returning to Haag's 1971 Master Plan, the architect outlined how:

The geographic location, historic significance and esthetic [sic] resources combine to render these structures a monument to man's pioneer use of technology... In the context of the planned park, selected structures will be the initial physical expression of active urban recreation embodied in the reclamation of industrial totemic artifacts [sic].¹⁴⁹

This statement of purpose suggests two points as to why the project was pursued. Firstly, and as Thaïsa Way explains, the industrial features remind visitors of the historic reliance on 'urban industrial ventures' as opposed to just a 'history of Seattle [that] focused... only on the natural resources of mountains, forests, and water.'¹⁵⁰ Rooting an urban narrative, through the Park, in the industrial past,

¹⁴⁷ Diedra Henderson, 'City Is Sued Over Sledding Accident At Gas Works Park', *Seattle Times*, 31 May 1991.

¹⁴⁸ Evan M. Allen, 'Newton graduate, 19, dies in fall from old tank in Seattle', *Boston Globe*, 30 May 2012; Tori Nakamatsu-Figaroa, 'Student survives 40-foot Gas Works fall', *The Falcon Online*, 30 April 2014, [online] <<http://www.thefalcononline.com/2014/04/student-survives-40-foot-gas-works-fall/>>, [accessed 31 March 2017] Daniel Beekman, 'Man hospitalized after fall from equipment in Gas Works Park', *Seattle Times*, 2 February 2015.

¹⁴⁹ Richard Haag Associates, 'A Report Sustaining The Master Plan for Myrtle Edwards Park,' (April 1971), p.1.

¹⁵⁰ Thaïsa Way, 'Landscapes of industrial excess: A thick sections approach to Gas Works Park', *Journal of Landscape Architecture*, 8, 1 (Spring 2013), 28-39 (p.31).

in some respects have memorialised and recognised an alternative history of Seattle, while at the same time as revitalising and reusing a landscape of waste. When narratives of the city's proximity to the natural environment are considered, those landscape features – such as Mount Rainier and Mount Baker which form part of the Seattle skyline, as well as surrounding lakes, forests, and trails – public access to those places is invited and has proved appealing. Haag's Master Plan in at this juncture aimed to instil a similar sense of belonging and accessibility to an urban landscape of industrialism.

The second point to resonate from this statement referred to the idea of 'maturity'. Maturation has been central to the continuing cycle of the social production of this post-industrial urban landscape. This is not meant in a glib fashion but in practical terms. As the industrial features became truly post-industrial, symbols of ruination, in combination with longstanding recreation use since the 1970s, the perception towards the park as a hybrid public space has matured. In other words, initial scepticism and concerns have allayed over the subsequent decades, and the park has transitioned from a space to a place, as the public have come to understand Gas Works. As such, from the park's opening in the mid-1970s to the present, coming to terms with the loss of a working, industrial space was not solely understood through the lens of economic decline. By allowing the park itself to physically mature, users became familiarised with the park's unique qualities as an urban public space which was once a site of industry.

During the 1970s, natural elements of the park have interacted with industrial pieces more visibly as nature began to reclaim industrial markers and coexist with them. The cooling towers continued to rust, and around the base of them, wildflowers have grown. Treelines filled out at the northern end of the park adjacent to the Burke-Gilman Trail, and marine birds made parts of the Park their habitat. A decade after the opening of the Park, the *Seattle Times* ran an article exclaiming that 'despite the pollution... the grass continues in most places to grow and grow and grow,' accompanied by a photograph depicting tall wildflower and grasses in the foreground, and the tanned iron cooling

towers in the background.¹⁵¹ The article adds that ‘the park has become a bird refuge’, illustrating the amalgamation of nature and industry in a wild combination.¹⁵² Similar photographs featured in the *Post-Intelligencer* showing the presence of avian species, even during the Park’s brief closure in 1984, due to environmental health concerns.¹⁵³ The maturation of the Park met the aims of the architect’s vision which sought to preserve the space as a ‘back-to-nature site.’¹⁵⁴

Also factored into this process of maturation is a greater understanding of both the continuous and lengthy process of environmental clean-up *in situ* at Gas Works Park. The conflict of understanding and approach to environmental legacies ran alongside efforts to gain personal and communal legitimacy over the place. In the first instance, watershed moments can be identified in the ongoing process to clean-up Gas Works Park and the by-products of earlier industrial use. Secondly, grass-roots neighbourhood-based coalitions came into being around the heritage that sought to preserve the history of the site. The drive to establish landmark status vested both a community stake in the park further exemplified this. which in turn fostered energies focused on place-making Gas Works Park. This chapter will now explore environmental themes and heritage legacies in turn.

Conflict over environmental legacies

The environmental history of Gas Works Park highlights one of the main problems in trying to create a safe public space out of an industrial park. As such the issue of environmental legacy at Gas Works Park, refers directly to the presence of waste industrial product, which was leftover at the site, following decades of energy production. Haag, and the Department of Parks and Recreation considered this aspect of the site’s situation prior to, and during the conversion of the derelict gas works into a public space. One external organisation, that conducted preliminary testing at the Gas

¹⁵¹ Lansing Jones, ‘It’s Grass Works Park Now’, *Seattle Times*, 8 June 1984.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Jane Hadley, ‘Gas Works Park May Open Soon With a (Fairly) Clean Bill of Health’, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 13 July 1984.

¹⁵⁴ Karen Engstrom, ‘Lake Union Park – “A Back-to-Nature Site”’, *Seattle Times*, 16 December 1973, 32-36.

Works Park site in 1972 reported that 'of the numerous petroleum and chemical plants we have inspected, this would seem to be the most severely polluted.'¹⁵⁵ In the same year, the Washington Natural Gas Company confirmed to the Department of Parks and Recreation that an oil spill had occurred at the derelict site in January 1969.¹⁵⁶ The soil toxicity at the Park proved to be an ongoing environmental issue since the Park opened in the 1976.

Haag recognised this in his assessment of the park, and incorporated a method of environmental clean-up, known as 'bioremediation' within the 1971 Master Plan. Bioremediation was, at the time, experimental and theoretical. Akin with the motif of Gas Works being one of the first post-industrial park in North America, the bioremediation project embarked upon was pioneering and unprecedented in the context of park creation. Gas Works Park itself would take on the identity of an operating laboratory of sorts to test theories of *in situ* soil recovery theories. Bioremediation refers to the process by which microbes and bacteria which are found naturally in the environment are utilised to clean up soils which have been contaminated by toxic pollutants. For advice on bio-remedial strategies, Haag drew upon the expertise of Richard Brooks, a Seattle-based environmentalist who set up Chemithon Corp., a chemical engineering firm in 1954.¹⁵⁷ Through Haag's discussions with Brooks, he came to the idea that the solution to treating the existing pollution problems at Gas Works Park could be found within the same toxic soils which raised the problem in the first instance. In a 2004 interview, Haag extrapolated on his discussions with Richard Brooks and explained the remedial process in layman terms. He outlined that bacteria were fostered within the soil which would then 'eat hydrocarbons, to digest hydrocarbon molecules,' the latter of which was in plentiful supply in the contaminated soils north of Lake Union. Referring then to Gas Works Park, Haag explained

¹⁵⁵ Alan Toelle, *Letter to Richard Haag*, 13 September 1972, Box 66, Folder 14, Planning, Construction and Maintenance Records, Record Series 5804-05, SMA.

¹⁵⁶ Robert J. Tomlinson, *Letter to Ernest J. Ferrero*, 15 November 1972, Box 66, Folder 12, Planning, Construction and Maintenance Records, Record Series 5804-05, SMA.

¹⁵⁷ 'Our History' (2013), *Chemithon*, <http://www.chemithon.com/our_history.html>, [date accessed 5th April 2017].

He [Richard Brooks] said, “No, the best, the perfect bacteria microbes have evolved here from when they brought the first coal in, and the first oil in and so on. They’re right here, they just need to be aerated, stimulated and fed”. And I said, “Nobody’s going to believe that”. And he says, “Demonstrations”. So we made three demonstration plots, 100 square feet, ten by ten and planted different things, and it worked. So that allowed us to know we could actually have a park without hauling everything away.¹⁵⁸

Haag and the developers of the Gas Works Park site set up a series of ‘demonstration plots.’ The 1971 Master Plan for the site had called for the ‘phytoremediation’ of the Park’s toxic foundations, which employed the use of living plant species as a mechanism which neutralised contaminated soils. ‘The most functional and pollution resistant plant materials,’ which would be ‘determined by test plantings at the site,’ were recommended to deal with the remedial approach settled upon by Haag and Brooks.¹⁵⁹ Haag noted that during the development of the Park and the testing of the bioremediation method, nature’s recovery mechanisms were harnessed at the site, as a means of offsetting decades of industrial pollution. As a result, Haag and his proponents believed the process of bioremediation would be to combat toxic detritus in an environmentally harmonious, and cost-effective way.

Early signs of success for the bioremediation method were highlighted in July 1974, when it was reported that the site, once deemed an ‘ecological mess’ was instead ‘reaping a bountiful harvest.’¹⁶⁰ One newspaper wrote that the once ‘sterile’ landscape was ‘lush in a healthy growth of tomatoes, cabbage, squash, mustard greens, and even a grape vine or two’, after compost and ‘treat and seed’ was spread at the site.¹⁶¹ This ‘greening’ confounded earlier views that an entirely ‘garden or tree-

¹⁵⁸ Interview with Richard Haag, interviewed by Charles A Brinbaum, November 2004, *The Cultural Landscape Foundation*, transcript available at < http://tclf.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/Haag_Transcript.pdf > [Accessed 5th April 2017].

¹⁵⁹ Richard Haag Associates, ‘A Report Sustaining The Master Plan for Myrtle Edwards Park,’ (April 1971)

¹⁶⁰ Patsy Grant, ‘Gas Works Park may yield harvest’, *University Herald Today*, 31 July 1974.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

orientated park' would not occur at the site due to its toxicity.¹⁶² This view was shared within the 1971 Master Plan itself, and gave an insight into both an understanding of the ecological and topographical makeup of the site, as well as adhering to Haag's vision for a post-industrial park space which combined industrial features, with natural elements within the design.

The 1974 Final Environmental Impact Report for Gas Works Park revealed how the continued presence of polluted soils went on to affect the design, use, and aesthetic of the park itself.¹⁶³ Haag faced several issues in getting the park off the blueprints and into construction. He faced issues of cost and budget pressure, as well as creating and maintaining a publicly accessible park despite its contaminated nature. As Thaisa Way points out, alternative proposals to remove 'the top six feet of soil... and replace with 180,000 cubic yards of new soil' if carried out 'would have left little funding for the actual park.'¹⁶⁴ Haag had already adopted the adaptive re-use approach of industrial features, and as such, bioremediation correlated with that vision of dealing with environmental and architectural design concerns in situ.

As the earlier examination of popular and media commentary on industrial iconography shown, the environmental condition of Gas Works Park also divided viewpoints both locally and beyond in terms of commentary and analysis. Ensuring that the Park was a safe place to visit required long-term efforts of persuasion and understanding, particularly when the timespans involved with bioremediation are considered. Renewed environmental concerns in the 1980s and 1990s went on to test the mettle of both the park's continued vitality, and the trust of the public. To win over both public approval, as well as satisfy environmental concerns held by politicians, city officials, and advocacy groups, whilst also

¹⁶² Alf Collins, 'Little can grow in most of gas-plant site', *Seattle Times*, 18 July 1971.

¹⁶³ 'Final Environmental Impact Statement' (19 June 1974), Doc. 127, *Department of Parks and Recreation, City of Seattle*, Published Collections 2091, SMA, 60-89.

¹⁶⁴ Thaisa Way, *The Landscape Architecture of Richard Haag: From Modern Space to Urban Ecological Design*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015), p.160.

adhering to financial constraints, Haag's vision in effect raised the profile of the Park's unique aesthetic and environmental status, rather than hiding it.

In terms of dealing with ground pollution, a recovery process such as bioremediation represented a slow approach. The complete removal of contaminated soils and the introduction of new soils, as occurred during the construction of the Olympic Sculpture Park, while expensive, provided a quicker solution to environmental degradation. Considering this, bioremediation was recognised as a decades-long technique for Gas Works Park. Haag was forced to defend the remediation approach to the public and the media when the park encountered difficulties in the mid-1980s.¹⁶⁵ Following sampling within an Environmental Protection Agency investigation in the spring of 1984, Seattle Mayor, Charles Royer took the decision to close the Park on 20 April of that year.¹⁶⁶ For a time after August 1984, the Play Barn and picnic areas of the Park remained fenced off, as those sections of the site remained a 'hotspot' for contaminants.¹⁶⁷

Meanwhile community and public concerns were visible during this period of closure and EPA investigation. Throughout the Spring and Summer of 1984, local newspapers regularly updated the public of the ongoing closure and surveys into the Park's condition. Concerns were raised over the presence of carcinogenic chemicals at the site which were not only present in the soils, but mobile due to the element of groundwater run-off and infiltration. Media commentary reported on the closure, and the potential human health risks of the park, and several articles cited the Environmental Protection Agency's definitions of 'hazardous', and 'carcinogenic' chemicals present in the park's soil, and Lake Union's shoreline sediment. Newspaper headlines and commentaries once again raised the issue of public safety as high on the Park agenda. The presence of environmental officials and scientists during the mid-1980s, dressed in white overalls, hard hats, and protective gloves led to some

¹⁶⁵ Lansing Jones, 'Park designer defends pollution plan', *Seattle Times*, 16 May 1984.

¹⁶⁶ Lansing Jones, 'Cleaned-up Gas Works Park reopens this week', *Seattle Times*, 12 August 1984.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

sensationalist reporting that ‘moon men’ had arrived at the Park.¹⁶⁸ Such reporting fed into the narrative that Gas Works Park was a dangerous and hazardous place, rather than a safe and clean space for leisure and recreational respite.

Perceptions towards soil toxicity at Gas Works Park during the mid-1980s were also reflected in local literature. The relics of the gas plant invoked memories of an industrial past, that for some, would have rather left behind. Washington-based author and novelist, Earl Emerson alluded to the gas plant in his 1988 novel *Black Hearts and Slow Dancing*, writing that ‘A rust brown smudge ballooned over Seattle... it grew dirtier every minute.’¹⁶⁹ Industrial iconography, and the lingering presence of ground pollution, as William S. Saunders and Elizabeth K. Meyer point out, came to be ‘associated with danger and trauma as much as regeneration and healing.’¹⁷⁰ The duality of how ground pollution and its clean-up at the site could be perceived fed into popular notions of how the same Park could be interpreted in terms of its sublimity as a place of healing on the one hand, or nightmarish fear on the other.

Haag responded glibly to the EPA’s investigations in 1984, and remarked that ‘it was reprehensible for the EPA to poison the minds and spirits of the people through their grotesque inquisition,’ deploying environmental connotations by adding, ‘I just hope people’s minds haven’t been polluted.’¹⁷¹ Reflecting on Gas Works Park decades later, Haag explained how during his involvement with the Park, he ‘learned about all kinds of pollution, especially bureaucratic pollution.’¹⁷² Haag’s reaction towards the EPA’s investigations illustrated the conflict between the vision of renewal through adaptive reuse, and the physical realities of inviting the public to traverse and engage with a contaminated site. Haag’s

¹⁶⁸ Jane Hadley, ‘“Moon Men” at Gasworks Upset Mayor’, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, n.d., p.A1; ‘A Close, Careful Look’, *Seattle Times*, 27 October 1986, p.B2.

¹⁶⁹ Earl Emerson, *Black Hearts and Slow Dancing* (New York: William Morrow, 1988), in Elizabeth K. Meyer, ‘Seized by Sublime Sentiments’, in *Richard Haag: Bloedel Reserve and Gas Works Park* eds. William S. Saunders and Meyer, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), p.6.

¹⁷⁰ Meyer, ‘Seized by Sublime Sentiments’, in *Richard Haag: Bloedel Reserve and Gas Works Park* eds. Saunders and Meyer, p.7.

¹⁷¹ Lansing Jones, ‘Cleaned-up Gas Works Park reopens this week,’ *Seattle Times*, 12 August 1984 (C2).

¹⁷² Interview with Haag, interviewed by Brinbaum, November 2004.

design for Gas Work Park stressed the importance of retaining the industrial markers which imbued the Park with a sense of place and meaning. The overtly visible markers of the former industrial condition of the site, notably the ‘cracking’ towers, exposed pipework, and boiler house machinery were sanitised, secured, and made structurally sound prior to public access. However, the invisible markers of industrial use, such as the hazardous particles buried in soils and sediment were dealt with over a longer, even indefinable, period of time. Both elements, when the architect’s Master Plan is considered, instilled a sense of place in the park, but the contaminated soils transcended the nostalgic and preservation tendencies of machine parts. Contaminated soils required treatment and remediation, as in a realistic, rather than conceptual sense, the park’s toxicity represented an unwanted, but nevertheless omnipresent by-product of earlier use.

Seattle City Council returned to the issue of remediation in the early 1990s. In May 1992, the City tabled options to fund \$2 million worth of remediation work in accordance with the Environmental Impact Statement that called for half of that figure to be sourced from the State Toxics Fund.¹⁷³ In April 1997, Seattle’s Department of Parks and Recreation, in conjunction with the Washington Department of Ecology and Puget Sound Energy (formerly Washington Natural Gas Company), published a ‘Public Participation Plan’ on the ongoing environmental clean-up process at Gas Works Park.¹⁷⁴ The document sought to identify ‘community concern’ and act upon it in a transparent fashion, in the spirit of the Model Toxics Control Act (1988) which came about following sustained grass-roots efforts.¹⁷⁵ A timeline of events was established which facilitated engagement with the public through fact sheets, workshop sessions, comment hearings, and community group briefings. The Public Participation Plan came on the back of renewed public and media interest regarding safety

¹⁷³ Laura Wishik, *Letter to Council Member Cheryl Crow*, 7 May 1992, Central Staff Analysts' Working Files, Record Series 4603-01. Box 224, Folder 11, SMA. The ‘States Toxics Fund’ refers to the Washington State Department of Ecology’s Model Toxics Control Act (1988) which deals with hazardous waste clean-up.

¹⁷⁴ ‘Gas Works Park Environmental Clean Up: Public Participation Plan’, (April 1997), *Washington Department of Ecology, Seattle Parks and Recreation, and Puget Sound Energy*.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.* p.1.

concerns over public health and the environment during the 1990s. A *Seattle Times* article referred to the late 1990s clean-up plan, as well community concerns over the presence of benzene in the park's soils.¹⁷⁶

At this time, it was revealed that 'budgetary and regulatory reasons' lay behind the stalling of a rigorous bioremediation plan for Gas Works Parks.¹⁷⁷ According to a troubleshooting document, 'state environmental law requires that the DOE (Department of Energy) must supervise the work of the City. Because of budget constraints, DOE did not have the staff required to supervise this kind of clean-up effort.' Criticisms of the environmental condition of the park continued in the media up to and after the turn of the new century.¹⁷⁸ Further concerns were raised over the levels of contamination at the Park at the turn of the twentieth century. A 2003 report by the Washington State Department of Ecology explained that 'wastes found at the site include solvent-soaked wood chips, slag, lampblack carbon, coal by-products, and tar.'¹⁷⁹ The report added that

'Analysis of sites along the north shore of Lake Union in the vicinity of Gas Works Park found high levels of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and elevated concentrations of arsenic, copper, lead, zinc, and other metals.'¹⁸⁰

This level of detail of the extent to which Gas Works Park constituted a polluted environment did not correlate with descriptions and summaries completed closer to the Park's development. A 1979 Environmental Impact Report highlighted the 'extremely polluted condition of the site which resulted

¹⁷⁶ Jon Savelle, 'A Final Cleanup Plan for Gas Works', *Seattle Times*, n.d. (c.1997-1998).

¹⁷⁷ No Author, 'Gas Works Park Environmental Clean-Up Project: Answers to Common Questions', n.d. (c.1997-2003).

¹⁷⁸ Lisa Stiffler, 'Cleaning Up Lake Union's "Big Dirty Sink" May Be a Mess All Ats Own', *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 20 July 2002.

¹⁷⁹ Richard Jack, 'Sediment Toxicity Near Gas Works Park, Lake Union, Seattle (March 2003), *Washington State Department of Ecology*, p.2.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.3.

from over forty years of heavy industrial use.¹⁸¹ The same report further outlined that ‘the long term impact of the proposed park development on natural systems should be a return to a more stable and ecologically sound conditions that have existed since man first developed the site.’¹⁸² The effort to ‘return’ the Park to such a condition required a plan to tackle toxicity *in situ* rather than through the removal of polluted soils. Containment and remediation formulated the approach taken to dealing with the environmental hangover from past industrial use. The same report highlighted that in financial terms, ‘on site burial of the polluted soil should represent a significant savings to the project,’ with a plan of ‘soil rehabilitation’ undertaken to help restore soil quality over many years.¹⁸³ The former industrial use of the site therefore continued to persist in the form of an undesired environmental legacy for years thereafter.

Compared with the subsequent history of the Park’s use and condition, its environmental condition has proved more problematic than theorists and planners had accounted for when plans to redevelop the site were first tabled. Nonetheless, Gas Works Park remained a popular destination for both Seattle residents, and visiting tourists alike. The presence of pollutants in the soil, and the risk they posed the visitors have throughout the Park’s existence been mitigated and tackled by a variety of actors, ranging from community coalitions and city officials, to external experts and state and federal employees in environmental departments. It has taken several decades for media narratives to fully engage in the clean-up process which Haag envisioned at the start of the project in the late 1960s, with newspaper headlines geared more towards negative images of danger, park closure, public health risk, and continual testing. Despite this, the Park ranks favourably as a place to visit and tourist attraction. In 2016, Gas Works Parks featured as one of the ‘10 Parks That Changed America’ (along

¹⁸¹ ‘Final Environmental Impact Statement’ (19 June 1974), *Department of Parks and Recreation, City of Seattle*, Doc. 127, Published Collections 2091, SMA, p.1.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, p.1.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.66.

with Freeway Park, to be discussed in a later chapter), in a PBS documentary.¹⁸⁴ The Park has also featured in *Lonely Planet*, and recent travel-based publications including *Seattle Walks*.¹⁸⁵

Conclusion: Gas Works Park

The history of Gas Works Park illustrates the contestation which transpired over the issue of how a former industrial site could be reimagined as a place of leisure and recreation, without abandoning the working history of the Park's recent past. Tied up in this conflict – both conceptually and physically – were debates over landscape beauty and industrial aesthetics, the joining of industry and nature, public safety, and the issue of environmental legacy.

The attempt to create a park out of a former industrial site clashed with the continual issues of environmental legacy. In spite of this, pollution imbued the space in cultural memory as a site linked to industrial use even after industry ended, and this narrative was favoured by park architect Haag, and proponents of Gas Works Park. Woven into the topics of environmental legacy and park aesthetics relating to industrial features were safety concerns. The idea that a park is supposed to be a haven or respite space from 'ills' in society clashed on a conceptual level with the intention of the architect, the management by the Department of Parks and Recreation, and those who sought a middling narrative between industry and nature.

Furthermore, EPA investigations and media coverage which portrayed the site in a negative way raised questions which would go on to push the debate over how post-industrial landscapes could be reimagined as public spaces, and whether bioremediation and environmental recovery through

¹⁸⁴ '10 Parks That Changed America', *10 That Changed America*, PBS, 11 April 2016, Television, 41 minutes, 51 seconds. [online] <"<http://www.pbs.org/video/10-changed-america-10-parks-changed-america/>">, [accessed 14 September 2017].

¹⁸⁵ Brendan Sainsbury and Celeste Brash, *Lonely Planet Seattle*, (Dublin: Lonely Planet Global Limited, 2017); David B. Williams, *Seattle Walks: Discovering History and Nature in the City*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2016).

natural means, could work alongside such a space being accessible to the wider public. The debates surrounding the park's creation in the early 1970s, as well as heightened coverage over environmental safety in 1984, the late 1990s, and the 2000s illustrated a resilience of the co-existence between industry and nature, against long-held perceptions of their incompatibility.

The risk of being injured by metal parts of adapted industrial pieces could be, and were minimised by those tasked with maintaining the park. The visible presence of abandonment served also as a warning to visitors and park users, of the downsides of post-industrial spaces, and developed a deeper understanding of what the Gas Works site stood for in terms of place. However, the 'invisible' state of ground pollution in soils and sediment proved more shocking to park users initially. All of this came together with the fact that Gas Works Park represented the first post-industrial park space of its kind in North America, and the Western World. The intrigue, curiosity, and high visitor numbers suggest that rather than shunning the attempt to bring together industry and nature, Gas Works Park has acted as a site of experimentation in forming new opinions and perceptions on the two, seemingly disparate concepts.

The development of Gas Works Park demonstrated one early approach to understanding and re-imagining industrial spaces in a post-industrial society. The central element of the Park's sense of place depended upon the retention and re-use of industrial features, both in overtly visible – through cooling towers, pipework, and machine parts – and invisible – ground pollution and soil remediation – forms. The next chapter will pick up themes developed here regarding the relationship between industry and nature, and explore how they were dealt with in the creation of another park on the land of a former industrial operation within the vicinity of Downtown Seattle. At Olympic Sculpture Park, traces of past industrial use were removed rather than retained. An alternative place-based narrative was established by the park's architects and advocates which fixed the sense of place towards a pre-industrial, and pre-urban timeframe. In doing so, Olympic Sculpture Park attempted to foster a more

‘natural’ experience in park space, rather than focusing on preserving and reimagining a site of industry.



5. 2015 Fourth of July at Gas Works Park [People picnicking and lounging.]¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁶ ‘2015 Fourth of July at Gas Works Park [People picnicking and lounging.]’, 177326, 4 July 2015, 5802-15: Department of Parks and Recreation Digital Photographs. Courtesy of the Seattle Municipal Archives.

Chapter II: Reconciling the Freeway: Seattle's Freeway Park and I-5 Colonnade Bike Park

“It was with the Freeway, cutting through the very heart of the city, that Seattle began taking one of its wrong turns and started to lose its identity as a city.”

Paul Thiry, 1972¹⁸⁷

“By the freeway we did some wonderful stepped Babylonian-type gardens full of plants and lovely things. And everybody has loved it ever since. That seems to me one of the good things about that park too, and that is that it accepts the nature of where it is and uses it as part of the solution. Now the two pieces of the city are connected. The healing occurred easily.”

Lawrence Halprin, discussing Freeway Park, 2003¹⁸⁸

Eisenhower's Interstate Highway System and Seattle

On 29 June 1956, the Federal-Aid Highway Act was signed into law by President Dwight D. Eisenhower. The Act ushered in a wave of mostly federal-funded road highway construction across the United States of America, and formed the Interstate Highway System.¹⁸⁹ New and improved stretches of highways criss-crossed the nation linking major urban centres. To create the Interstate Highway System, the Act authorised \$25 billion to fund the building of 41,000 miles of highway, over a ten-year project, which at the time represented the largest public works project in the nation's history, and outpacing the ventures of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal programme.¹⁹⁰ Road construction on the Interstate Highway System continued throughout the second-half of the twentieth century, with total mileage covering 47,856 miles, according to data collected by the Department of

¹⁸⁷ Paul Thiry, as quoted in, Nard Jones, *Seattle* (New York: Doubleday, 1972), p.21.

¹⁸⁸ Charles Birnbaum, Interview with Lawrence Halprin (2003). Transcript available at The Cultural Landscape Foundation [online] <<https://tclf.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/Halprin-Transcript.pdf>>, [accessed 2 October 2017].

¹⁸⁹ According to the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, it is stated that the 'Federal share payable on any project in any State shall not exceed 95 per centum of the total cost of such project.' See Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, Pub. L. No. 627, 70 Stat. 374 [379-380], (1956).

¹⁹⁰ Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956, Pub. L. No. 627, 70 Stat. 374 (1956).

Transportation in 2013.¹⁹¹ Federal-aid legislation for the Interstate Highway System exceeded the initial costing, and by 1996, authorised funds reached \$119 billion.¹⁹² Eisenhower's Interstate Highway System reached the city of Seattle during the 1960s in the form of Interstate 5, the main highway linking the northern and southern borders of the United States along the Pacific Coast.

Aside from joining up the nation's cities and disparate regions, the Interstate Highway System pervaded into urban environments and subsequently re-ordered inner city and downtown landscapes. In Seattle, the Interstate project cut through the Downtown as the I-5 expressway dissected the city parallel to Seventh Avenue. By the mid-1960s, a corridor of vehicular-only traffic streamed through central districts of Seattle which had previously been accustomed to multi-modal city streets. Seattle, like numerous other cities across North America and Europe, was becoming geared towards the needs of the automobile over other traditional urban functions. The growth of automobile usage and Interstate expansion in urban locations has been connected to environmental problems such as pollution, landscape destruction, and congestion which have been linked to negative effects on human health, and wider social issues which include spatial dislocation, neighbourhood removal, vehicular and energy dependence, and blight.¹⁹³

This chapter will explore two responses to this dissection by concrete and automobile: the development of two Seattle parks that attempted to re-connect the divided urban landscape and

¹⁹¹ Office of Highway Policy Information (October 21, 2014). Table HM-20: Public Road Length, 2013, Miles By Functional System (Report). *Federal Highway Administration*.

<<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformation/statistics/2013/hm20.cfm>> [accessed 10 August 2017].

¹⁹² Figures obtained from the Federal Highway Administration – 'What did it Cost?', [online]

<<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/interstate/faq.cfm#question6>> [accessed 24 July 2019].

¹⁹³ Helen Leavitt has been vocal since the late 1960s on the topic of how the Interstate Highway System has 'invaded' the urban core and as a result 'exacerbated urban crises', see *Superhighway – Superhoax*, (New York: Doubleday, 1970). Peter Newman and Jeffrey Kenworthy explored these issues in a North American and global context during the 1990s, see their work *Sustainability and Cities: Overcoming Automobile Dependency*, (Washington D.C.: Island Press, 1998). Much has been written on the environmental effects of increasing automobile usage, Richard T.T. Forman has linked these symbiotic issues to the expansion of highway systems under the growing study of 'road ecology' in Forman et. al, *Road Ecology: Science and Solutions*, (Washington D.C.: Island Press, 2003). See also Joseph F. DiMento, and Cliff Ellis *Changing Lanes: Visions and Histories of Urban Freeways*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013).

provide for public access and valuable recreational and social space. The first, Freeway Park, was planned, constructed, and opened in the mid-1970s above the I-5 in the heart of Downtown Seattle. The second, the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park, came to fruition later in the mid-2000s, transforming wasteland space beneath the elevated sections of the freeway between the Eastlake and Capitol Hill neighbourhoods, to the north and north-east of the central business district. Together, they represent two successful examples of the re-establishment of public space where it had previously been lost.

In this chapter, I will present an alternative spatial narrative for understanding the relationship between the freeway and public space which occurred concurrent to other supportive or opposing reactions towards the Interstate System. Since the 1960s, the growth of an anti-freeway movement on the one hand, and the emphasis on interstate construction and calls for urban renewal on the other hand, have shaped the historical narrative for understanding public reactions to city expressways. Physically, both parks presented in this chapter – Freeway Park and the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park - diverged from these traditional lines of thought and offered a compromise solution which sought to transcend the ‘either/or’ nature of the debate. For Freeway Park’s designer Lawrence Halprin, the new inner-city expressways with their elevated roadways, off ramps, and interchanges offered new and exciting opportunities for the landscape architect and the urban planner to exploit, rather than viewing the freeway as the provider of only one function, the movement of vehicular transport.¹⁹⁴ Halprin worked with Angela Danadjieva, a project designer within Lawrence Halprin & Associates, to put into practice the construction of a park space above a busy Seattle expressway.¹⁹⁵ More recently, the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park established a connective form of space between two Seattle districts either side of the freeway, centred largely around urban BMX/off-road cycling. Conceptually, as icons of an experimental take on the urban park motif, the two parks shifted intellectual discussion over the

¹⁹⁴ Lawrence Halprin, *Freeways*, (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1966).

¹⁹⁵ ‘Angela Danadjieva’, *The Cultural Landscape Foundation*, [online] <<https://tclf.org/pioneer/angela-danadjieva>>, [accessed 2 November 2017].

interplay of the freeway as part of the downtown urban form and how 'new' spaces can be formed through the elevated and tunnelled design of multi-laned inner-city highways.

Though the case studies have similarities in certain respects such as their experimental take on park design, operating as layered recreational spaces in relation to the non-pedestrian freeway, and both being in Seattle, the process of by which the two spaces were established differed at a developmental level. Freeway Park, first discussed in the late 1960s, was a project which epitomised a 'top-down', institutional-led approach to park creation. From the design stage, through the park's construction, and its opening and subsequent trajectory, this has been the case, as Seattle's Department of Parks and Recreation maintained the site (and continue to do so). The park was conceptualised, designed, and built during an era of urban renewal of cities across the nation, led and instituted predominantly by a centralised cohort of professional officials, with the backing of the Forward Thrust initiative.

By contrast, the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park, took an alternative route to becoming one of Seattle's unique park environments. The idea of 'reclaiming' divided space is more transient at the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park, and citizens' efforts drove a grassroots bid to create a park space between Eastlake and Capitol Hill, with the heavy involvement of volunteer groups such as the Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance. By the mid-2000s, when the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park venture gained traction, urban land values were too high to match the landmark parks projects undertaken by the City during the twentieth century, and Seattle park policy shifted from engaging in wide-reaching urban renewal development towards a more volunteer partnership approach.¹⁹⁶ With this in mind, this chapter will also explore the extent to which the public were involved in park creation, and how the two case study parks contrasted one another in this regard during their creation, design, and management.

¹⁹⁶ Richard Florida, 'The Staggering Value of Urban Land', *CityLab*, 2 November 2017, [online] <<https://www.citylab.com/equity/2017/11/the-staggering-value-of-urban-land/544706/>>, [accessed 24 July 2019].

Furthermore, the chapter will explore ideas of perception, and how perceptions of these spaces has shifted over time regarding human interaction and the park's use. In doing so, examples from both park spaces will be presented which illustrate how specific design features and architectural alterations has affected perception and use. Here, media commentary is also considered in the shaping of public perceptions towards the two park spaces as well as the how the designs for the Park's factored into the shifting of popular perceptions. On this point, investigating how the park's 'mature' in relation to horticultural design at Freeway Park, and the increasing visibility of human use at the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park, will bolster understanding of how perceptions of park space shift over time.

Throughout this chapter the examples of first Freeway Park and then the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park to facilitate multiple modes of movement and passage will be explored. Initial project intentions for Freeway Park centred on the establishment of a recreational space in Downtown Seattle, for the purposes of meeting, relaxing, and spending time within Park. However, as the Park matured, for a variety of reasons ranging from architectural design and to visitor perception, its primary park function altered to being that of a thoroughfare and space through movement. Similarly, the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park invited active cycling pursuits as opposed to the Park being a place for pause and reflection. Together, as spaces of re-connection, both Parks facilitated the movement of people, either on foot or bike, from one city district to another in a more personal form. For Freeway Park, kinesthetics and movement featured heavily in Halprin's understanding of how social space operates due to the influence of his wife's work in the fields of experimental art and modern dance. In a more contemporary sense, urban designer Amalie Wright's writings on 'linkages', 'obsolescences', and 'co-location' help inform human use of park spaces akin to Freeway Park, investigated first in this chapter, and the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park, which will be explored later in the chapter.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁷ 'The Halprin Life/Art Process: Theory, History, and Practice', *Moving Towards Life: Five Decades of Transformative Dance*, eds. Anna Halprin and Rachel Kaplan, (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1995),

Before engaging in an investigation of these two parks, the historical backdrop against which reactions to inner-city freeway construction in the late twentieth century ought to be considered. The common denominator which links both Freeway Park and the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park is their relationship to the Interstate 5 Highway in the urban setting. The chapter will then move into the exploration of the case studies, first introducing Freeway Park as an alternative reaction to creating and understanding urban space which does not necessarily conform to the typical 'pro' or 'anti' freeway narrative which has dominated traditional park debates

Historical Narratives: The Pro and Anti-Freeway Movement Debates

The 'coming of the freeway' to American cities, both between them and within them, provoked a varied response to their place in the modern, urban United States. Much of the debate relating to their construction and form has centred upon two opposing narratives – the pro-freeway movement, often in line with calls for 'urban renewal', and the anti-freeway revolts. In Seattle, policy directives in line with other major American cities, urban renewal aimed to improve the 'quality of life' through investment in public housing projects, such as proposals to redevelop commercial districts such as Pike Place Market with high-rise commercial and office space, and the fostering of infrastructure connections between Downtown and suburb, through freeway construction.¹⁹⁸ Countering this shift, lobby groups and citizen activists such as Jane Jacobs mobilised for the preservation of social and community life in the city. The selection of Freeway Park and the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park as spaces of study serves not to counter these narratives, and should instead help elucidate an alternative undercurrent within spatial design and conceptual analysis ongoing alongside these two movements,

2-70; Amalie Wright, *Future Park: Imagining Tomorrow's Urban Parks*, (Collingwood, Australia: Csiro Publishing, 2013).

¹⁹⁸ Marshall Kaplan, Gans, and Kahn, *The Model Cities Program*, (Washington D.C.: Department of Housing and Urban Development, 1973), 6-7; Document 1331, 'The Seattle Model City Program in Action, 1970', Published Document Collection, SMA.

which focused on the notion of 'reconciliation' with the freeway. Re-appropriating and re-imagining urban space, and what the freeway represented, is a central tenet which links these two parks.

The Interstate Highway System construction programme and funding levels underpin federal, state, and city efforts to utilise roads and automobiles to drive economic and transportation growth across the United States.¹⁹⁹ For freeway advocates, the bottom line was that Interstates both connect the nation, and power the modern economy. Robert Moses, the influential and controversial urban thinker inextricably linked with New York City, writing in an article that appeared in a December 1956 edition of *Harper's Magazine* declared that the Act and the subsequent highway construction programme 'will affect our entire economic and social structure.'²⁰⁰ In retrospect, Moses was correct in his prediction. The coming of the Interstate Highway System had a profound effect on the nation, and particularly the nature of public infrastructure which altered the urban fabric of numerous cities from East to West. In this regard, the Pacific Northwest cities were familiar to downtown infrastructural development centred around the automobile. In the aftermath of the Second World War, national economic expansion provided fertile ground upon which the 'automotive city' flourished. Spacious and numerous concrete highways became commonplace in cities such as Seattle.

The concept of the 'automobile city', and as a result the command of the freeway in transportation modes, has typically been applied most strongly to cities and states in the American West, including the Pacific Northwest.²⁰¹ Freeways became a central infrastructural feature, and influenced urban

¹⁹⁹ The scholarly debate over the pros and cons of freeway construction across the United States has continued into recent decades. Mark H. Rose has argued that 'without doubt, the net results of building a national freeway system included more rapid economic development, enhanced speed and mobility for motorists and truck operators, and the creation for millions of urban residents to relocate from central cities to suburban districts', in *Interstate: Express Highway Politics, 1939-1989*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990), p.101. Conversely, scholarship has explored the negative effects of Interstate Highway expansion on city neighbourhoods, for example, see Raymond A. Mohl, 'Ike and the Interstates: Creeping toward Comprehensive Planning', *Journal of Planning History*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (August 2003), 237-262.

²⁰⁰ Robert Moses, 'The New Super-Highways: Blessing or Blight?', *Harper's Magazine*, December 1956, 27-31.

²⁰¹ On the concept of the 'Automotive City', see Peter D. Norton, *Fighting Traffic: The Dawn of the Motor Age in the American City*, (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2008).

design around the needs of the automobile, particularly following the expansion of the automotive industry in the 1950s. At that time, the post-war American economy switched from military production to the manufacturing of consumer goods. Furthermore, suburbs grew beyond the city limits, expanding urban populations, which required modal access between residential areas and the workplace.²⁰² These socio-economic elements combined and fed the demand for both freeway construction and private transportation, with cities such as Los Angeles, Phoenix, and Seattle serving as prime examples. In the Pacific Northwest, historian David Louter has explored how highway expansion affected peripheral Western regions and National Parks throughout the twentieth century. Louter argued that ‘cars dominate the national park experience’, and his research has investigated the relationship between the park concept and the automobile.²⁰³ In the same region, the relationship between automobile and freeway, and park and public space, can also be investigated in relation to the urban environment.

With change came conflict and disagreement. The advent of the multi-lane, control-access freeway which infiltrated the urban core, became the focus of a multitude of fights and quarrelling between pro- and anti-freeway advocates. Moses was no stranger to these disputes as protest fermented in New York City over his proposed Lower Manhattan Expressway, which cut through the heart of the city, drew the attention of community activist Jane Jacobs, and coalition of anti-freeway groups and individuals. The battle over the proposed Lower Manhattan Expressway in the early 1960s represented one landmark clash in what would later be termed the ‘Freeway Revolts’. In cities across the country, neighbourhood activists and local demonstrators protested a slew of freeway projects, against both planned and completed urban highways. The movement transcended the United States,

²⁰² Carl Abbott, *The Metropolitan Frontier: Cities in the Modern American West* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1993), p.155.

²⁰³ David Louter, *Windshield Wilderness: Cars, Roads, and Nature in Washington’s National Parks* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006) p.164. See also *Ibid.*, 3-10.

with similar protests occurring in Canada, Australia, and Europe, all reacting against what was often perceived as a dividing, disruptive or destructive urban conduit.

Responses to the infiltration of the Interstate Highway System into inner city and downtown environments varied between cities, and the reaction against their presence within the urban landscape became a protracted one over the second half of the twentieth century. During the 1990s, in San Francisco, local opposition successfully lobbied for the raising of the Embarcadero Freeway, following on from lengthy disputes during the 1980s, and safety concerns following the Loma Prieta earthquake which struck the city in 1989.²⁰⁴ In San Diego, plans to connect Interstate 5 and Interstate 805 downtown were halted following neighbourhood opposition. And in Los Angeles, the Laurel Canyon Freeway which would have cut through Central Los Angeles, extending from Hollywood to Los Angeles International Airport, failed to make it off the drawing board following local opposition, and the fact its path led through an influential celebrity district.²⁰⁵

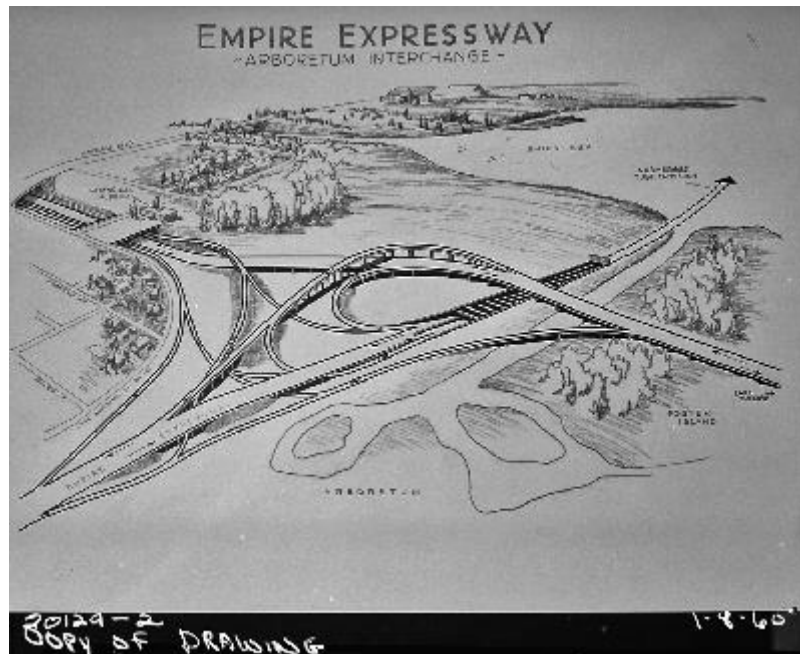
Within Seattle, one section of the mothballed R.H. Thomson Expressway (originally the Empire Expressway), which would have cut through Washington Park Arboretum, southwards east of Capitol Hill, and eventually connect with Interstate 5, was built following approval in 1959.²⁰⁶ At the northern end of the expressway, an elevated interchange would connect the planned freeway with a proposed link across Lake Washington, and it was here where a collection of ramps were constructed but never completed. Successful lobbying by citizen activists against the plan, and in support of preserving the wetland environment and Washington Arboretum, resulted in the axing of the project. The short ramp

²⁰⁴ Christopher Elliott, 'End of the Road Arrives for Embarcadero Freeway', *Los Angeles Times*, 28 February 1991, p.SDA3-A33; see also David Jones, *California's Freeway Era in Historical Perspective*, (Sacramento: California Department of Transportation, 1989).

²⁰⁵ Larry Pett, 'Homeowner Opposition to Freeways on Rise', *Los Angeles Times*, 26 July 1970; Irving Burleigh, 'Laurel Canyon Fwy. Row Erupts Again', *Los Angeles Times*, 22 January 1971, p. SF6; 'Freeway Deletion Bill OKd by Reagan: Proposed Laurel Canyon Link Cut From State Plan', *Los Angeles Times*, 6 November 1971, p.A1.

²⁰⁶ Seattle City Council Ordinance No. 87850, (12 January, 1959), *Seattle Municipal Archives*. See also, Knute Berger, 'Slaying Concrete Dragons', *Crosscut*, 30 March 2011, [online] <<http://crosscut.com/2011/03/the-wouldbe-county-killers-2/>>, [accessed 22 August 2017].

sections remained a ghost of a future that could have been for the next half-century and began to be dismantled in 2016.



6. Empire Expressway Bridge Design. Copy of Drawing. Arboretum Interchange. Jan 8, 1960.²⁰⁷

A variety of feelings have forwarded local anti-freeway movements across the United States. In these New York and Los Angeles examples, plans were halted prior to construction, the former by a grassroots movement, and the latter by elite-celebrity pressure. The calls to tear down the Embarcadero Freeway, dominating the Bay waterfront accelerated following an act of nature. However, these examples illustrate one important commonality, which centred on the tearing down of the freeway within the urban landscape as a means of solving the problem of inner-city highway proliferation. Jane Jacobs, the prominent urban activist in New York argued that expressways and autos were ‘instruments of city destruction.’²⁰⁸ Additionally, Raymond Mohl has noted how the teardown movement which sprung up across the United States during the 1960s and 1970s, favoured

²⁰⁷ ‘Empire Expressway Bridge Design. Copy of Drawing. Arboretum Interchange.’, 63320, Jan 8, 1960, 2613-07 Engineering Department Photographic Negatives. Courtesy of the Seattle Municipal Archives.

²⁰⁸ Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, (New York: Random House, 1961), p.338.

freeway removal and championed alternative modes of transportation, chiefly light rail, and mass transit.²⁰⁹ DiMento and Ellis have recently explored the shifts in public feeling over American freeways during the twentieth century, arguing that the Interstate Highway System was ‘a logical development of modern transportation technology’ but its development has come to be an ‘iterative process, in which modifications came as highway developers learned from past mistakes’ such as neighbourhood destruction, pollution, and a lack of public input.²¹⁰

These traditional debates, casting a ‘pro’ or ‘anti’ view of the freeway has explained political and social discourse for numerous examples across the United States, notably that of Manhattan in New York, but it has its limitations when applied to the two Parks investigated in this chapter.²¹¹ Contrary to this narrative, by focusing on the development of two Seattle parks inextricably linked to the freeway, an alternative history of approaching the coming of the multi-lane freeway into the city limits can be etched. Freeway Park and the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park, both constructed along stretches of the North-South Interstate 5 highway in Seattle reconnected downtown districts dissected by a busy arterial route, crossing the Interstate either above or below its express lanes. In both instances, the imperative behind the creation of the parks has been to bring into use accessible public space, in conjunction with a land use which prohibits non-vehicular public access. Additionally, both Freeway Park and the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park were experimental in their form, use, and design, and reflected attempts to reconcile both disconnection within urban space, and provide a park environment which meets the challenges of establishing public space around non-conventional park features involving concrete,

²⁰⁹ Raymond A. Mohl, ‘The Expressway Teardown Movement in American Cities: Rethinking Postwar Highway Policy in the Post-Interstate Era’, *Journal of Planning History*, 11 (2012), 89-103. Mohl explores the teardown movement in relation to Seattle, see *Ibid.* 89-103 (93-94).

²¹⁰ Joseph F. DiMento and Cliff Ellis, *Changing Lanes; Visions and Histories of Urban Freeways*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2013), 209, 211.

²¹¹ For a recent concise study of the battle over the Lower Manhattan Expressway in New York, often characterised through perspectives of Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs, see Anthony Flint, *Wrestling with Moses: How Jane Jacobs Took on New York’s Master Builder and Transformed the American City*, (New York: Random House, 2009); also Roberta Brandes Gratz, *The Battle for Gotham: New York in the Shadow of Robert Moses and Jane Jacobs*, (New York: PublicAffairs, 2010).

columns, and traffic. Peter Harnik has argued that ‘it wasn’t until the construction of Freeway Park that the “deck-the-freeway” concept began getting some serious attention.”²¹² With that, the alternative line taken by Halprin, and those thereafter inclined by his beliefs of the urban form in a ‘Freeway Age’, this chapter will now turn to examine both parks in turn, beginning with Freeway Park and its visionary design in the 1970s.

‘Lidding’ the Interstate 5: Freeway Park

The earlier of the two parks, Freeway Park, was conceptualised not long after the express lanes first opened to traffic in the late 1960’s. The Park forms a ‘park-lid’ above the Interstate 5 between Exit 164 and Exit 165B, and Sixth and Ninth Avenues. The park has connected Downtown Seattle with the neighbouring First Hill district, which had been divided following the full opening of the Interstate 5 express lanes in January 1967.²¹³

In order to be of most use for vehicular users – both luring new users and alleviating downtown traffic congestion – the Interstate 5 was built directly through central areas of Seattle, which were heavily populated residentially and commercially. The Park took advantage of air rights above the highway, ceded by the Department of Transportation, which project files highlighted as the ‘largest area of undeveloped area in the Downtown which can be developed as a park.’²¹⁴ Downtown regeneration

²¹² Peter Harnik, *Urban Green: Innovative Parks for Resurgent Cities*, (Washington D.C.: Island Press, 2012), p.138.

²¹³ Opening Day Brochure, *Seattle Freeway (I-5) Midway to Olive Way Opening January 31, 1967*, (Olympia, WA: Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT], 1967). The ribbon-cutting ceremony in January 1967 marked the date when the express lanes through Downtown Seattle opened in their entirety. Other sources show that sections of the freeway located between the Downtown and the northern suburbs of the city opened in stages in the mid-1960s, with another ribbon-cutting ceremony taking place in February 1965. Details of this ceremony, which took place on February 3, 1965, are included within the Seattle to Everett section. See ‘Snip!: Road Builders and Ribbon Cutters Are Enjoying a Great Year’, *Washington Highways*, 12, 6, (September 1965), 12-13. WSDOT Library Digital Collections, [online] <<https://cdm16977.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16977coll1/id/4785/rec/14>> [accessed 30 September 2017].

²¹⁴ Usage of Washington State Highway Commission air rights permission referred to in E.I. Roberts, *Letter to Hans A. Thompson*, 27 July 1971, Box 18, Folder 5, Superintendent's Subject Files, 1936-1993, Record Series

projects drew political and economic support from city, state, and federal levels of government, with the 'Forward Thrust' initiatives highlighting Seattle's focus on local urban growth against the backdrop of President Lyndon B. Johnson's policies of renewal, the War on Poverty and support for public-private partnerships.²¹⁵ As a result, Freeway Park was funded from a variety of sources in this vein, with Forward Thrust bonds accounting for \$2.8m of a \$3.5m budget.²¹⁶ Administratively, the Park was managed and developed through the city, notably, the Department of Parks and Recreation, and monthly progress reports during construction phases, as well as after the park's opening in 1976, attested to this structure.²¹⁷ At the time of opening, the park created 4.5 acres of newly accessible public space (later expanded to 5.5 acres with additional phases of development) in Seattle's downtown centre.²¹⁸

Elsewhere in the United States, some early attempts to combine multi-modal spaces in relation to inner city freeways had been attempted, though not on the scale envisioned for Freeway Park. In New York City, the Brooklyn Heights Promenade completed in 1951, composed of a cantilevered walkway which partially covered what would become Interstate 278 in Brooklyn, with west-facing views of Manhattan. The 'roadtop park' gave 'broad views of the New York Harbor,' and was completed under the oversight of Robert Moses, highlighting an early example of such a design, which combined Moses two urban interests – roads and parks.²¹⁹ The design of the Brooklyn Heights Promenade precedes that of Halprin's writing on Freeways, and of Seattle's Freeway Park, but provided a marker of how

5802-01, SMA; 'City of Seattle: Downtown Freeway Park', 7 October 1969, Box 22, Folder 16, Planning, Construction and Maintenance Records, Record Series 5804-05. SMA.

²¹⁵ The Housing and Urban Development Act and the New Communities Act (both 1968) epitomise federal and executive level support for partnerships between public institutions and private finance.

²¹⁶ For a breakdown of funding sources, see Alison Hirsch, "Three: Freeway Park, Seattle, Washington", *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes*, 26, 1 (2006), 57-87, (p.60).

²¹⁷ The Department of Parks and Recreation's Planning, Construction and Maintenance Records, Record Series 5804-05, *Seattle Municipal Archives (SMA)*, contain material records and documentation relating to Freeway Park (specifically Boxes 22 to 24).

²¹⁸ Initial acreage outlined by the Mayor of Seattle, see Floyd C. Miller, *Letter to Douglas R. Hartwich*, Box 27, Folder 3, *Board of Park Commissioners Minutes*, Record Series 5801-01, SMA; 'Freeway Park', *The Cultural Landscape Foundation*, [online] <<https://tclf.org/landscapes/freeway-park>>, [accessed 26 October 2017].

²¹⁹ 'Brooklyn to Open New Road Top Park', *New York Times*, 1 October 1950, p.75.

freeway and public space could be reconciled. Halprin and Danadjieva embraced the concept more readily, and the function of a public park to physically link two distinct spaces divided by the Interstate 5.

The design for Freeway Park, championed by Lawrence Halprin and his landscape design firm, Lawrence Halprin & Associates, incorporated brutalist architectural form and natural 'green' elements above the Interstate 5 express lanes below. A public advisory guide outlined how following the completion of the project, 'the landscaped cover will provide a park-like pedestrian link between First Hill and the downtown business district.'²²⁰ Topographically, the I-5 express lanes are partially sunken which provided Halprin and his team the ability to bridge across the freeway, creating a lid structure. Covering a 460 metre stretch of the I-5, Freeway Park spans ten express lanes, with additional acreage to the east of the interstate, and according to Alan Tate represents 'a prime example of the exploitation of "air-rights" over a highway'.²²¹ Sunken, or partially sunken freeway routes cut through inner cities and downtowns across the nation, rather than the costlier approach of tunnelling underneath a city. Coupled with Seattle's steep natural geography, forming gradients from west to east, the design of Freeway Park, with its numerous stairways and ramps, in some respects mirrors the sloping landscape form which the freeway had dissected. A closer insight into the aesthetic design of the Park in relation to the surrounding urban form will be discussed shortly, but for now, it is worth considering Halprin's conceptualisations of the mid-twentieth century city design and how this influenced the creation of Freeway Park in Seattle, before moving onto the physical development of the Park during the early 1970s.

Writing in his 1966 book, *Freeways*, Halprin highlighted a duality in the infiltration of multi-lane expressways into urban environments. On the one hand, Halprin exclaimed that their construction

²²⁰ 'Seattle Freeway Park Advisory Information', n.d. (circa. 1974), *Washington Department of Highways*, accessed from WSDOT Library Online.

²²¹ Alan Tate, *Great City Parks*, (New York: Taylor & Francis, 2004), p.17.

was destructive for the urban fabric of a city. However, their unique and disruptive form, weaving through downtown and inner-city districts, presented the opportunity for creative development. Halprin explains in the book that freeways offered 'form-giving potential,' and saw 'their inherent qualities as works of art in the city'.²²² Halprin continued, stating that often, feelings towards freeways in cities comes down to perception. Pro-growth advocates heralded their construction across the nation as a positive move for the post-war American economy. Conversely, anti-freeway activists saw the freeway's presence in the city as oppressive and damaging to urban life and inner-city communities. The antidote to this, Halprin argued, was to reset ingrained perceptions. He quantified that 'the trick is to perceive the freeway as part of the cityscape and tame it, rather than complain about it.'²²³

Halprin, when he stated that 'transportation must take its place as a form-giving rather than a destructive element,' also saw within aspects of freeway design, the opportunity to limit its intrusive elements into urban ecology and social spaces.²²⁴ Elsewhere, and at the same time, *Parks & Recreation* noted in a 1966 article that 'contrary to popular misconception that the highway planner has a bulldozer mentality, the profession in the past decade has been increasingly concerned with aesthetic and human values.'²²⁵ While it is difficult to see through a mid-1960s lens how the highway planners adapted Downtown sections of Interstate 5 in Seattle to adhere to this aesthetic realisation, Halprin positioned himself as one designer who was conscious of the 'human values' that others were calling for.

²²² Lawrence Halprin, *Freeways*, (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1966), p.5.

²²³ Lawrence Halprin, and Jim Burns, *Lawrence Halprin: Changing Places*, (San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1986), p.139.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p.55.

²²⁵ Rex M. Whitton, 'Highway Location: A Socio-Economic Problem', *Parks & Recreation*, Vol 1, No. 1 (January 1966), 24-26, 56 (p.24).

In *Freeways*, Halprin mapped out a theoretical blueprint and explained that 'if interchanges are designed as parks, they can bring needed recreation facilities into a downtown area.'²²⁶ Halprin recognised that the process of constructing swathes of concrete highways in cities created new space at the same time for non-vehicular use. Perceptually, the arrival of the freeway demolished sections of the city, but it also implicitly established new land use opportunities beyond the singular purpose of facilitating the movement of automobiles. At the time of publication, Halprin summarised the state of freeway construction in American cities by arguing that 'freeways have always been designed for one purpose only and that is to move traffic.'²²⁷ Alternatively, for a freeway to 'become a part of the city and cease being separate from it,' Halprin claimed that 'enormous possibilities unfold,' as multiple urban functions, such as parks and recreational space, can become woven into the fabric of the city, in harmony with the freeway.²²⁸ Running concurrently with the gaining momentum of the anti-freeway movement, Halprin offered an alternative outlook on urban alterations in the era of mass inner city highway development. Understanding and conceptualising the freeway in this manner, viewing the freeway as a part of the new urban landscape, ultimately informed his design for Freeway Park in Seattle.

The resulting Freeway Park was constructed between interchanges, rather than at one. At the site of the Park, the I-5 curves from north-west/south-east to north/south in direction. This curvature, along with the east-west hillside gradient at this location, provided one of the alternative spaces that Halprin alluded to, in which the urban contours of the land gave the designer and planner 'form-giving' potential to work with when developing a new public space. Prior to the eventual plans which would see Freeway Park come to fruition, earlier visions for a lidded Interstate 5 in Downtown Seattle had called for a longer stretch over over-head park space, covering several intersections in the process. This lengthier 'lidding' of the Interstate 5 over a twelve-block span were originally mused by Paul Thiry,

²²⁶ Ibid., p.72.

²²⁷ Ibid., p.134.

²²⁸ Ibid., p.134.

as a means of 'rectify[ing] some of the mistakes of the 1960s.'²²⁹ A visionary lidded ribbon of newly created public space would have epitomised the Halprin's doctrine of working with, rather than against, the freeway in modern urban planning. In the downtown, the Interstate 5 would have effectively been artificially buried into a tunnel, despite its original above ground construction. However, the ambitious and costly plans were scaled back to cover roughly a three-block span.

The section of the Interstate 5 which Freeway Park would be constructed above was part of a 20-mile stretch informally known as the Seattle-Everett Freeway. This segment of the north-south I-5 project was opened on February 3, 1965, at a cost of \$18 million. The opening represented a 'major highlight' in the Washington State Highway Commission's Thirty-first Biennial Report, as the new freeway 'eliminated 26 traffic lights' and 'save[d] motorists 22 minutes driving time and 84 cents per trip.'²³⁰ The freeway, in the eyes of the state's Department of Transportation, gave the city enhanced mobility and movement, economic benefits, and much needed time-savings. On the ground, the physicality of a multi-laned concrete highway dissected the urban form in two.

Selecting an architect and approving a design

Once the city had thrown its weight behind the siting of a park above the I-5 in the Downtown, attention turned towards selecting the architect to design and oversee the project. Lawrence Halprin and his firm had been selected by the City in November 1970 from a shortlist of names, and he went on to design Freeway Park with Angela Danadjieva.²³¹ Initially, the park board were keen to recruit a

²²⁹ Jeffrey Karl Ochsner, 'Introduction', in *Shaping Seattle Architecture: A Historical Guide to the Architects*, 2nd edn, edited by Ochsner (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2017), p.23.

²³⁰ Charles G. Prah, *Thirty-first Biennial Report, 1964-1966*, (Olympia, WA: Washington State Department of Highways, 1966), p.52. WSDOT Library Digital Collections, call no. HIST 353.9797 WASHING 1964-1966 31st, [online] <<https://cdm16977.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16977coll4/id/4725/rec/31>>, [accessed 30 September 2017].

²³¹ 'Freeway Park', *The Cultural Landscape Foundation*, [online] <<https://tclf.org/landscapes/freeway-park>>, [accessed 1 November 2017] Hans A. Thompson [Superintendent Department of Parks and Recreation], *Letter to E.G. Henry* [Executive Secretary, City of Seattle Board of Public Works], 17 November 1970, Box 27, Folder 3, Don Sherwood Park History Collection, Record Series 5801-01. SMA.

locally-based architect to spearhead the design project for Freeway Park. Included within these considerations was Seattle-based Richard Haag Associates, the landscape architect firm behind the developments at the derelict Brown Point Gas Works site, and Paul Thiry, a commended and distinguished voice in Seattle urban planning and affairs.²³² A ‘father of Northwest modernism’, Thiry served as a supervising architect at the 1962 World’s Fair which took place in Seattle, and continued to have a hand thereafter in the fairground’s renovations into the Seattle Center.²³³ His iconic residential designs at Normandy Park, Washington garnered national attention and was emblazoned across the cover of *Sunset* magazine.²³⁴ However, Halprin’s vision, and informed conceptual approach, as illustrated in *Freeways*, captivated the attention of the City, despite the fact his landscape architect firm was based in San Francisco. This locational element went onto affect the resulting design of the Park, particularly regarding horticultural design as the vegetation and park matured. The selection of specific plants factored into shaping public perceptions of Freeway Park during the 1980s and 1990s, which will be returned to later in this chapter.

In line with his innovative approach to understanding the freeway, as laid out in his book, Lawrence Halprin was keen to give the public a stake in the new park, especially during the developmental stage of its life, as a means of avoiding a potential rift between designer and user. This style was also evident in Richard Haag’s design process with Gas Works Park. Halprin categorised his method of involving the public through what he called, the RSVP Cycle. The RSVP Cycle essentially represented a systematic

²³² J.W. Dimmich [Director of City of Seattle Architectural Design and Construction Division], *Letter to Hans A. Thompson*, 4 August 1970, Box 27, Folder 3, 5801-01. SMA; Hans A. Thompson, *Letter to Al Bumgardner* [Chairman, Seattle Design Commission], 13 August 1970 Box 27, Folder 3, 5801-01. SMA.

²³³ ‘Father of Northwest Modernism’ quote from Jack Broom, ‘Thiry House Heading for Demolition’, *Seattle Times*, 1 April, 2010; Peggy Andersen, ‘Obituaries: Paul A. Thiry Sr., Principal Architect Of 1962 World’s Fair’, *Seattle Times*, 3 July 1993; Marga Rose Hancock, ‘Thiry, Paul Albert (1904-1993)’, *HistoryLink*, [online] <<http://www.historylink.org/File/9383>>, [accessed 2 February 2018].

²³⁴ Cover image ‘Beach house stands on concrete legs’, *Sunset Magazine*, April 1967.

method of understanding collaboration within the design and developmental stages of an architectural project.²³⁵ In a 2003 interview, on the origin of the RSVP cycles, Halprin said that:

I became very aware of the fact that as I designed if I didn't include people somehow they became angry, literally... I thought of ways at that moment where I would try to get a system going which would allow people to feel a creative, who are going to be shareholders and occupants of an environment, that would allow them to participate in not only the dialogue as clients but also as participants of the solution.²³⁶

The development of Freeway Park, faced challenges in its experimental approach to park design on the one hand, and in its physical siting in the urban landscape on the other. In addition to the public voice, nearby developers and the planned construction of large buildings adjacent to the park also influenced the conversation of Halprin's downtown project. Surrounding buildings and their occupiers, such as Horizon House, the Park Place Building, and the ongoing plan to construct a parking garage all required a careful period of consultation, collaboration, and compromise between the various parties. Archival documents compiled in 1972 highlighted that Seattle City Council subsequently 'acted \$3-1/2 million dollars for a 585-car public parking garage, which would support the eastern half of the park,' a structure partially constructed underground.²³⁷ The concrete design of the parking garage blended with the aesthetic of the interstate freeway, and the brutalist visuals of Freeway Park above it. The inclusion of a parking garage also cemented the centrality of the automobile in the outlook of downtown planning, when planners prospectively gazed into the future of urban locales such as Seattle. In short, it was clear that by 1972, the site would 'contain a private office building and garage,

²³⁵ Lawrence Halprin, *The RSVP Cycles: Creative Processes in the Human Environment*, (New York: George Braziller Inc., 1970).

²³⁶ Charles Birnbaum, Interview with Lawrence Halprin (2003). Transcript available at The Cultural Landscape Foundation [online] <<https://tclf.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/Halprin-Transcript.pdf>>, [accessed 22 October 2017].

²³⁷ 'Central Freeway Park Project', 27 September 1972, Box 22, Folder 16, Planning, Construction, and Maintenance Records, Department of Parks and Recreation 1969-1972, Record Series 5804-05, SMA.

an interstate freeway, a public parking garage, and Seattle's major downtown park which will also provide access over the freeway.²³⁸

Concerns were raised as early as 1969, when the Park was still in its conceptual development and planning stages, over the issue of shading and shadowing in the Park because of the construction of the Park Place Building. One concerned individual highlighted that the building would be 'detrimental' and 'would detract from the pleasing appearance of the gateway to the inner city' which the Park would represent to both visitors on foot, and those viewing the city from the freeway.²³⁹ The then Seattle Mayor, Floyd Miller, responded to such concerns by emphasising how the city was working with the developers of the Park Place Building, R.C. Hedreen. The eventual result of this negotiation saw Hedreen locate their planned high-rise to the northwest corner of the park, so that shade from afternoon sunshine would not diminish light levels in Freeway Park. The Park Place development reportedly returned \$175,000 dollars to the City in taxes, compared to the \$50,000 collected from prior use.²⁴⁰ From the point of view of the City, this economic element illustrated the financial motive for accommodating both a new urban park, and commercial property at the site. High-rise buildings, as predicted the then Parks Superintendent Hans A. Thompson, eventually sprung up around Freeway Park, and added an additional topographical element to the aesthetic of the fledgling park.²⁴¹

Integral further to the development of Freeway Park was the Forward Thrust bonds and with that programme, the work of James Ellis. Ellis, headed the Forward Thrust initiative in the late 1960s and early 1970s and continually backed the creation of the Park, a hallmark in a series of measures and projects Ellis had a hand in, which would progressively manage urban growth, ensuring 'more open

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Harold V. Smith, *Letter to Floyd C. Miller* [Mayor of Seattle], 22 June 1969, Box 59, Folder 4, Wesley C. Uhlman Subject Files 1957-1977, Record Series 5287-02, SMA.

²⁴⁰ Alan Tate, *Great City Parks*, p.22.

²⁴¹ Hans A. Thompson, 'Seattle's over-the-freeway park', *Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation*, June 1972, 36-38 (p.36), Box 12, Folder 2, Superintendent's Subject Files, 1936-1993, Record Series 5802-01, SMA.

space, and more parks.²⁴² Ellis encapsulated how Freeway Park transcended the pro- and anti-freeway discourse:

[Freeway Park] did not become a casualty of the war between freeway fighters and freeway lovers. This project did not suffer the attrition of lengthy lawsuits between environmentalists and developers. Freeway Park was enthusiastically undertaken as a joint project by imaginative private owners, by sensitive highway officials and by a city determined to stay livable.²⁴³

Here, Ellis referred to the range of interest groups, departments, and organisations, both public and private, who came together to create the Freeway Park project, and the adjoining structures. In 2008, a push was made by the Freeway Park Neighborhood Association to rename the Park in honour of Ellis.²⁴⁴ The Association President, David Brewster labelled Ellis, 'Mr Freeway Park' highlighting the efforts of the Forward Thrust civic leader in getting the Park off the drawing board and into reality.²⁴⁵

Furthermore, a Tripartite Agreement, signed off by the Mayor of Seattle, the State of Washington Department of Highways, and R.C. Hedreen in May 1970, included specific reference to the construction of pedestrian bridges between the Park project and adjacent property. The pedestrian bridges worked as a 'good faith attempt to secure the consent of the Plymouth Church and/or the owner or owners of the property north of University Street' in order to provide local foot access.²⁴⁶ These additional, collaborative arrangements adhered to Halprin's RSVP strategy and demonstrated that the Park was more than just an architectural vanity project above the freeway. Mayor Wesley C.

²⁴² William H. Mullins, 'The Persistence of Progressivism: James Ellis and the Forward Thrust Campaign', *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, Vol 105, No. 2, (Spring 2014), 55-72.

²⁴³ James R. Ellis quoted in, Alison Hirsch, 'Lawrence Halprin's Public Spaces: Design, Experience and Recovery. Three: Freeway Park', *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes*, Vol. 2, Issue 1, (2006), 57-87 (p.82).

²⁴⁴ Susan Gilmore, 'Group Pushing to Rename Freeway Park', *Seattle Times*, 3 September 2008.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ See pages 11-12 of 'Freeway Park Tripartite Agreement', May 1970, Box 22, Folder 20, Planning, Construction and Maintenance Records, 1928-1994, Record Series, 5804-05, SMA.

Uhlman went further, stating in private correspondence with the League of Women Voters of Seattle that without Tripartite Agreement, 'there would be no Freeway Bridge or Park at all.'²⁴⁷

Within the project goals, three of the five aims for the Park related to access, pedestrian safety, and visitor experience. Read in conjunction with the Tripartite Agreement, the five goals in sum would produce 'reciprocal benefits' for those involved and the resulting park environment, created for the citizens of Seattle²⁴⁸. The first of the goals sought to 'improve pedestrian access across the Seattle Freeway and adjacent streets in the vicinity of Seneca Street and University Street,' which directly indicated how Freeway Park operated as a mechanism for urban re-connection following the construction of the Interstate 5. Building on from this, a second goal called for the 'separat[ion of] pedestrian and vehicular movement to achieve maximum vehicular and pedestrian safety.' The third goal, relating to visitor usage and benefit summed up the intention of the project as a whole:

develop a substantial connected public open space available for pedestrian passage, for the preservation of light and air for public rest and recreation and for enjoyment as a place of interest in a dense urban environment.²⁴⁹

In-line with these goals and in-keeping with the urban freeway environment, the Park design meshed man-made concrete structure and borders, with green elements through raised planters, tree lines, and minimal maintenance flower beds. Freeway Park's brutalist design chimes with Halprin's earlier writings on urban park design in post-war America. His view placed emphasis on the concrete form of

²⁴⁷ Wesley C. Uhlman [Mayor of Seattle], *Letter to Barbara Sarason* [President of the League of Women Voters of Seattle], 20 November 1973, Box 28, Folder 24, Superintendent's Subject Files, 1936-1993, Record Series 5802-01, SMA.

²⁴⁸ See 'Goals' on pp3-4, within 'Freeway Park', 26 March 1970, Box 22, Folder 16, Planning, Construction and Maintenance Records, 1928-1994, Record Series, 5804-05, SMA.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid.* p.4.

the city, rather than utilising greenery and flowers to hide or limit the visibility of man-made structures. In *Freeways*, he wrote that

The integration of the freeway and the city with its landscape should be understood to mean integration with its urban environment. This means an integration with architecture and urban form, not with planting. Shrubbery and grass and plantings in cities often are diametrically opposed to urban qualities of aesthetics, particularly in built-up urban cores.²⁵⁰

The prominence of concrete within the zig-zagging design by Halprin and Danadjieva emphasised the urban nature of the location. The varying heights of concrete containers and blocks mirrors within the park, the visible skyscraper and high-rise structures that existed, and were built subsequently, outside and surrounding the park. The maze-style layout of the Park reflected the density accustomed to the urban city form, as well as maximised the acreage and space available for Park use, on a perceptual level. This latter feature of Freeway Park's design went on to create a myriad of social and criminal problems as the Park matured in the 1980s and 1990s, negatively altering Seattleite's view of the space.

Concerns over design were raised at the advent of construction of Freeway Park. Carl R. Johnson, Director of the Columbia Club, a programme which served dinner and organised social events for senior citizens in Downtown Seattle, vented his worries publicly in the *Seattle Times* in 1975. He wrote on behalf of his organisation that they feared Freeway Park would become an 'architectural nightmare,' adding:

We are expressing our concern about the freeway park... there was one word that prompted this letter, and that word was "canyon". If this is true, we see that type of construction as a barrier to movement

²⁵⁰ Halprin, *Freeways*, p.44.

of people and a potential area for assault... Lest you forget, they [senior citizens] are already residing in a “grand canyon” of concrete walls and asphalt valleys with streams of water and traffic.²⁵¹

Johnson invoked the metaphor of nature to illustrate the Columbia Club’s frustration of the ‘anti-nature’ of Downtown Seattle. The “canyon” mentioned within his remarks referred to the cascading water features included within Halprin and Danadjieva designs. Johnson’s tone reflected the view that there was a disconnect between Halprin’s vision which fused the natural and the non-natural in the city, creating an ‘urban nature’, and the long-held view that park spaces should be more closely aligned to nature, in order to delineate them from the concrete and asphalt he describes. Later remodelling in the Park further addressed issues of access for senior citizens and users with limited mobility, but the question over prioritising the Park’s utility or landmark spatial design became a continuous debate from its conception.

Mitigating the Freeway

The remaining two stated goals within the project description for the Freeway Park plans directly related towards the mitigation of undesirable elements that had accompanied the utility of the downtown section of the Interstate 5.²⁵² These were outlined as ‘mak[ing] the freeway aesthetically more compatible with adjacent public and private land use,’ and also to ‘suppress the traffic noise of the Seattle Freeway for a substantial adjacent area.’ Between cities, these by-products of the Interstate System proved less of an issue, but in a busy residential and commercial downtown environment, these two stated goals became a focus for limiting the detrimental effect of the freeway’s presence in the city.

²⁵¹ Carl R. Johnson, *Letter to The Seattle Times*, 14 January 1975, Box 23, Folder 16, Planning, Construction and Maintenance Records, 1928-1994, Record Series, 5804-05, SMA.

²⁵² See ‘Goals’ on pp3-4, within ‘Freeway Park’, 26 March 1970, Box 22, Folder 16, Planning, Construction and Maintenance Records, 1928-1994, Record Series, 5804-05, SMA.

Prior to the Park's construction, local traffic data indicated that the Downtown I-5 express lanes served 97,000 vehicles each day (1970).²⁵³ In 1976, the year Freeway Park opened to the public, this figure had risen to 120,600 vehicles per day.²⁵⁴ The amount of traffic passing underneath Freeway Park has risen steadily since then, with 198,300 vehicles in 1990, and by 2016, the section of Interstate 5 below Freeway Park served 207,000 vehicles daily.²⁵⁵ The Interstate 5 was organising the city for the motorist, but increased automobile usage had a detrimental environmental impact in the form of noise pollution. Within the park environment, it inevitably meant that the freeway remained omnipresent. Halprin carved out a new social space in a concrete landscape which had previously created void spaces – places that lacked a public or social function overtly beyond that of automobile transport. But the Park had to overcome issues of noise to appeal to the wider public, and the non-vehicular user. The problem of noise proved a paramount issue for Halprin and planners alike, as the stated goals for Freeway Park illustrated. The alternative solution to minimise the traffic noise, and mask its source was woven into the Park's design.

Elisabeth C. Miller [Betty Miller], acted as a horticultural consultant for Freeway Park during its design and construction in the mid-1970s. Miller conveyed her thoughts on the design of the Park in a 1979 article for *American Forests*. She highlighted the growing 'psychological and physical pressures of the city environment' and the need for tranquillity in public spaces. At the same time, Miller conceded that 'many of our traditionally favorite trees cannot tolerate the environmental stresses,' referring to

²⁵³ Data from milepost 163.28 (nearest traffic count), Daniel J. Evans "Annual Traffic Report 1970", *The Washington State Commission Department of Highways*, p.20. [online] <<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/mapsdata/travel/annualtrafficreport.htm>>, [accessed 1 November 2017].

²⁵⁴ Data from milepost 163.28 (nearest traffic count), No Author, "Annual Traffic Report 1977", *The Washington State Commission Department of Highways*, p.20, [online] <<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/mapsdata/travel/annualtrafficreport.htm>>, [accessed 1 November 2017].

²⁵⁵ Data from milepost 165.91, No Author, "1991 Annual Traffic Report", *Washington State Department of Transportation*, p.13, [online] <<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/mapsdata/travel/annualtrafficreport.htm>>, [accessed 1 November 2017].; For 2016, traffic data obtained from Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) volumes at milepost 165.96 A, referring to Exit 165A (Off-ramp to Union Street and 7th Avenue. See 'WSDOT GeoPortal' with milepost values, *Washington State Department of Transportation*, [online] <<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/data/tools/geoportal>>, [accessed 31 October 2017].

the depth of plant beds, air pollution, and funnelling wind patterns found in cities such as Seattle.²⁵⁶ In the article, Miller also raised concerns that over time, trees planted in concrete beds with limited space and drainage 'will eventually rot in the resultant stagnant water,' and called for these aspects of Freeway Park's horticultural design to be given 'highest priority on the budget.'²⁵⁷ Nonetheless, 'dense edges of conifers,' were selected for their 'environmental tolerance' as well as for aesthetic purposes.²⁵⁸ The growth of tree lines in Freeway Park went onto exceed expectations in terms of height and coverage, and were subsequently blamed for fostering social issues which occurred in the Park, as the space matured.

A carefully planned system of cascading water features was the solution proposed by Halprin and Danadjieva's design. Halprin's design statement outlined how fountains on the western side of the Park would be cascading and interact with an 'exciting, active, [and] enthralling' sense of place. Meanwhile, on the eastern side of the Park, place-making of a more 'softly' and reflective section of the park would be aided by 'quiet shallow pools and a diminutive waterfall.'²⁵⁹ Instructive physical models of the proposed park illustrated this combination of water, concrete, and green foliage, carefully positioned to ensure road noise was eliminated from the space as much as possible. To the east of the Interstate, top-down models of the design centralised the shallow pools and border tree line shielding the edge of the Park and the roadway. While to the west of Freeway Park, the towering canyon design was clearly visible offering terraces and sheer drops for water to tumble over.

²⁵⁶ Betty Miller, 'Urban Forestry West: Seattle's Freeway Park', *American Forests*, Vol. 85, No. 10 (October 1979), 28-31 (p.30).

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 28-31 (p.31).

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 28-31 (p.29).

²⁵⁹ Lawrence Halprin & Associates, 'Memorandum', 30 July 1974, 1-2, Box 23, Folder 14, Planning, Construction and Maintenance Records, 1928-1994, Record Series, 5804-05, SMA.



7. Model of Freeway Park showing the reflecting pools to the east of the park. 1970.²⁶⁰

Hans A. Thompson, Seattle Parks Superintendent from 1969 to 1973, writing in *Parks & Recreation*, the leading national publication on park issues, highlighted that in the centre of the park, ‘a series of waterfalls will tumble over a 30-foot by 120-foot canyon and fall into pools on the canyon floor.’²⁶¹ He continued to add that ‘the sound of falling water... will alleviate the site’s noise pollution problem so that the visitor will find the park a restful retreat from the urban environment.’²⁶² Writing in 1972, four years before Freeway Park opened to the public, Thompson here had already accepted that the

²⁶⁰ ‘Model of Downtown Plaza’, 76465, 1970, 5804-04: Forward Thrust Photographs. Courtesy of the Seattle Municipal Archives.

²⁶¹ Hans A. Thompson, ‘Seattle’s Over-The-Freeway Park’, *Parks & Recreation*, Vol. 7, No. 6 (June 1972), 36-38 (p.36).

²⁶² *Ibid*, p.37.

acoustic environment of the space would not be akin to the traditional municipal park, but the design represented an attempt to circumvent these residual spatial issues. Public information signage emphasised that '27,000 gallons of water are recirculated each minute,' to muffle freeway noise, when the water aspects of the park are in operation.²⁶³

One of the main water features included within the design of Freeway Park was funded by the American Legion Foundation of Seattle, which gifted the City \$35,000 to establish a 'Children's Wading Pool and Fountain,' accompanied by a commemorative plaque.²⁶⁴ The pool and fountain, with the sounds of falling water, helped mitigate a proportion of the road noise emanating from the freeway below, and initially provided a recreational function for family-orientated play. In this light, the design and intention for the space aligned with traditional park functions, for recreation and escape. John Miller, chairman of the City Council Parks and Public Ground Committee, responded by stating that 'the fountain and wading pool will enhance a park which itself will bring greater beauty and vitality to Seattle's downtown.' A 1976 brochure for Freeway Park proclaimed that 'the freeway has been silenced.'²⁶⁵

However, despite the aural water-centric solution, Freeway Park's design 'couldn't completely muffle the sound of traffic, and the park experience is accompanied by a white noise – not obtrusive, but not minimal, either,' wrote Peter Harnik in 2012.²⁶⁶ The issue of noise intrusion into the park, and a decision to switch off the water fountains factored into an image problem which plagued the Park's identity in the 1980s and 1990s, and as a result shifted its identity through the decades.

²⁶³ 'Canyon', public information sign, located within Freeway Park.

²⁶⁴ See "Agreement" (August 1975) document between City of Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation and the American Legion Foundation of Seattle; David L. Towne [Superintendent] 'News Release', 17 October 1975, Seattle Parks and Recreation, Box 34, Folder 11, Superintendent Subject Files 1936-1993, Record Series 5802-01, SMA.

²⁶⁵ 'Seattle's Freeway Park', brochure (1976), as quoted in Alison Hirsch, 'Lawrence Halprin's Public Spaces: Design, Experience and Recovery. Three: Freeway Park', *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes*, Vol. 2, Issue 1, (2006), 57-87 (p.69).

²⁶⁶ Harnik, *Urban Green*, p.138.

Shifting Perceptions and Problems of Perception

The Environmental Impact Statement compiled for Freeway Park acknowledged how the Park would facilitate the movement of people between districts. It was estimated that ‘the total number of park users, including people who just walk through the park on their way to some other destination, is estimated at 3000-4000 per day.’ This figure incorporated footfall from adjacent ‘residential areas east of the park [walking] through the park to jobs or other destinations in the Central Business District.’ Additionally, the report highlighted how ‘there should be significant general use of the park on warm sunny days, particularly during the lunch hour by office workers.’ These visitation numbers were approximated at 1,000 per day, plus around 800 vehicles using the parking garage. Designers and auditors recognised the Park’s function as a connecting modal as well as a destination in itself.

As a destination, Freeway Park was intended to be a place to go for specific purpose. This was highlighted through several leisure and recreation events which occurred regularly after the Park’s opening in 1976. Archival photography from the late 1970s captured a scene of vibrancy and activity in terms of the Park’s use as a destination, beyond that of a thoroughfare. Citizens would gather for lunchtime concerts and weekend big band ensembles. Children and adults alike were photographed enjoying the water features of the Park, cooling off during unusually sweltering summer days for a city iconified for dreary wet weather. What stands out from the photographic record is the demographics. Men and women, adults and children, elderly couples and young families are shown enjoying their time in the Park. Additional photographs from the 1970s also display quieter scenes of strolling and relaxing, a past-time often associated with the function of a municipal park space.



8. Enjoying the fountains in Freeway Park. 1970. ²⁶⁷



9. Lunchtime concert taking place in Freeway Park. 14 September 1979. ²⁶⁸

²⁶⁷ 'Freeway Park', 77803, 1970, 5804-04: Forward Thrust Photographs. Courtesy of the Seattle Municipal Archives.

²⁶⁸ 'Freeway Park: Symphony Concert', 77772, 14 September 1979, 5804-04: Forward Thrust Photographs. Courtesy of the Seattle Municipal Archives.

One *Seattle Times* article recounted a September afternoon in 1978, in which the Seattle Symphony Orchestra performed in Freeway Park, while ‘crowds perched on cement columns, sat on the grass, and patiently stood on the walkways.’ The ‘symphony-goers tote[d] brown-bag lunches and bottles of wine,’ with the event bringing together ‘businessmen in suits and ties, senior citizens, students, office workers, and a few small children,’ for the lunchtime recital.²⁶⁹ Similarly, additional media commentary captured the scene in Freeway Park on an April lunchtime, writing that ‘it takes about 10 minutes on a balmy spring day for workers in most of Seattle’s downtown offices to get from their desks to Freeway Park.’²⁷⁰ At that time, Freeway Park was ‘irresistible’ for the downtown dweller on an agreeable day.²⁷¹ The idyllic prose is accompanied by a serene image of people sitting on the concrete edging, enjoying the spring sunshine, with many of the Park’s trees without leaves and having yet to reach full maturity. The ranging heights of Halprin and Danadjieva’s concrete columns offered Park users the opportunity to perch atop, dangle their feet off the edge, with the backdrop of gurgling water to help them retreat from the urban surrounds. This clever mimicking of nature with the form of the city enabled the individual to imagine that they were not sitting in an urban park, rather a national park, miles from Seattle’s streets.

It did not take long for others to raise an alternative interpretation of this design feature. As Jane Jacobs warned in 1960, ‘parks are volatile spaces... they tend to run to extremes of popularity and unpopularity.’²⁷² Anything but tranquil and relaxing, others charged that Freeway Park was hazardous. One Seattle resident wrote to the *Seattle Times* with urgency, and remarked that ‘great danger exists to life and limb.’ Those same lofty concrete vantage points ran the risk of ‘falls from higher waterfalls and even that of drowning.’²⁷³ There was reasonable logic behind these warnings, as some heights

²⁶⁹ Charles Brown, ‘Menu at Freeway Park: Sandwiches and Sousa’, *Seattle Times*, 16 September 1978, A12.

²⁷⁰ Alf Collins, ‘Freeway Park is also people’s’, *Seattle Times*, 23 April 1978, J1.

²⁷¹ *Ibid*, J1.

²⁷² Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, p.89.

²⁷³ M.R.W., ‘Freeway Park Hazard Fraught?’, *Seattle Times*, n.d. (c. 1976-1977).

reached 30 feet above ground level for the Park. Other residents wrote to the Superintendent of Seattle Parks and Recreation in the Summer of 1976, when Freeway Park officially opened for public use, and highlighted the potential for criminal activity in 'hidden walled-in areas' where an individual could be 'robbed, mugged,' or become the victim of a sexual assault.²⁷⁴ On this latter suggestion, the warning foreshadowed a string of sexual and violent assaults committed in Freeway Park in the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s, which will be discussed shortly. In response to the concerns raised, Parks Superintendent David L. Towne argued that Freeway Park 'was specifically designed to involve people creatively in its environment,' but warned against 'careless or inappropriate use.'²⁷⁵ The position of the Parks Department and those who advocated the Park's design faced the challenge of how the conceptual design worked in reality, when some of its innovative and brutalist design went on to foster unwanted perceptions and behaviour.

Following on from the initial years after opening, fewer people saw Freeway Park as either a destination for relaxation, or as a desirable walking route to and from workplaces and residential streets, though the latter function prevailed during daylight hours. A string of incidents occurred during the 1980s which sparked a continuous decline in public support for Freeway Park. These events which centred around the combination of illicit activity and poor maintenance cemented a negative image for the Park which the Parks Department and local advocates were unable to shift until the new century.

One of the most significant moments in shaping the negative perception of Freeway Park's occurred on 2 April 1985, when a woman who was passing through the Park became the victim of a sexual assault. Archival documents describe how the incident took place during the mid-afternoon when the

²⁷⁴ Ormrod Hamilton and Dan Dawson, *Letter to David L. Towne* [Parks Superintendent], 29 June 1976, Box 23, Folder 16, Planning, Construction and Maintenance Records, 1928-1994, Record Series, 5804-05, SMA.

²⁷⁵ Towne quoted in response to 'Freeway Park Hazard Fraught', *Seattle Times*, n.d.

victim was 'grabbed' by the assailant who 'came from the shrubbery.'²⁷⁶ The incident drew city-wide and national attention.²⁷⁷ Employees working in the nearby Park Place office block demanded action to curb illicit and criminal activity that had taken root in the Park. In a letter to the Mayor of Seattle, they called for the pruning of overgrown shrubbery for creating an atmosphere in which 'unsavory characters with less than honorable intentions could hide or to which they could drag their victims.'²⁷⁸ In relation to this second point, the signatories of the letter called for 'increased police surveillance' so visitors could use the Park 'without the fear that we may suffer bodily and emotional trauma.'²⁷⁹

A Seattle Police Department memorandum letter highlighted years earlier, in August of 1982, that pedestrian routes and public spaces within the park were poorly lit, particularly the East Plaza, and the 8th Avenue underpass. The 1982 letter also raised general issues of concern which included the Park's 'heavily landscaped' design regarding shrubbery, and an 'isolated area' close to a stairway between the park and street level on 8th Avenue which 'identified this location as a problem area and highly vulnerable to misuse.'²⁸⁰ Following the 2nd April incident, Parks Superintendent Walter Hundley corresponded with Mayor Royer about putting into place security measures based upon the 1982 SPD findings, particularly with regard to shrubbery pruning, lighting concerns, and cordoning off of the 'isolated area.'²⁸¹ Hundley's letter revealed that the 2nd April attack took place 'in an area of the park not visible from the park pathway and noise from the I-5 traffic corridor permeates the area.'²⁸² From these descriptions and the subsequent measures taken by the Parks Department, the Seattle Police

²⁷⁶ Walter Hundley, *Letter to Mayor Charles Royer*, 5 April 1982, Box 76, Folder 6, Superintendent's Subject Files, 1936-1993, Record Series, 5802-01, SMA.

²⁷⁷ Constantine Angelos, 'Illuminating Dark Side of Freeway Park – Neighbors Request More Lights, Patrols', *Seattle Times*, 22 January 1992. [Online] <<http://community.seattletimes.nwsourc.com/archive/?date=19920122&slug=1471514>>, [accessed 1 December 2017].

²⁷⁸ Sharon del Moral et al, *Letter to Mayor Charles Royer*, 10 April 1985, Box 76, Folder 6, Superintendent's Subject Files, 1936-1993, Record Series, 5802-01, SMA.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Laurie Merwin, *Letter to Major N. Skagen* [Crime Prevention Division], 10 August 1982, Box 76, Folder 6, Superintendent's Subject Files, 1936-1993, Record Series, 5802-01, SMA.

²⁸¹ Walter Hundley, *Letter to Mayor Charles Royer*, 5 April 1982, Box 76, Folder 6, Superintendent's Subject Files, 1936-1993, Record Series, 5802-01, SMA.

²⁸² Ibid.

Department, and the various Maintenance Divisions, a combination of design features contributed the conditions in which the criminal act could take place.

Later in 1985, John Hopkins of the Facilities Maintenance Division, highlighted that exit doors between the Parking Garage and Freeway Park lock behind 'exiting persons [meaning that they] become trapped between unsavoury characters, and a locked door.'²⁸³ This omission reveals both the design issues behind the exit route, and the perception that upon arrival in Freeway Park, parking garage users were likely to meet 'unsavory characters.' Hopkins blames lighting in this situation, as adequate illumination would have 'permit[ted] people to see, through the window doors, the situations they would be stepping into.'²⁸⁴ Following on from the sexual assault which took place in April 1985, further design features contributed to an unsafe environment which fed fears that Freeway Park was a dangerous downtown location.

In 1986, matters regarding lighting and shading within the Park rose up the agenda of issues plaguing Freeway Park's image problem. Robert L. Durham of Urban Seattle Community Council linked the problems of inadequate lighting inside Freeway Park to undesirable and criminal activity. Durham observed that 'because the trees have grown so tall, the 80-foot lighting poles are no longer effective. Pathways are thrown into deep shadow... and these tunnels of darkness invite incidents that can become serious.'²⁸⁵ In his letter to Chief Fitzsimmons of the Seattle Police Department, the Parks Department and Seattle Mayor Charles Royer, Durham reminded the city officials of a sexual assault which occurred in Freeway Park, plus 'drinking parties in the middle of the night,' and other activities which included the setting off of 'fireworks,... [and] purse snatchings.'²⁸⁶ Durham and the Urban

²⁸³ John Hopkins, *Letter to Warren Eckstrom* [DAS Property Management], 21 June 1985, Box 76, Folder 6, Superintendent's Subject Files, 1936-1993, Record Series, 5802-01, SMA.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Robert L. Durham, *Letter to Patrick Fitzsimmons* [Chief of Seattle Police], 2 July 1986, Box 76, Folder 6, Superintendent's Subject Files, 1936-1993, Record Series, 5802-01, SMA.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

Seattle Community Council continued to press on the issue of shading and lighting into 1988. One letter to Holly Miller, the new Parks Superintendent, in October of that year stated that the organisation, 'for the past eighteen months... expressed our concern about the inadequate pedestrian lighting in Freeway Park.'²⁸⁷ Miller responded to these concerns with Parks Department plans of tree removal and re-lighting.²⁸⁸

Parks Department archival records detailed a string of incidents and observations between 1987 and 1988 which highlighted the desperate state which had befallen Freeway Park. Included within these records was the 'rush [isobutyl nitrate drug]... with syringes around the bottle'; 'vandals caught putting graffiti on the walls'; the arrest of 'two men who were in the women's public restroom'; 'transient sleeping'; 'vomit and feces throughout the park'; and the dumping of 'garbage' and large goods.' The catalogue of misdemeanours also included evidence of drug use, theft, and the consumption of alcohol within the Park.²⁸⁹ These incidents contributed to the decline of both the Park's physical environment, and the public image of Freeway Park, which upon its opening had been billed as a much-needed oasis of public space in the heart of a growing Seattle Downtown.

Archival documentation suggests a sluggish back-and-forth process of apportioning responsibility between Seattle Parks and Recreation, Seattle Police Department, and by 1988, the new Washington State Convention Center for dealing with the issues plaguing Freeway Park. One letter highlights how the Parks Department approached the Seattle Police Department about providing 'more, [and] regular, evening and nighttime foot patrols through Freeway Park,' an issue raised numerous times

²⁸⁷ Robert L. Durham, *Letter to Holly Miller*, 7 October 1988, Box 76, Folder 8, Superintendent's Subject Files, 1936-1993, Record Series, 5802-01, SMA.

²⁸⁸ Holly Miller, *Letter to Robert L Durham*, 21 October 1988, Box 76, Folder 8, Superintendent's Subject Files, 1936-1993, Record Series, 5802-01, SMA.

²⁸⁹ C.M. Girtch, *Letter to Captain Munter, East Precinct SPD*, and attached documentation dated 20 January 1988, Box 76, Folder 8, Superintendent's Subject Files, 1936-1993, Record Series, 5802-01, SMA.

between in 1987 and 1988.²⁹⁰ Durham pointed out on one occasion that while ‘cruising the streets in a patrol car may work for thoroughfares... this leaves a park area with no observation at all.’²⁹¹ The unique design of Freeway Park, with the unconventional elevated east-west design straddling above the Interstate 5 expressway meant that the Park was difficult to patrol from the perspective of a police vehicle. By separating the Park away from the access and sight of vehicular traffic, the space was isolated from an instrumental method of policing. Meanwhile further correspondence detailed how the Washington State Convention Center would be involved with funding and maintaining some lighting, and a police presence during events held at the venue, further complicating the issue.²⁹² The position of the Parks Department suggested that the root of Freeway Park’s social problems could be solved ‘if we can provide the improved lighting, the Police foot patrols and the elimination of hiding places,’ in order to ‘permit us to regain control of the Park.’²⁹³

Aside from the unwanted and dangerous actions which were reported as taking place within Freeway Park, a series of general decline was observed in terms of park maintenance. Signs of deterioration within Freeway Park surfaced only 18 months after opening. Gerald A. Friesen [project manager] alerted Donald Harris of Seattle’s Department of Parks and Recreation in February 1978 of water fountain damage. Cracks had been observed in window panes adjacent to a waterfall feature. Immediate repairs were ordered to ensure that water did not leak onto the freeway below, which Friesen highlighted ‘was one objection of the Highway Department early in the design [stage].’²⁹⁴ Further correspondence around this time flagged up sixteen other ‘drainage’ related soil issues and

²⁹⁰ C.M. Girtch, *Letter to Captain Munter, East Precinct SPD*, 20 January 1988, Box 76, Folder 8, Superintendent's Subject Files, 1936-1993, Record Series, 5802-01, SMA.

²⁹¹ Robert L. Durham, *Letter to Mayor Charles Royer*, 11 June 1987, Box 76, Folder 8, Superintendent's Subject Files, 1936-1993, Record Series, 5802-01, SMA.

²⁹² Cynthia Maisel [Deputy Mayor of Seattle], *Letter to James R. Ellis* [Chairman of Washington State Convention Center], 11 August 1988, Box 76, Folder 8, Superintendent's Subject Files, 1936-1993, Record Series, 5802-01, SMA.

²⁹³ Grant Morris [WHO?], *Letter to C.M. Girtch*, 13 November 1987, Box 76, Folder 8, Superintendent's Subject Files, 1936-1993, Record Series, 5802-01, SMA.

²⁹⁴ Gerald A. Friesen, *Letter to Donald Harris*, 6 February 1978, Box 24, Folder 10, Planning, Construction and Maintenance Records, 1928-1994, Record Series, 5804-05, SMA.

leakages within the Park and nearby property including the East Plaza Parking Garage.²⁹⁵ The highlighted problems would have been expected to a degree, especially when considering the challenging structural design of Freeway Park. However, over the next decade fixes and repairs were needed to deal with the issue of water safety both inside Freeway Park, and to prevent water or material seepage causing accident or injury to park and freeway users. Some of the Park's design features in this regard went on to be blamed for fostering negative perceptions, and abetting criminal activity.

In addition to the teething issues surrounding water features documented in 1978, structural and cosmetic deterioration relating to the Pigott Memorial Corridor proved a problem for the Parks Department in 1984. A December 1984 inspection observed 'rusty' handrails, missing covers relating to water features, and a 'wash out on [the] hill upper North side.'²⁹⁶ The deteriorated and unsafe state of restrooms led to measures in 1988 to ensure 'periodic special clean-up and anti-graffiti' deep cleans, as well as regular night-time lock up of those facilities.²⁹⁷ In 1989, local residents raised concerns about leaking water pipes linked to Freeway Park's water fountain features, which were confirmed by the then Parks Superintendent, Holly Miller.²⁹⁸ As a result, fountains within the Park were turned off during the winter of 1989/1990. A decision was taken to have the water fountains operational only during daylight hours, with periodic seasonally related switch-offs during winter months from the 1990s and into the new century.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁵ E. Byron McCulley, *Letter to Jim Sekor* [Seattle Parks and Recreation], 15 November 1977, Box 24, Folder 10, Planning, Construction and Maintenance Records, 1928-1994, Record Series, 5804-05, SMA.

²⁹⁶ Bruce C. Rooney, *Letter to Gerald Friesen*, 27 December 1984, Box 76, Folder 7, Superintendent's Subject Files, 1936-1993, Record Series, 5802-01, SMA. Further correspondence in this folder document the request for night-time patrolling.

²⁹⁷ Cynthia Maisel, *Letter to James R. Ellis*, 11 August 1988, Box 76, Folder 8, Superintendent's Subject Files, 1936-1993, Record Series, 5802-01, SMA.

²⁹⁸ Robert L. Durham, *Letter to Holly Miller*, 31 August 1989, and response by Holly Miller, *Letter to Robert L. Durham*, 2nd October 1989, Box 76, Folder 9, Superintendent's Subject Files, 1936-1993, Record Series, 5802-01, SMA.

²⁹⁹ Holly Miller, *Letter to John Huber* [of Horizon House], 26 January 1989, and Holly Miller, *Letter to Russell Brown*, 26 August 1991, both Box 76, Folder 9, Superintendent's Subject Files, 1936-1993, Record Series, 5802-01, SMA. Alison Hirsch insinuates that reduced water fountain operation was down to budgetary concerns, see

Throughout this time, criminal incidents and unwelcoming activity and the official discussions regarding them was not confined to internal correspondence. Adverse perceptions were further perpetuated by popular media reports. Negative media perceptions culminated in a newspaper report written in local alternative publication *The Stranger* and subsequently received widespread attention. The 2002 article entitled 'Topography of Terror' surmised the fate of Freeway Park during the 1980s and 1990s, and in doing so, gave a catchy name to the Park's image problem. Charles Mudede's article listed the spate of criminal incidents which took place in the Park and ultimately linked these and the Park's decline to design.

Although violent crimes are committed in other parks around the city, Freeway Park is distinct in the sense that it's hard to separate its crimes from its design... It's highly likely that the man who stabbed RaeAnn Champaco to death in Freeway Park [in 2002] knew its convoluted design would afford him the cover he needed for a successful getaway. Champaco was deaf and mute, so she could not scream for help; but even if Champaco could scream, it's hard to hear anything over the park's thundering artificial waterfalls and the traffic rushing beneath it.³⁰⁰

Mudede's article draws heavily on conversations he'd had with Mike Evans, a former law enforcement officer who worked on 'reforming' the Park 'to make it more pleasant and safe.'³⁰¹ Mudede and Evans pointed to lighting creating dark and shadowed parts of the Park, inadequately designed restrooms, small tunnels with obscured corners, poorly maintained planting, and a 'brutal' use of concrete which in places form to create 'dangerous... 'little concrete rooms.'³⁰² Also detailed in the article were the

Hirsch, "Three: Freeway Park, Seattle, Washington", *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes*, 26, 1 (2006), 57-87, (p.86).

³⁰⁰ Charles Mudede, 'Topography of Terror', *The Stranger*, 22 August 2002. Full article available online <<https://www.thestranger.com/seattle/topography-of-terror/Content?oid=11685>>, [accessed 12 December 2017].

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² Ibid.

attempts to warn park users of the dangers of waterfalls and ledges. However, Mudede went further in his commentary by saying, 'perhaps the city should post signs at the very entrances of Freeway Park. Entering this park at all is risky business.'³⁰³ Mudede's 'Topography of Terror' article, and its headline stuck in the minds of Seattle residents' familiar with the trajectory of Freeway Park. Others criticised the emotive and heightened language used by Mudede in the article for fuelling a negative image.

One underlying factor which indirectly affected Freeway Park's decline in popularity during the 1990s and early 2000s could have been linked to a shifting urban core. By the turn of the twenty-first century, investment headed towards redevelopment of the area which came to be known as South Lake Union. The district lies to the north of Denny Way, and north of Seattle's main downtown streets, such as Pike Street, Pine Street, and business locales. This northward migration of the urban focus also coalesced around a reimagined South Lake Union, in a park-like work and leisure amalgamated environment known as the Seattle Commons. The Seattle Commons project, billed at the time as Seattle's 'Central Park', gained momentum in early 1990s but was denied city funding following high-profile public votes in 1995 and 1996.³⁰⁴

The debates around the Seattle Commons plan will be explored in a later chapter, but despite its failure when put to the electorate, investments continued to pour into South Lake Union, predominately through the involvement of Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen. In the mid-2000s, Amazon announced plans to locate its offices and headquarters in South Lake Union, further bolstering neighbouring redevelopment and speculation. Consequently, in 2010, Lake Union Park opened at the expense of close to \$10 million in city funds to acquire land, and a further \$20 million raised by the

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Knute Berger, 'South Lake Union Could Have Been Seattle's Central Park,' *Crosscut*, 16 December 2015, [online] <<http://crosscut.com/2015/12/south-lake-union-could-have-been-seattles-central-park/>>, [accessed 4 January 2018].

Seattle Parks Foundation to create a new green space in Seattle's downtown vicinity, limiting the primacy of Freeway Park.³⁰⁵ Additionally, Olympic Sculpture Park opened through a public-private initiative in 2007, further increasing the acreage of downtown public park space.

The series of illicit observations during the 1980s and 1990s, coupled with Mudede's 2002 article fostered an uninviting image of Freeway Park. Images of citizens sunbathing along concrete terraces and enjoying lunchtime concerts were a distant memory by the mid-2000s. Undesirable perceptions were harmful to the park experience and sharply contrasted both the intentions of the architects and the park department. As the park experience was affected in this way, it meant that the Park did not function as an attractive bridge between two Seattle districts, divided by the Interstate 5. Negative connotations with the Park went onto affect the park's purpose, be that as a non-vehicular, pleasant thoroughfare, or as a public space retreat from the bustling Seattle downtown. By the 1990s, and more evidently after the turn of the twenty-first century, the Park's image problem was tackled head-on, led by efforts both from a departmental design viewpoint, and also by local community engagement and volunteer organising.

Changing Perceptions for the better?

Early design attempts at abetting the negative perceptions attached to Freeway Park accompanied the opening of the neighbouring Washington State Convention Center in 1988. As part of the creation of this convention complex, which also spans the Interstate 5 expressway, remodelling occurred within Freeway Park, to connect the Park with the Convention Center. Additional ramps, stairs, and walkways were created to link the two neighbouring spaces. The opening of the Convention Center and its link

³⁰⁵ A breakdown of funding figures and sources show that the City of Seattle invested \$17.5 million in land acquisition payments between 1970 and 2010. Of the construction costs, a further \$10.8 million in city funds (direct and through the Pro Parks Levy) were allocated for the Lake Union Park project with \$20 million sourced from private donations, and \$690,000 from statewide budgets. Full details can be found 'Lake Union Park Grand Opening on September 25,' *Seattle Parks and Recreation*, [online] <<http://parkways.seattle.gov/2010/09/22/lake-union-park-grand-opening-on-september-25/>>, [accessed 4 January 2018].

to Freeway Park suggested that the latter needed to shed its unwelcome character, and that the former would facilitate new footfall into the park. However major modifications were limited and the Park continued to be a site of illicit and criminal activity into the 1990s.

Further impetus for this rejuvenation initiative centred around restoration work which began in 2006, as well as the continuing work of the Park's advocacy group, the Freeway Park Association. The main goals of the renovations focused upon the reversal of the decline of the Park which had been augmented by negative perceptions, through careful and considered redesign. One of the central tenets of this mid-2000s restoration drew upon the expertise of Iain Robertson, a landscape architect and design academic, who was based at the University of Washington's College for Built Environments. In 2012, he wrote at length for *Landscape Journal* about replanting and his involvement with Freeway Park's renovations. In the article, Robertson recalled the initial purpose of Freeway Park, as a conduit space to span 'a deep "freeway gulch"', which in the years after opening was a 'success' as 'citizens flocked to its open sunny lawns, terraces, and concrete structures to eat lunch, stroll, pause, and take delight in its water features.'³⁰⁶ The picture painted here reflected the initial embrace of Seattle citizens of the Park and its unique design. Not only had this image deteriorated by the turn of the twenty-first century, Robertson notes that some did not even know where Freeway Park was, according to a 2006 survey.³⁰⁷

Robertson recalled how he approached the redesign with 'trepidation' as 'the park experience had changed substantially; the open sunny smile over years had become a somber, overbearing frown.'³⁰⁸ His involvement in the redesign work required an understanding of the Park's future in the twenty-first century, while remaining 'empathetic to the original design character and conception.'³⁰⁹ Over

³⁰⁶ Iain Robertson, 'Replanting Freeway Park: Preserving a Masterpiece', *Landscape Journal*, Vol. 31 Issue 1/2 (2012), 77-99 (p.77).

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 77-99 (p.77).

³⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 77-99 (p.78).

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 77-99 (p.78).

the decades since the Park opened, plant species matured to the extent that it gave the Park an overcrowded and shaded quality. Tree shade cast by towering Deodar Cedars contributed to the 'sombre' tone Robertson alluded to, and wider commentary argued that it aided the pursuit of criminality. Discussions with Robertson and close analysis of his 2012 article indicate that a lack of foresight when it came to horticultural knowledge, lay at the heart of Freeway Park's problems. The original designers had chosen Deodar Cedars and similar tree species for their qualities in screening off the freeway, mitigating both the noise and smell from the vehicles below. However, the Deodar Cedars grew rapidly in the temperate and oceanic Seattle climate. Regular rainfall and mild temperatures fostered the growth of the tree lines ahead of expectations, and did not 'rot' in 'stagnant water' as Betty Miller had raised concerns over in 1979.³¹⁰

In 1971, Angela Danadjieva Tzvetin, Freeway Park's project designer, spoke of how such a design with these tree species would provide 'elderly people [with] peaceful surroundings in which to relax in full sun as well as in shade.'³¹¹ This seems an apt observation to make as several retirement apartments are located immediately outside the Park. However, as Robertson highlights, 'anticipating plant growth rates or how plants will be managed and assessing the effects of growth and management on the design experience are not, typically, the main considerations in designers' minds when preparing planting plans.'³¹² The rapid maturation rate of the Deodar Cedars, coupled with a lack of regular maintenance required by the Parks Department led Robertson to replace them with two species of Hemlock - *Tsuga canadensis* and *Tsuga mertensiana*. Robertson justified this decision by stating that the hemlocks would serve the purpose of providing a screen from surrounding traffic noise and intrusion, while growing at a slower rate than the Deodar Cedar. Furthermore, the selection of 'small-statured bitter cherries (*Prunus emarginata*) were chosen to replace the large sweetgums and red and

³¹⁰ Betty Miller, 'Urban Forestry West: Seattle's Freeway Park', *American Forests*, Vol. 85, No. 10 (October 1979), 28-32 (p.31).

³¹¹ Angela Tzvetin Danadjieva, Office memorandum "Design Notes on Freeway Park", 12 January 1971, as quoted in Robertson, 'Replanting Freeway Park', 77-99 (p.82).

³¹² Robertson, 'Replanting Freeway Park', 77-99, (p.98).

Norway maples in the deciduous groves surrounding Cascade Canyon,' as their narrow growth allowed for 'tighter planting without substantially increasing shading.'³¹³

Consequently, to mitigate the impact shading had on the park experience, Robertson's redesign utilised the use of smaller tree species which served multiple ends. These species reduced the amount of shade cast, continued to lessen outside road noise in the park, and 'enlivened' the Park's character during winter months, when the combination of lack of foliage, dreary weather, and concrete aspects of the Park coalesced to make the space uninviting. Smaller tree species were also better suited to the concrete planter bed design envisioned by Halprin and Danadjieva. This meant that the skeletal and basic design of Freeway Park remained intact during and after the redesign, retaining the original character of the Park design despite calls for overhaul. The Seattle Design Commission reviewed Iain Robertson's proposals in May 2008, and 'unanimously approved' them in a meeting on 15 May 2008, paving the way for the alterations to take place thereafter.³¹⁴

One of the central ideas to come out of Iain Robertson's involvement in the horticultural redesign of Freeway Park was the concept that the space acted as a 'living' entity. Maintenance and care for its design and existence contributed to its vitality. The efforts of the late 2000s renovation work illustrated that both attention to how horticulture operated in a complex setting, such as Freeway Park, as equally important as understanding the human ecology of the Park. Natural and human elements are closely linked in Freeway Park, despite its overtly brutalist and concrete design. The work to rejuvenate the Park's green credentials were subsequently followed by a re-understanding of how the Park worked for people. Initially envisaged as a space of reconnection and reconciliation against a spatial disruption wrought by Interstate 5, the work of volunteers and the Freeway Park Association

³¹³ Ibid., 77-99 (p.92).

³¹⁴ 'Approved Minutes', *Seattle Design Commission*, 15 May 2008, [online] <<https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/OPCD/DesignCommission/ProjectArchive/SeattleDesignCommission-2008.05.15FreewayParkminutes.pdf>>, [accessed 6 January 2018].

sought to build on Robertson's foundational work to turn the Park's fortunes around, by welcoming people back into space.

The Freeway Park Association was established in 1993, 'in response to the community's demand for greater public safety,' following the decline of Freeway Park in the 1980s.³¹⁵ According to the Association's website, the group partnered with a number of local organisations, such as nearby retirement community Horizon House, neighbouring hotels and businesses, arts organisations, churches, district improvement non-profits, and Seattle Parks and Recreation. Their mission statement calls to 'mobilize [...] resources and community members to ensure widespread enjoyment and the continued maintenance of Jim Ellis Freeway Park,' which it recognises as a 'rich and dynamic outdoor experience.'³¹⁶

The extent of the Association and its affiliated partnerships can be observed in its work in recent years to establish not only a community coalition which cares for the Park, but also in its drive to create a calendar of regular events to entice citizens to spend more time in Freeway Park. Part of Freeway Park's historic image problems during the 1980s and 1990s stemmed from the fact that the space was not being used by the broadest cohort of users which architects and managers had envisioned. The Freeway Park Association has overseen the organisation of a range of public events including walking tours, musical-themed evenings, illuminations, gardening workshops, dances, concerts, and exercise classes to cater for an extensive Seattle audience. As of 2018, many of these events take place on a regular schedule.³¹⁷ A highlight in this schedule is the 'Fountain Festival' which aims to 'celebrate the parks greatest architectural feature', its water features.³¹⁸ On a visit to Freeway Park in April 2016, I

³¹⁵ 'About The Freeway Park Association', *Freeway Park Association*, [online] <<http://freewayparkassociation.org/about/>>, [accessed 5 January 2018].

³¹⁶ Ibid.

³¹⁷ 'Upcoming Events/Past Events', *Freeway Park Association*, [online] <<http://freewayparkassociation.org/blog/our-events/>>, [accessed 5 January 2018].

³¹⁸ 'Freeway Park Fountain Festival', *Freeway Park Association*, [online] <<http://freewayparkassociation.org/fountain-festival/>>, [accessed 5 January 2018].

encountered a volunteer-led guided 'tree-walk' in progress, in which over a dozen individuals made their way through the park, gaining a horticultural education of the Park's plant species.³¹⁹

In addition to these events, in recent years, the Freeway Park Association has launched a project entitled 'Finding Freeway Park'. This two-phase initiative, aims to 'address... historical misconceptions' of the Park, and to 'reconnect the Park with the city and the city to its Park through thoughtful community engagement and urban design strategies that address visibility, accessibility and safety to and through the Park.'³²⁰ In essence, the strategy is engaged in a place-making process which welcomes people back into the Park, and dispels the negative connotations which had been externally attached to the Park in the closing decades of the twentieth century. One aspect of the project utilises small grant funding from city agencies to implement design alterations for the purposes of helping people access the Park. By acting as park 'stewards' the Freeway Park Association has shifted the power of managing the Park away from the total control of the Parks Department, and formulated a new way for public and private entities to get involved in place-making the Park. Alongside this has been the establishment of a social media presence for the Park, to communicate with a wider Seattle audience.³²¹

Media commentary amidst the efforts of the Freeway Park Association and initial replanting discussions suggested the beginnings of a shift in public perception. In the Summer of 2005, the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* linked park improvements to increased visitor numbers.³²² In 2006, The Cultural Landscape Foundation reported that the then Seattle Mayor, Greg Nickels, remarked 'we must not

³¹⁹ 'Tree Walk at Jim Ellis Freeway Park', [online]

<<https://www.seattle.gov/trees/docs/Freeway%20Park%20Final.pdf>>, [accessed 5 January 2018].

³²⁰ 'Finding Freeway Park', *Freeway Park Association*, [online]

<<http://freewayparkassociation.org/findingfreewaypark/>>, [accessed 5 January 2018].

³²¹ Freeway Park on Facebook [online] <<https://www.facebook.com/freewayparkseattle/>>, [accessed 5 January 2018]; on Instagram [online] <<https://www.instagram.com/freewayparkseattle/>>, [accessed]; and on Twitter [online] <<https://twitter.com/freewayparksea>>, [accessed 5 January 2018].

³²² John Iwasaki, 'Improvements Bringing People Back to Freeway Park,' *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 19 July 2005.

turn our back on the park again.³²³ Following the replanting work recommended by Iain Robertson, the *Seattle Times* reminded its readers of the ‘traffic chasm’ downtown Seattle would have without Freeway Park, and praised the renovations ‘removal of trees to increase visibility’, ‘fresh plantings’, and ‘inspired design.’ The article’s author recalled how the Park’s lack of use linked to the fact that the waterfalls designed to mask the road noise beneath the Park ‘had been left dry,’ defeating the purpose of the Park’s central intent.³²⁴ In 2014, The Trust for Public Land ranked U.S. cities on their park credentials, through a system called ParkScore. Seattle entered the top ten, with Peter Harnik, director of the Center for City Park Excellence at the Trust for Public Land, praising the city for its creative method of establishing park space, making specific reference to Freeway Park.³²⁵

The Freeway Park Association’s work with Freeway Park illustrated how citizen advocacy aided the reinvigoration of a Seattle park space. The I-5 Colonnade Bike Park, in contrast to Freeway Park, came to fruition because of direct volunteer action and impetus, rather than initially being conceived by Seattle’s Department of Parks and Recreation. The second case study in this chapter will consider an alternative trajectory for how a park space concept was utilised to re-connect urban space disrupted by the arrival of the Interstate 5 expressway. However, in this example, the power of community and advocate activism sparked the project, whereas in the case of Freeway Park, similar efforts manifested itself later following years of city-led management.

³²³ ‘Freeway Park: Past, Present, and Future?’, *The Cultural Landscape Foundation*, 10 October 2006, [online] <<https://www.tclf.org/content/freeway-park-past-present-and-future?destination=search-results>> [accessed 3 January 2018].

³²⁴ Valerie Easton, ‘In the Concrete Jungle, Freeway Park Will Offer Respite Once Again’, *Seattle Times*, 28 July 2008, [online] <<https://www.seattletimes.com/pacific-nw-magazine/in-the-concrete-jungle-freeway-park-will-offer-respite-once-again/>>, [accessed 6 January 2018].

³²⁵ ‘The Trust for Public Land Releases 2014 ParkScore Index’, *The Trust for Public Land*, [online] <<https://www.tpl.org/media-room/trust-public-land-releases-2014-parkscore%C2%AE-index#sm.00009cj1wf13ijewwu4rhlzsesvsf>>, [accessed 6 January 2018]; Peter Harnik’s comments quoted from a news article by Sara Bernard, ‘Portland And Seattle Parks Make Them Top-Ranked Cities’, *KUOW*, 20 May 2015, [online] <<http://kuow.org/post/portland-and-seattle-parks-make-them-top-ranked-cities>>, [accessed 6 January 2018].

Trails under the Freeway: The I-5 Colonnade Bike Park

In 2011, *CityLab*, an online platform for the discussion of urban affairs, scouted the United States for innovative uses of empty spaces beneath overpasses. Seattle's I-5 Colonnade Bike Park, underneath the busy Interstate 5 arterial route, featured as one of the nation's 'cool projects under freeway overpasses.' Writing about such spaces, *CityLab*'s Nate Berg noted that:

At their best, they [freeways] make getting into and around cities incredibly easy; at their worst, they segregate and isolate communities. Somewhere in between those two poles is a ton of potential. The spaces beneath those overpasses are often underutilized – or utilized in ways illegal or undesirable. Cities are beginning to take advantage of these dead spaces as usable parts of the public realm.³²⁶

Berg's analysis was applied to Seattle, and is especially true of the 'empty space' which the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park came to be built upon. The Colonnade space supporting the Interstate 5 lay unused, at least officially, and off-limits for decades between its construction and the opening of the Bike Park between 2005 and 2007.³²⁷

The I-5 Colonnade Bike Park has a shorter lifespan than Freeway Park, however its spatial construction and creation of place provides an insightful case study in relation to the themes of multi-modal movement and re-connection central to this chapter. By multi-modal, I am referring to the diverse ways in which people traverse the city environment through walking, cycling, driving, and so forth. Seattle Parks and Recreation describes the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park as 'a winding series of bike paths, trails, and an off-leash area running under the I-5 highway,' adding that the 'space helps link the Eastlake and Capitol Hill neighborhoods.'³²⁸ Before uncovering the history behind this particular space

³²⁶ Nate Berg, '9 Cool Projects Under Freeway Overpasses', *CityLab*, 23 September 2011, [online] <<https://www.citylab.com/design/2011/09/under-overpass-projects-under-freeways/192/>>, [accessed 10 January 2018].

³²⁷ Opening dates vary, Berg's article for *CityLab* cites 2005 as the year in which construction began, with

³²⁸ 'I-5 Colonnade: About', *Seattle Parks and Recreation* [online] <<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/find/parks/i-5-colonnade>> [accessed 19 August 2017].

in Seattle, it is worth pausing to consider division of urban space between the public, the semi-public, and the private, in relation to freeways and underpasses.

Vehicular users travelling along a stretch of the Interstate Highway System, whatever the duration of the journey - be that the commute to work, or to reach a destination beyond the city limits - are engaged, for the most part, in a limited or solitary relational experience. The driver may travel alone with only the company of a voice on a radio station or phone call transmitted from miles afar. If there are passengers, this may be limited to familiar relationship groups such as family, friends, or carpooling work colleagues. The freeway, with its design and strict set of regulations governing use and operation often excludes anyone but the vehicle user the opportunity to engage and traverse the landscape and places through which the roadway extends. Lyn Lofland, through her work on public spaces has referred to the 'privatism' which operates in public space.³²⁹ The freeway, and in this example, the Interstate 5 expressway, is a semi-public space in which multiple vehicular users pass through, but through their own individual private spaces - the vehicle. Pedestrians cannot walk along the freeway, and it is dangerous for drivers to exit their vehicles whilst on the express lanes.

On the other hand, the city citizen walking between their home and their place of work has the opportunity to interact with a myriad of different people, places, and objects. On a smaller city street or avenue, vehicles-users, pedestrians, cyclists, runners, and so on can go about their journey in a multi-modal fashion. Jane Jacobs observed the city street as central to understanding how cities operate in terms of urban ecology and human interaction, stating that 'streets and their sidewalks, the main public places of a city, are its most vital organs.'³³⁰ Jacobs extended this line of thinking to

³²⁹ Lofland, *The Public Realm*.

³³⁰ Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, p.29.

include park space, as witnessed through the protests to save Washington Square Park in New York from being bulldozed for one of Robert Moses numerous freeway projects during the 1950s.³³¹

The basic purpose of both freeways and city streets is to connect places, but each does so in a way which sets different parameters for who can utilise those spaces. One of the main arguments of this chapter has been to illustrate that parks can also provide that connecting function as we have seen earlier with Freeway Park. Freeway Park became a place that was created for the purpose of reconnecting Seattle districts, but the space upon which it occupies was not there prior to the Park's existence as it was merely air-space above the Interstate 5. In the example of the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park, the Park provides the multi-modal space in which a broad community of users can come, traverse, or engage in the space itself, which prior to its designation as such a public space; access had been forbidden and discouraged, despite the physical space existing.

By the mid-2000s, the Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance (the group that ignited the project to utilise the I-5 underpass space) and Seattle Parks and Recreation aimed to provide a solution to what Kip Redick has termed 'freeway alienation', evident beneath the I-5 at Eastlake. While the freeway fostered the movement of cars, buses, and freight vehicles, 'freeway alienation effectively means that local citizens, 'no longer cooperate with the constituents of the environment in order to creatively maintain a healthy mutual habitat.'³³² In the context of the 'dead space', to borrow Nate Berg's phrase, beneath the Interstate 5 that became the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park, this refers to the physical human link between residential and commercial districts through non-automobile modes of movement. Feet may have been forbidden both on the freeway, and underneath the highway between the 1960s and the 2000s, but the creation of the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park fostered reconnection through the presence of footfall, and pedal power. The transition of the abandoned underpass area from 'dead space' to

³³¹ Anthony Flint, *Wrestling with Moses: How Jane Jacobs Took On New York's Master Builder and Transformed the American City*, (New York: Random House, 2009), 61-92.

³³² Kip Redick, 'Feet Forbidden Here', *Environment, Space, Place*, 2, 1, (Fall 2010), 7-26 (p.9).

park space occurred over a couple of years in terms of construction but was mused about conceptually for decades up to 2007.

The idea for the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park came about largely because of the efforts of the Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance (formerly the Backcountry Bicycle Trails Club), and Seattle City Parks which funded the project through the Seattle Neighbourhood Matching Funds.³³³ The Matching Funds initiative, which began in 1988, symbolised the shift towards supporting community-led and local district-based projects. According to Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, the scheme ‘provide[s] matching dollars for neighborhood improvement, organizing, or projects that are developed and implemented by community members.’³³⁴ Prior to the initiation of Matching Funds, park development in Seattle was led, for the most part, by city oversight in conjunction with architectural firms selected by the Parks Department and the Design Commission. The advent of Matching Funds offered the Parks Department in Seattle the opportunity to share the process of park creation with local citizens, primarily on monetary terms, but also practically in terms of organisation and management through the spirit of the initiative.

In 2007, the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park was awarded \$74,996 in matching funds, with a further \$15,000 in 2009, and \$24,575 in 2014 for improvement and maintenance works to support community-led efforts.³³⁵ The use of the Matching Funds initiative is important when the Park project is compared to Freeway Park. The development of the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park, represented an alternative approach to creating accessible park space in Downtown Seattle. Both parks attempted to reconnect

³³³ ‘Trail Projects: I-5 Colonnade’, *Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance* website, [online] <<https://www.evergreenmtb.org/trails/projects/i5-colonnade>>, [accessed 31 August 2017].

³³⁴ ‘Neighborhood Matching Fund’, *Seattle Department of Neighborhoods*, [online] <<https://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/programs-and-services/neighborhood-matching-fund>>, [accessed 31 August 2017].

³³⁵ I-5 Colonnade Bike Park Neighborhood Matching Funds (2004, 2007, 2009, 2014), within data available at [online] <<http://data.seattle.gov/Community/City-Of-Seattle-Neighborhood-Matching-Funds/pr2n-4pn6/data>>, [accessed 31 August 2017].

pedestrians between city district in the wake of mass automobile usage. However, while Freeway Park followed a top-down approach to design, construction and management (the latter shifting to a mixed mode of sharing responsibility in recent years), the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park came about in major part through public and volunteer energies, rather than official channels, epitomised by the goals of the Matching Funds initiative.

Before the Bikes: Tracing the Roots of an Underpass Park Space

The Interstate 5 had been completed through Seattle's urban environment in January 1967, and its route through the city ploughed straight through central districts, densely populated by residential and commercial units. At that time, planners argued that it was necessary that such freeways be constructed in these urban locations to target inner-city traffic congestion and entice suburbanites to come back into the heart of the American city. Peter D. Norton has highlighted that, in the vision of President Eisenhower's Advisory Committee on a National Highway Program, the 'well-funded interstate freeway program, did not shrink (as European highways did) from venturing into the heart of cities.'³³⁶ Seattle and the Interstate 5 was no exception to this guiding principle of linking American cities, and connecting city and suburb alike. In order to keep the Interstate 5 as streamlined as possible, elevated sections of the freeway were required through Eastlake resulting in the underpass space following completion of construction in 1967.

Musings on the utilisation of under-the-freeway areas for public park space between Eastlake and Capitol Hill were mooted as early as 1962, when the Interstate 5 was first being built through Seattle, and the Eastlake section remained confined to the blueprints. An article that appeared in the *Washington Highway News* periodical in May of that year outlined a vision of a 'landscaping project'

³³⁶ Peter D. Norton, *Fighting Traffic: The Dawn of the Motor Age in the American City*, (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 2011), p.253; The President's Advisory Committee on a National Highway Program and the report that followed refers to *A Ten-Year National Highway Program: A Report to the President*, (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1955).

beneath the elevated section of the Interstate 5 between Shelby Street to the south and Martin Street to the north.³³⁷ The planned park would have been constructed almost entirely under the freeway, hemmed in by the north-south Harvard Avenue and Eastlake Avenue ground-level roads that predated the I-5 route. The article labelled the project as 'Freeway Park', a name that ultimately came to be attached to the above-the-freeway park space which crossed the Freeway in Downtown Seattle. This vision did not come to fruition, with the space underneath the Interstate 5 at Eastlake remaining disused, and in places overgrown, as of 2017. Instead, Seattle's Parks Department opted to establish a small nearby green space, called Fairview Park, which was not related to the freeway structure. However, the article rightly foresaw how in the future 'some spaces along and under the structures of the Freeway will undoubtedly be developed as play areas for children and for athletic activities.'³³⁸

The Eastlake Community Council, a volunteer organisation representing Eastlake district residents established in 1971, recalled how the coming of the Interstate 5 divided the community. Where a 'thriving residential neighborhood' stood in 1960, it was 'destroyed' following the construction of the freeway in 1962. The ECC's historical perspective recounts the division that the Interstate 5 caused for the Eastlake community:

Despite the freeway along this stretch being on a high viaduct whose grand space underneath would have allowed re-establishment of passage underneath, the I-5 right of way was marked "no trespassing," an exclusion reinforced in some places by fences.³³⁹

On a visit to the site of the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park, and its vicinity in May 2017, the fencing referred to by the ECC remained in place underneath some sections of the elevated freeway. This description

³³⁷ 'Freeway Park for Seattle', *Washington Highway News*, May 1962, p.3, via the WSDOT Library Digital Collections [online] <<https://cdm16977.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16977coll1/id/4089/rec/16>>, [accessed 10 January 2018].

³³⁸ *Ibid.*, p.3.

³³⁹ 'Brief History of The I-5 Colonnade Open Space', *Eastlake Community Council*, [online] <<http://www.eastlakeseattle.org/?page=colonnade>>, [accessed 10 January 2018].

by the ECC, that the space beneath the Interstate 5 acted as a space of exclusion was further emphasised by its use as a dumping ground for removed earth and waste product from the construction of Freeway Park, further south along the expressway's route. Don Sherwood's Park History files which include sketches, notes, and information on most of Seattle Parks and Recreation's properties contains several pages of illustrative and insightful content on Freeway Park's relationship to what would later become the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park. Don Sherwood's notes highlight a 0.9-acre site underneath the Interstate 5 between E Garfield Street and E Galer Street which was used as a 'soil storage area', a far cry from an inviting public park environment. This site was later incorporated into the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park. The construction of one reconnective public space in the 1970s, Freeway Park, effectively designated a future district-joining park space, as a wasteland space, for dumping.

Oral histories of Eastlake have captured the sense of loss of community that accompanied the construction of the Interstate 5 through the district. On the subject of the Interstate 5 in Eastlake, James Jules remarked that:

Freeways tend to make bad neighbors. Our freeway (Interstate-5), built in the late 1950s and early 1960s, paved over hundreds of houses once brimming with school-aged children. When completed, it created a noisy, dirty, dangerous, hostile chasm where a thriving community existed before.³⁴⁰

A recent article in *Bike Magazine*, described the prior condition of the Park, presenting a typical image of the space during the 1970s and 1980s as follows:

³⁴⁰ James Jules, 'Rogers Playground on Eastlake', *Historylink*, 21 December 2001, [online] <<http://www.historylink.org/File/3652>>, [accessed 2 February 2018].

for years the area beneath it was a wasteland filled with transients and drug deals. It was the kind of place you wouldn't walk alone, even in broad daylight... a rundown, vacant, freeway underpass [that] could be turned into a productive space.³⁴¹

During the 1990s, the desire to transform the empty, 'wasteland' space beneath the Eastlake Colonnade sections of the Interstate 5 into a 'productive space' gained pace once more. The 1998 Eastlake Neighborhood Plan recommended converting the Colonnade space into an accessible place for public use. The recommendations effectively laid the groundwork for a plan to reconnect the Eastlake and Capitol Hill districts through a series of green space and public stairways, aimed predominately for pedestrian and non-vehicular use.³⁴² Within the 'Open Space Planning' chapter of the 1998 Eastlake Neighborhood Plan, recommendations were put forth to establish improved lighting, the 'planting of suitable trees and other vegetation' and 'install climbing notches on I-5 columns,' as a public survey of local residents called for both passive and active public spaces which reflected recreational demands.³⁴³

These recommendations within the Eastlake Neighborhood Plan reflected a wider inter-district goal of establishing greater non-vehicular east-west routes across the city. The objective was discussed by policymakers within the City Council and Seattle's Office for Planning & Community Development in the early 2000s. One of the stated transportation policies for Eastlake within the 2005 Seattle Comprehensive Plan was to 'strive to establish additional pedestrian connections where they do not

³⁴¹ Heather Hansman, 'Cold Case: The Country's First Urban Bike Park Sees a Second Coming', *Bike Magazine*, 25 March 2015, [online] <<https://www.bikemag.com/features/originals/cold-case/>>, [accessed 9 January 2018].

³⁴² Chapter 5, entitled 'Open Space Planning' directly referred to the conversion of space underneath the elevated sections of the Interstate 5 in the Eastlake district for public use, and establishing stairway connections between Eastlake and Capitol Hill where steep 'hillclimbs' would be made more accessible. See 'Chapter V: Open Space Planning' in 1998 Neighborhood Plan, specifically pages v1-2, v5, v21-22

³⁴³ 'Chapter V: Open Space Planning, 1998 Neighborhood Plan, v.21-22. Page v.11 refers directly to 'Active Recreation Priorities', that include space for 'walking and jogging' and 'bicycling'.

now exist, such as under or over Interstate-5 or along the shoreline.³⁴⁴ Those familiar with the topography of Seattle are familiar with the steepening of gradients when traversing eastward from western streets and districts. Between the Eastlake and Capitol Hill district, the Howe Street Stairs, constructed in 1911, straddle the two neighbourhoods and comprise of over 350 steps divided into 13 flights, with a section passing underneath the Interstate 5.³⁴⁵ The utilisation of this staircase route, along with the adjacent Blaine steps, played into the hands of the proponents pushing for a publicly accessible space underneath the freeway at Eastlake, and their place in the Park will be returned to later.

The Howe Street Stairs and the Blaine Street Stairs that run through the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park have served several functions. Originally constructed to link Seattle citizens residing at the top, or along the slopes of Capitol Hill with the now defunct Seattle streetcar trolley system, geographically the stairs link two Seattle districts which have limited accessibility for those not using an automobile.³⁴⁶ In terms of access to public transit, during the 2000s and 2010s, the staircase continued to connect these residents with bus services into the Downtown. As such, the staircases are used for commuting purposes between Eastlake and Capitol Hill, both of which comprise of densely populated residential communities with commercial land uses, as well as Downtown Seattle. The latter's main Broadway street has for decades been a hub for local businesses and employment.

The staircase's route provides both commuting and recreational functions for pedestrians. One other major use of the staircases is for exercise purposes. The Howe Street Steps are comprised of 349 steps,

³⁴⁴ 'Transportation Policies: EL-P20' in 'Neighbourhood Planning Element' of the City of Seattle Comprehensive Plan, (Seattle: City of Seattle Department of Planning & Development, 2005), 8.86.

³⁴⁵ Jake Jamarillo and Cathy Jamarillo, *Seattle Stairway Walks: An Up-and-Down Guide to City Neighborhoods*, (Seattle: Mountaineers Books, 2017) p. 11, 70–74.

³⁴⁶ Susan Ott Ralph and the University of Washington has put together an interactive database of Seattle's 650 stairways with GIS mapping tools and accompanying photographs as part of 'Seattle All Stairs' and can be found at <<https://faculty.washington.edu/smott/SeattleStairs.html>> [accessed 9 February 2018].

while the Blaine Stairs total at 293.³⁴⁷ The Trust For Public Land has highlighted how the steps are often used by firefighters in training exercises, and for novice climbers in preparation for hiking up the nearby Mount Rainier.³⁴⁸ Descending both stairways, pedestrians are afforded expansive views of the Seattle skyline, the Olympic Mountains on the horizon, and Elliot Bay, which can also be seen from some vantage points under the freeway at the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park.

On the back of the comments in the 2005 Seattle Comprehensive Plan, the initial development of what would become the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park, began to form. Progress was sluggish over the next decade. However, when landscape architect firm, J.A. Brennan Associates got involved with the space in 2016, the firm outlined how the ‘Colonnade is still under programmed,’ and there existed a ‘great unrealized potential to stitch this part of Seattle back together, and serve citywide and regional recreation and nonmotorized travel needs.’ The language used to interpret the underpass space mirrored comments earlier accounts of the site made, such as James Jules’s reference to a ‘chasm’, and *Bike Magazine’s* ‘wasteland’ characterisation. J.A. Brennan Associates’ design schematics and concepts incorporated a further four acres of fenced off under-freeway space, south of the existing park, extending the boundary of the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park to the point at which Lakeview Boulevard crosses the Interstate 5 from the east. Within this ‘long-range plan’, it was noted that ‘a comprehensive program of recreation and travel improvements, including greatly improved lighting,’ would ‘better connecting Colonnade to the surrounding area,’ and boost visitation numbers.³⁴⁹

With this observation epitomising design goals, J.A. Brennan Associates put forth a concept plan to both ‘diversify and intensify adventure’ while catering to commuter needs by incorporating ‘new pathways, stairways, and gateways [that] will safely and enjoyably bring pedestrians and bicyclists to

³⁴⁷ Ibid. 70-74.

³⁴⁸ ‘Blaine Street Steps’, *The Trust for Public Land*, available [online] <<https://www.tpl.org/our-work/blaine-street-steps-seattle#sm.00009cj1wf13ijewwu4rhlzsesvsf>> [accessed 9 February 2018].

³⁴⁹ J.A. Brennan Associates, ‘I-5 Colonnade Open Space Study Final Design Concept Memo’, 4 October 2016, p.2. Available online <<http://www.eastlakeseattle.org/?page=colonnade>>, [accessed 19 February 2018].

and through this area.³⁵⁰ Just as Freeway Park did between Pike and Seneca Streets in Downtown Seattle, the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park spread the net of potential park users wider and also sought to fix a sense of place to the site beyond being just a means of transit connection.

Broadening the audience

J.A. Brennan Associates plans also sought to make it easier for pedestrian users to navigate between the two districts and underneath the freeway. Designs and architect notes illustrated how steps and stairways would be enhanced, and regraded at steep sections to make for easier traversing; trails would be paved; measures taken to meet accessibility standards; and better signage for wayfinding.

A site analysis, which drew on public comment, was presented at an Eastlake Community Council public meeting in May 2015 that called for an ‘additional stairway’ be built through the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park. The identified location for this stairway was to be situated ‘between Franklin Ave. E. and Lakeview Blvd. to continue the Blaine St. steps that connect 10th Ave. E. to Lakeview Blvd’, within the central section of the Park. A continuous east-west connection could then be completed between the Blaine Street Steps (that extended uphill eastwards to North Capitol Hill), and adjacent Eastlake streets such as Franklin Ave. E. and Eastlake Ave. E. In addition to completing this connection, it was noted that such a design, once completed, would create an exercise ‘loop.’ Both the Blaine Street Steps and the Howe Street Steps would form a circuit route, incorporating the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park and other local landmarks such as Streissguth Gardens and Volunteer Park, one of Seattle’s oldest Olmsted-designed landscapes. Jaramillo and Jaramillo have added that Streissguth Gardens ‘are a refuge of carefully tended native plants and wandering pathways,’ a contrast to the bustling freeway lanes and bike trails beneath the Interstate 5.³⁵¹

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ Jaramillo and Jaramillo, *Seattle Stairway Walks*, [ebook, no page number]

Though not referred to directly in such terms, the Howe Street Steps and the Blaine Street Steps integration between Eastlake and Capitol Hill formed part of a pedestrian highway within and around the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park, trailing through city districts. J.A. Brennan Associates plans also proposed a new 'north-south multi-use path' that, within the park boundaries, stretched from E. Newton Street in the north, and Aloha Street in the south.

Off-Road and Off-Leash

The I-5 Colonnade Bike Park has also been designed to include a large off-leash dog area by Seattle Parks and Recreation. Journalist Sean Keeley recently noted that 'finding a reliable place to take your pooch for running, playing and interacting with others can be hard.'³⁵² The problem is not a trivial one either. Political scientist Julie Walsh has written that since the late 1980s:

it has become commonplace for dog owners to be scolded, ticketed, and in some rare cases, even arrested for walking their dogs off-leash in places that had either allowed or tolerated that activity before.³⁵³

Walsh observed that in Seattle, 'animal control officers cracked down on off-leash walking in 1994.' Enraged the Citizens of Off-Leash Areas formed shortly after in 1995 with the City of Seattle compromising with dog-owner demands in 1996 when Seattle Parks and Recreation agreed to oversee a pilot study area in 1997. One of the proposed areas identified was at Gas Works Park.³⁵⁴ By 2018, Seattle Parks and Recreation advertised 14 off-leash areas across the city.³⁵⁵ The half-acre off-leash area at the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park represents one of Seattle's newer dog areas and since 2016, has

³⁵² Sean Keeley, 'Mapping Seattle's Ten Best Dog Parks', 5 March 2014, [online] <<https://seattle.curbed.com/maps/seattle-best-dog-parks-off-leash>>, [accessed 19 February 2018].

³⁵³ Julie M. Walsh, *Unleashed Fury: The Political Struggle for Dog-friendly Parks*, (Purdue: Purdue University Press, 2011) p.1

³⁵⁴ Friends of Lake Union referred to plans for a 'dog run' in their quarterly publication. 'Gas Works Dog Run?' Friends of Lake Union circular, Summer 1999, Box 40, Folder 4, Nick Licata Subject Files, Record Series 4650-02, SMA; further references in Box 54, Folder 2, entitled 'Off Leash Areas - Gasworks Park', Jan Drago Subject Files, 4624-02, SMA.

³⁵⁵ 'People, Dogs & Parks Plan', *Seattle Parks and Recreation*, (June 2016), p.5. [online] <<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/find/dog-off-leash-areas>>, [accessed 19 February 2018].

received attention from Seattle Parks and Recreation and the Eastlake Community Council for improvements alongside broader development plans for the Colonnade space.

The improvements of the off-leash area at the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park, whilst forming a park of greater vision for the space underneath the freeway at Eastlake, also came on the back of a survey which found that only 2% of dog owners used the space monthly, and 90% had never visited. Citywide, the survey revealed that dog owners would be more willing to use off-leash areas if the spaces were within walking or biking distance, aesthetically looked ‘like a park environment’ and contained ‘open exercise areas.’³⁵⁶ Specifically in relation to the I-5 Colonnade off-leash space, J.A. Brennan Associates consulted 299 individuals through public workshops. Respondents called for safety improvements to increase usage of the space. The architects addressed concerns by introducing higher fences, new ‘paw-friendly surfaces’, ‘better signage’ to delineate the area from other park uses and improve lighting which enhanced visibility.³⁵⁷ Coupled with this, \$73,000 was earmarked for the off-leash area improvements by Seattle Parks and Recreation.³⁵⁸ In order to create a well-visited, multi-use park space underneath the Interstate 5, bridging Eastlake and Capitol Hill districts, advocates and designers sought to broaden the cohort of users, and dog-walkers formed an integral part of that vision.

In sum, the gradual construction and expansion of the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park represents the clearest legacy of Freeway Park in its acceptance of the freeway’s presence but its viewpoint that the lost spaces above or beneath the concrete express lanes can be reclaimed. These spaces that operate in an inter-twined manner with the freeway opened new places for a non-vehicular audience to use. A community of users has been established at both parks – commuters, tourists, cyclists, extreme sport athletes, dog-walkers, horticulturalists, young and old, solitary users and families alike. The

³⁵⁶ Ibid. p.58.

³⁵⁷ J.A. Brennan Associates, ‘I-5 Colonnade Open Space Study Final Design Concept Memo’, 4 October 2016; see also final design schematic for ‘I-5 Colonnade Open Space Improvement Study’ dated 29 July 2016, available online <<http://www.eastlakeseattle.org/?page=colonnade>>, [accessed 19 February 2018].

³⁵⁸ ‘People, Dogs & Parks Plan’, p.36, 42.

experiments paid off and were ripe for replication beyond this isolated portion of interstate highway in one US city.

Recent Years

In contrast to negative perceptions of Freeway Park in the 1980s, more recent commentary on the Park has been celebratory, despite the park's flaws. Peter Harnik, environmental advocate and former Director of the Trust for Public Land remarked that Freeway Park 'was beautiful and memorable' but conceded that 'it failed on one major count: acoustics.' Despite the best efforts of its designers to heal the scar that Interstate 5 caused through the Seattle landscape, it is ultimately unable to completely rectify that situation.³⁵⁹ In other words, the Park, by its namesake, is not a separate entity from the freeway that runs beneath it. The presence of vehicle noise, and by its concrete design is symbiotically linked to the road that traverses, unwaveringly and constantly below.

Seattle's Freeway Park, for some, stands head and shoulders above the crowd in leading the national mood towards lid-parks and the use of park design to reconcile change wrought by expressway construction. Mark Hinshaw argued in this decade that 'Seattle pretty much invented the idea of covering an interstate freeway with green space.'³⁶⁰ At least locally, the Sam Smith Park lidded a section of the I-90 in Seattle's inner city Mount Baker district took inspiration from Freeway Park, as did the Mercer Island Lid (later renamed Aubrey Davis Park) over the I-90 on Mercer Island within Lake Washington to the east of Seattle, that opened during the 1990s. Studies and interest in completely enclosing the Interstate 5 through Downtown Seattle through a large-scale 'park lid' project gained traction in recent years and receives regular commentary in the city's media.³⁶¹

³⁵⁹ Harnik, *Urban Green*, p.138.

³⁶⁰ Mark Hinshaw, 'A park over Interstate 5? Not a new idea', *Crosscut*, 18 January 2016, [online] <<https://crosscut.com/2016/01/a-park-over-interstate-5-not-a-new-idea>>, [accessed 24 July 2019].

³⁶¹ The 'Lid I-5 Movement' has brought together several urban actors and Seattle-based groups in recent years to further the cause of lidding the I-5, including individuals involved in the running of Freeway Park. More information can be found on their website [online] <<https://lidi5.org>>. Examples of media commentary include Danny Sullivan 'What Would Seattle Look Like if I-5 Was Covered?', *Seattle Mag*, March 2018, [online]

Journalist and long-time Seattle resident David Brewster takes a more consequential view of Freeway Park in the grander picture of inner-urban freeways and how they forever changed city environments. Brewster surmised that Freeway Park acted as ‘a model for other cities to heal the scar that cuts right through a neighbourhood.’³⁶² Nationally, examples can be found in US cities whereby mid to late twentieth-century urban transport planning responded to the need for greater urban road capacity by constructing freeways in inner city neighbourhoods. Whether that is Interstate 59 in Houston, the I-94 that dog-legs around the western and southern fringes of Downtown Minneapolis, or the maze of lanes that link the I-20 and I-85 due south of Downtown Atlanta, road arteries are a visible and relatable element of the United States’ urban centres across the country.

In New York, Brooklyn Bridge Park was completed in 2008 adjacent to the I-278 route that forms the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway. Efforts were made to link the Park with the Brooklyn Heights Promenade, a cantilevered walkway over the Expressway. The Promenade, which predates Freeway Park, and the Brooklyn Bridge Park, also represent attempts to bridge freeway space with public space, though Freeway Park embodies the first large scale attempt to craft an urban park over an interstate highway. In Portland, Oregon, the Burnside Skatepark was established (ad hoc during the 1990s) beneath the east section of the Burnside Bridge which spans the Willamette River. Freeway Park and the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park has been directly referenced in plans elsewhere to transform unused underpass space into accessible park areas. In Chattanooga, Tennessee, local news media quoted Noel Durant, the city’s Program Director for the Trust for Public Land, as drawing inspiration from the

<<https://www.seattlemag.com/news-and-features/what-would-seattle-look-if-i-5-was-covered>>, [accessed 24 July 2019]; Gabriel Campanario, ‘Time to Put a Lid on the I-5 Canyon’, *Seattle Times*, 18 December 2015, [online] <<https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/time-to-put-a-lid-on-the-i-5-canyon/>>, [accessed 24 July 2019]; and more recently through a feasibility study as reported by Natalie Bicknell, ‘Seattle Releases Request for Proposals for Lid I-5 Feasibility Study’, *The Urbanist*, 14 December 2018, [online] <<https://www.theurbanist.org/2018/12/14/want-to-build-a-freeway-lid-over-i-5-in-seattle/>>, [accessed 24 July 2019].

³⁶² Harnik, *Urban Green*, p.138.

Seattle Park for the development of space under the Olgiati Bridge, currently populated by ‘a jungle of weeds and brush, graffiti-painted concrete columns and debris.’³⁶³

I would agree with Brewster’s assessment of Freeway Park. Coupling his sentiments with Halprin’s initial principles behind Freeway Park we can return to the concept of ‘movement.’ At the core of the park-lid idea and the examples of Freeway Park and the I-5 Colonnade Bike Park, the notion of allowing different modal functions to operate in the urban environment is central. In the 1960s, the predominance of the automobile in allowing people to move from one place to another captivated the minds of urban planners and fixated vehicle users alike. However, it was only after the Interstate 5 had been built that the realisation became clear that the city relied on movement of many kinds – walking, driving, cycling, and so forth simultaneously. As Peter Merriman highlighted, ‘Halprin was quite clear that as a designer it was his job to engage with and engineer people’s embodied movements, sensations and experiences.’³⁶⁴ Urban streets of all sizes epitomise and foster movement. The largest of these – the Interstate Expressway however curtailed other types of movement.

Halprin sought to engineer an urban space that allowed for the movement of as many people as possible. Freeway Park embodied more than just a bridge, it created a place in which people could move between different parts of the city, but also provided an outlet for retreat from the hustle and bustle of urban surrounds. An experiment in alternative park design, it required a longer stretch of time to come to its true fruition and win-over the hearts and minds of Seattle citizens, many of whom had become resistant to the idea that the freeway was a fact of urban life by the end of the twentieth century. Freeway Park was a model for the future. It blazed a new path that allowed for the reconciliation between the freeway and people-centred urban space. Its greatest contribution has

³⁶³ Tim Omarzu, ‘Park Proposed for Space Beneath Olgiati Bridge in Chattanooga’, *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, 24 July 2015, [online] <<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/local/story/2015/jul/24/bike-park-proposed-under-olgiati-bridge/316227/>>, [accessed 3 February 2018].

³⁶⁴ Peter Merriman, ‘Roads: Halprin, Modern Dance and the American Freeway Landscape’, in *Geographies of Mobilities: Practices, Spaces, Subjects* ed. by Peter Merriman and Tim Cresswell, 99-118 (113-114)

been that it offered an alternative way of looking at twentieth-century urban America. Rather than being either pro-freeway or anti-freeway, the Freeway Park model spawned a middle ground that accepted the presence of the Interstate in the Downtown, but worked to reclaim the spaces that it dissected, that had a longer history. In this light, the traditionalist idea of a park – that of a typically green space, separated from the urban or non-nature, was turned on its head and re-examined. Seattle citizens, at first sceptical and fearful of Freeway Park have reflected on its place in the city and have replicated its core principles of re-connection and reconciliation elsewhere in the city, and others have drawn inspiration from it to re-create its form in cities across North American and the wider world.

Chapter III: Discovery Park as an Urban Wilderness or Historic-Cultural Preservation Space

‘Since 1964, my Committee has approved, and the Congress has enacted legislation to set aside 13 million acres and land and water for the use and enjoyment of the American people... Because I believe in the relevance of parks and recreation programs to our urban crisis...’

Senator Henry M. Jackson, 1969³⁶⁵

‘The seclusion of the site, the magnificent vistas, the stretches of tidal beaches, the stands of native trees, the meadowlands—all combine to make this site one of surpassing beauty and serenity. As a park site its potential is bounded only by the vision and resolution of those into whose hands it is entrusted.’

Dan Kiley, Discovery Park Master Plan, (November 1972).

‘Hundreds of years ago, Spinoza wrote that “Nature abhors a vacuum.” More than 25 years ago, a vacuum was created when the military left most of Fort Lawton. Instead of buildings and roadways, noise and pollution, the land could then become a magnificent city park.’

Robert Kildall, founding member of the Friends of Discovery Park group, Letter to the Seattle Times (25th December 1994).

Introducing Discovery Park

On 1st September 1972, the then Seattle Mayor, Wes Uhlman, acting on behalf of the city, received the official land deed of the 391 acres of Fort Lawton military site, from Tricia Nixon Cox, and thus the Federal Government. Cox, President Nixon's daughter, presented the deeds in a short ceremony attended by Uhlman, marking a watershed moment for city's parks and public spaces. Just over a year later, on 28th October 1973, Washington senator's Henry Jackson and Warren Magnuson, and a host of other interested parties including Donald Voorhees and Robert Kildall, long-time advocates for the conversion of the site to a park, Dave Torone, President of the Magnolia Community Club, the district adjacent to the site, and Bernie Whitebear of United Indians of All Tribes gathered for a dedication ceremony in which Discovery Park was established.

³⁶⁵ “Jackson Sees Passage for Bill,” *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, May 30, 1969 as quoted in Sanders, *Seattle and the Roots of Urban Sustainability*, p.121.



10. *Discovery Park Opening Day Dedication by Senator Jackson, Mayor Brahman, and Mayor Uhlman. [Senator Henry Jackson Speaking].*³⁶⁶

The events culminated a lengthy period of deliberation over what to do with the land at the city's army base. It became clear as the 1960s progressed that the US army presence would be scaled back. In 1968, plans for base upgrades, which would have included the siting of ABM nuclear missiles had been rejected by the Department of Defense. With military investment in doubt, planning discussion ensued and proposals for the conversion of the site played out against a backdrop of urban renewal, city expansion, and a growing public call for park space. The inception of the Park may have ended one round of speculation over the future of the space. However, deciding what form the new park space should take sparked a conflict over what the park space should represent: an open space park akin to wilderness characteristics, or place for historic preservation and cultural engagement. The clash over purpose coincided with the opening of the park in 1973, and continued in the decades thereafter and into the twenty-first century.

This chapter will argue that since its founding as a public park, dualistic interpretations of the 1972 Master Plan for Discovery Park resulted in divergent attempts at place-making as the former Fort

³⁶⁶ 'Opening Day Dedication by Senator Jackson, Mayor Brahman, and Mayor Uhlman. [Senator Henry Jackson Speaking]', 73156, 28 October 1973, 2613-07 Engineering Department Photographic Negatives. Courtesy of the Seattle Municipal Archives.

Lawton military installation site was transformed into an urban park space. At the time of its transition into a park space, a lobby formed with the intention of ensuring that Discovery Park represented a place as akin to the natural world as possible. At its most extreme, advocates of this vision adopted an 'urban wilderness' approach to place-making, with the primary goal of achieving a restored state of wildness. In understanding this position, the concept of 'urban wilderness', its tenets and what it has come to represent for Discovery Park will be unpacked carefully through this chapter. This spatial conception at Discovery Park dominated the early trajectory of the Park's design and focus.

Countering this position, cultural organisers attempted to utilise the land at Discovery Park for first historic preservation, and then lately, for educational, leisure, and arts functions. This involved a succession of different actors, groups, and initiatives since the 1980s. Spurred in part due to clarifications included in the 1986 Master Plan for Discovery Park, this contingent centralised the effort of preserving existing military buildings within the Park and called for them to be repurposed as spaces for cultural exhibition and practical, as well as providing an outlet for artistic and historical display, for the wider public.

Beginning with a survey of the Park's pre-1972 history, this chapter will investigate the roots of this dual-conflict over function and spatial purpose, and then consider the intentions of Dan Kiley's Master Plan. The ambiguity of the 1972 Master Plan (and its 1974 Revisions) reveal historic insights into why Discovery Park became a contested site between the open-space advocates and those championing greater cultural activity within the Park boundaries. The themes which loomed over Discovery Park pitted a military past and the cause for historic preservation against local civilian calls for a wilderness space. City-wide sentiments coupled with national trends help inform the social and environmental context in which this contest is couched. Undercurrent movements that called for historic preservation in urban areas and a growing demand for open space parks across American cities help explain the positions taken by the opposing sides. This chapter will deal with the chronological history

of the tussle between the park's conceptualised and physical form as both a space for untouched nature, and for greater human activity, the latter of which gaining an increased foothold since the late 1980s, before evaluating the situation in more recent years.

Fort Lawton: 1890s-1950s

Before delving into the immediate backdrop which culminated in the creation of Discovery Park in the early 1970s, it is worth tracing a brief history of the 534 acre site, in order to understand its geographic situation, and the military presence which formed the Fort Lawton base.³⁶⁷ This extended place-history factors into the positions taken by both natural open-space advocates, and those who rallied for a greater human and cultural presence at the Park in the later decades of the twentieth century.

In the 1890s, the Magnolia Bluff, at the north western end of the central Seattle peninsula was largely untouched by the reach of the city. Incorporated into the city of Seattle in 1891, Magnolia represented a large district sited on headland, hemmed in by the waters of Elliot Bay, Salmon Bay, and later after 1911, the Lake Washington Ship Canal. The heavily forested bluff jutted out into Elliot Bay, an inlet within the complex Puget Sound water system. From this promontory, visitors to the bluff could look out across the waters of the Puget Sound to the majestic Olympic Mountains in the distance.

³⁶⁷ Originally 391 acres were transferred from US Army control to the City in September 1972. Since that time, the acreage of the site given over for park use has increased to 534 acres, with current proposals (as of 2018) calling for the continued expansion of the Discovery Park boundary. This would provisionally extend the Park's eastern limits to land adjacent to Texas Way and 36th Ave W, and bring total Discovery Park coverage to close to 700 acres.



11. *Magnolia Bluff overlooking the Puget Sound. 2 May 1903.* ³⁶⁸

John Charles Olmsted surveyed the site in preparation for his landscape design firm's 1903 plan for the city's parks. The firm was hired to establish a 'system' of park spaces and boulevards which covered the entire city. Their 1903 plan was accompanied by a detailed set of design notes, which included general contributions and explanations relating to the Magnolia district. These observations tied with Olmsted's overall remarks on the city's geographical situation that linked Seattle with its surroundings. Summarising at the start of their report, the Olmsted's argued that 'Seattle possesses extraordinary landscape advantages in having a great abundance and variety in water views and views of wooded hills and distant mountains and snow-capped peaks.' The brothers were in no doubt referring to the splendour of the Olympic Mountains and Puget Sound in these remarks, two regional characteristics which were directly visible, and in the case of the waters, reachable from the hilly Magnolia peninsula.

Olmsted's observations built upon earlier accounts of the peninsula's natural characteristics. In the late nineteenth century, the headland of Magnolia and its bluffs ecosystem was home to pioneer species of trees, and ferns. According to David Williams, General Land Office surveyors David Phillips

³⁶⁸ 'Discovery Park, Magnolia Bluff,' 29023, 2 May 1903, 5801-01: Don Sherwood Parks History Collection. Courtesy of the Seattle Municipal Archives.

and William A. Strickler, visiting the peninsula in 1855, observed a flora vista that included Douglas fir, western hemlock, red alders and an understory of ferns, salmonberry, and younger tree species.³⁶⁹ However, the composition of tree species became more deciduous at the turn of the twentieth-century and thereafter, as loggers moved in and felled the taller, older forest growth.³⁷⁰ These notes, along with Olmsted's survey constructed a natural and scenic sense of place at the site which both the Master Plan and its advocates drew for inspiration.

In addition to the existence of small logging efforts during the 1860s and 1870s, the 1890s witnessed the establishment of a military presence on the headland, which came in the form of the Fort Lawton US Army post in February 1900.³⁷¹ The base, named in honour of Major General Henry Ware Lawton, an American Civil War veteran who died in 1899 while serving in the Philippines during the Spanish-American War, came about primarily due to the persistence of local calls for the stationing of soldiers in the area. The calls came on the back the dual belief that it would quell tensions and criminality in the furthest reaches of the American West, and 'bolster Seattle's prestige' to heightened Seattle's reputation on the national stage.³⁷² Local Seattleites donated 'some seven hundred acres of prime land... in the hope of improving their local economy.'³⁷³ The impetus for this spirit of boosterism formed part of a collection of measures and actions that occurred at the turn of the twentieth century that sought to boost Seattle's profile, with the coming of the transcontinental Northern Pacific Railway to the city (1893), and the 1909 Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition further supporting the cause.

³⁶⁹ David B. Williams, 'Discovery Park (Seattle): Natural History', *Historylink.org*, 16 December 2015, [online] <<http://www.historylink.org/File/11161>>, [accessed 9 April 2018].

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁷¹ Logging efforts referenced on Seattle Parks and Recreation website, <<https://www.seattle.gov/parks/find/centers/discovery-park-environmental-learning-center/discovery-park-history>> [accessed 16 November 2019]; also see Brandt Morgan, *Enjoying Seattle Parks*, (Seattle, Greenwood Publications, 1979), p.109.

³⁷² Sanders, p.104.

³⁷³ See 'significance' section of Fort Lawton listing on the Historic American Buildings Survey, <<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/master/pnp/habshaer/wa/wa0100/wa0191/data/wa0191data.pdf>> [online], [accessed 16 November 2019].

Despite this human presence on the peninsula, the Olmsted Brothers still lobbied for the area to be enhanced and enjoyed for its natural characteristics. Augmenting their Seattle-wide vision for a parks 'system' that highlighted the city's scenic location, their 1903 Plan for the city outlined some core remarks for the Magnolia district specifically. For visitors to take in the majestic views of the Puget Sound and the Olympic Mountains, as well as enhance a sense of escape from the city by being in the presence of forest growth, the plan called for the creation of a 'parkway' along the edge of the headland, around the Fort Lawton boundary. The proposed parkway would follow atop of the bluffs and connect with a proposed 'bicycle path', 'bridle path' and 'electric railway' which was envisioned to connect up with the Fremont and Ballard neighbourhoods further north along Elliot Bay. The Olmsteds' noted that 'the woods here are so beautiful, and the land is of little value for residential purposes, that it would be desirable to include in this woodland park almost as much as is enclosed between the bicycle path and the shore.'³⁷⁴ The Olmsteds' were adamant on the scenic beauty offered by the unique location, and as such fashioned a plan which emphasised this for the human eye.



12. *Bicycle path near Fort Lawton that later became Magnolia Boulevard. 1900.*³⁷⁵

³⁷⁴ 'Report of the Olmsted Brothers', p.66-68.

³⁷⁵ 'Bicycle path near Fort Lawton that later became Magnolia Boulevard', 29857, 1900, 5801-01 Don Sherwood Parks History Collection. Courtesy of the Seattle Municipal Archives.

The Olmsteds' Plan went on further to request that 'permission should be sought from the government to extend some pleasure drives through this [Fort Lawton] property', which would allow for 'circuit drives,' and access to the sandy beach at the head of the promontory, which was 'certainly the best one for bathing within an equal distance from the city.'³⁷⁶ The Olmsteds' vision sought to establish access for a multitude of users, including motorists, walkers, cyclists, and horse-riders, and in-line with their other designs for city, the imperative was to encourage visitation and human use, through touristic and leisure pursuits.

What the Olmsteds' proposed for the peninsula and parts of the Fort Lawton base was a hybrid of a park landscape which incorporated and protected parts of the inner woodland, and the bluffs, but also accentuate the possibility for human recreational activity. Their remarks also included provisions for 'field sports, and athletic games', making the proposed site 'wholly desirable for families.' Their conclusions for the area stated that 'it would be well worth to have a pleasure drive cross it in order to make the views of the Sound and the Olympic Mountains from this high point available.'³⁷⁷ The 1903 plan for the Magnolia bluffs and Fort Lawton base did emphasise and showcase the natural environment, but it did not shy from limiting human activity within the surrounds discussed, as illustrated by these inclusions and suggestions. Ultimately, the Olmsted's designs here, and for the city more widely, often served as a source for inspiration when it came to park design and function. This retrospective endeavour at rooting design motivations occurred in relation to Fort Lawton and Discovery Park during the 1960s and thereafter, and both the 1972 Master Plan for Discovery Park, and its 1986 Development Plan successor document reflect the intentions of the Olmsted Brothers' proposals at least implicitly, as will be discussed later. Both the 1972 and 1986 documents, as we shall see, are drawn upon by each side of the Discovery Park spatial conflict to support their respective bids.

³⁷⁶ 'Report of the Olmsted Brothers', p.68.

³⁷⁷ Ibid. p.69.



13. Historic photo of Fort Lawton Grounds - Sixth Engineers Band. C. 1929.³⁷⁸

For the Fort Lawton site, and the surrounding coastal heights and bluffs, the potential for a park environment, threaded with scenic parkways and paths did not come to fruition at that time. The city did not pursue the Olmsted's request to seek permission from the federal government for access into parts of the Fort Lawton base for the purposes of parkway creation and recreational use. After being designated as Fort Lawton in 1900, the site remained under military control for the next six decades. Local boosting efforts to establish the US army base were supported by military planners who desired such a fort to protect against unwanted entry into the Puget Sound and Port Orchard Bay where the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard at Bremerton, further south, was located. In the opening decade of the twentieth century, visions of an appealing large municipal park space ultimately gave way to military necessity.

However, in the short to medium term, the scope of the Fort Lawton base remained limited. Despite having facilities and quarters for 3,500 stationed soldiers, the base was sparsely populated and lay largely dormant up to the 1940s. Highlighting this, a bid was put forth by Seattle's Department for

³⁷⁸ 'Discovery Park: Historic photos of Ft Lawton Grounds--Sixth Engineers Band, circa 1929', 170821, c. 1929, 5801-07 Department of Parks and Recreation. Courtesy of the Seattle Municipal Archives.

Parks and Recreation to lease the property and reignited a short-lived effort to construct a park in the place of the base, but the proposal was quickly turned down by the Secretary of War, Dwight F. Davis.³⁷⁹ Following the US entry into the Second World War, the site became a point of embarkation, and facilitated the movement of over one million US troops to the Pacific Theater. After 1945, the site continued its embarkation function, supporting US actions in the Korean War. Later in the 1950s, anti-missile infrastructure was constructed at the base in 1959 which included the siting of a large radar that connected to the nationwide Nike missile defense system. In the 1960s, Fort Lawton's military importance to Air Command declined once more.

This foray into the spatial history of the Discovery Park site portends the debates which engulfed the purpose of the space which played out during the period covering the 1970s to the present.

Envisioning a Park Space: 1950s-1960s

During the 1960s, the city faced a myriad of challenges which all linked back to the shifting dimensions of how urban environments were formed, populated, and used. Like many major US cities of the decade, Seattle was challenged with a changing economic focus, blight of downtown districts, congested and traffic-ridden streets, and a wave of air, water, and noise pollution. Against this backdrop of urban decay, the policy which gripped city officials nationally was that of urban renewal. Regenerating the central business district and inner-city environment which grand building projects, the razing of dilapidated buildings and structures, and the reconfiguring of urban infrastructure to become more streamlined. The city's Century 21 Exposition of 1962 had inspired a generation of urban thinkers, boosters, and politicians to think beyond the malaise of the present and envision a reinvigorated urban form. The spirit of demolition and make-anew led to controversial battles in the

³⁷⁹ 'Discovery Park History', *Seattle Parks and Recreation*, [online] <<https://www.seattle.gov/parks/find/centers/discovery-park-environmental-learning-center/discovery-park-history>>, [accessed 12th April 2018].

central city, but elsewhere, the opportunity to flight momentarily from the excesses of urban life presented itself in one of the unlikeliest of places.

In 1955, a resolution passed the Washington State Legislature that called for a World's Fair to be held in the City of Seattle. Slated for opening in 1959, 50 years after the 1909 Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition, Seattle's first foray into the arena of World's Fairs, the 'Century 21' Exposition as it became known needed a large suitable site to match the international scale of hosting such an event. The 'Civic Center Advisory Commission' in charge of organising Century 21 scouted locations across the city, with the Fort Lawton site very much in the crosshairs of the organisers. Edward E. Carlson, civic leader and chairman of the Commission, argued that 'long-range development... [and] long-range benefits' for the city were paramount for the Fair's legacy.³⁸⁰ However, instead of hosting the technological and cultural fair, Fort Lawton continued to be used for military purposes, with a training centre for reservists being constructed in 1958.³⁸¹ The conflicting visions and demands for the space, between military use and civilian use at this juncture highlighted an early example of the contention which would characterise the development of Discovery Park in the decades that followed.

A more central location of Lower Queen Anne eventually won out in hosting the city's Century 21 Exposition and the World's Fair took place three years later than initially pitched, in 1962. The site received subsequent redevelopments during the later twentieth century, and remains an important tourist and cultural attraction, known as the Seattle Center. Seattle journalist Shelby Scates, has argued that on reflection, the prospects of Fort Lawton being transformed into the fairgrounds of the

³⁸⁰ Edward E. Carlson, as quoted in R.M. Campbell, *Stirring Up Seattle: Allied Arts in the Civic Landscape*, (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2014), p.94.

³⁸¹ 'Historic American Buildings Survey: Fort Lawton', *National Park Service*, from Prints and Photographs Division, *Library of Congress* (HABS No. WA-150, 17-SEAT) [online] <<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/master/pnp/habshaer/wa/wa0100/wa0191/data/wa0191data.pdf/>> [accessed 3 March 2018], p.19.

Century 21 Exposition represented 'a hopeless notion, given pending military demands.'³⁸² Other potential uses for the Fort Lawton space called for the conversion of the base into a shopping complex, and also the construction of residential housing to supplement the military housing units that had been operated by Capehart Housing since the early 1950s.³⁸³ Other functions for the site, along these lines, were raised during the 1970s and 1980s, and will be discussed later. However, throughout the 1960s, Fort Lawton remained under military jurisdiction.³⁸⁴

In 1965, plans to expand Fort Lawton's Air Command remit briefly surfaced when it was suggested that Anti-Nuclear Ballistic Missile (ABM) hardware be positioned at the site. However, the likelihood of the plan coming to pass at Fort Lawton was thin when local manoeuvrings are considered. In April 1964 Secretary of State Robert McNamara had announced that 85 percent of the Fort Lawton property would be deemed surplus and the City of Seattle was invited to purchase the property at half of the market value. In this light, there appeared to be conflicting futures proposed regarding ABM expansion and the site in general. In December 1968, Senator Henry Jackson persuaded military officials to site the ABM plans elsewhere, with the support of local constituents.³⁸⁵

While the regression of Fort Lawton as an army base ensued, an opportunity arose in terms of utilising the site for city services. The city's recently formed Metro, a regional waste water treatment system, acquired a portion of the northern section of the Fort Lawton site at West Point to develop a sewerage

³⁸² Shelby Scates, *Warren G. Magnuson and the Shaping of Twentieth-Century America*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), p.70

³⁸³

³⁸⁴ President Richard Nixon signed off the transfer of 391 acres of Fort Lawton property to the City of Seattle on 1st September 1972, see Jeffrey C. Sanders, *Seattle and the Roots of Urban Sustainability: Inventing Ecotopia*, (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010), p.127.

³⁸⁵ See 'Fort Lawton' in Bob Santos, and Gary Iwamoto, *The Gang of Four: Four Leaders, Four Communities, One Friendship*, (Seattle: Chin Music Press, 2016), p.48, and Sherry L. Smith, *Hippies, Indians, and the Fight for Red Power*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p.163. Local constituents referred to the 'Citizens for Fort Lawton Park' group, as mentioned by Greg Dash 'Seattle Won a Park in a Battle With a Missile System', *Discovery Park Community Alliance*, 1 July 2017, [online] <http://discoveryparkcommunityalliance.com/DPCA_Public_Docs/History%20Article%20by%20Greg%20Dash.pdf>, [accessed 30 December 2019].

facility which has served Seattle, Shoreline, and north King County districts since 1966.³⁸⁶ In his dedication speech, Metro's legal counsel and Seattle citizen activist, hailed the development as 'the largest single pollution abatement project ever undertaken,' by the city, to counter urban pollution.³⁸⁷ Human and urban uses for the space had begun to take precedent towards the late 1960s on the back of citywide urban renewal fervour.

In 1968, Seattle voters approved a series of 'Forward Thrust' bond issues that sought to boost investment across a range sectors and bolster the city's defence against looming economic doubts as major local employer Boeing faced hard times. Wrapped up the Forward Thrust program was \$118 million for the city's Department of Parks and Recreation, of which \$3 million was set aside for the purchase of Fort Lawton to convert into a park. The economic groundwork had been completed to fund any future enterprises in park creation at the site, and those efforts then needed political impetus to match it. The picture by the start of 1969 suggested that the Olmsted Brothers calls for an open space park environment at Fort Lawton were being revisited.

³⁸⁶ 'King County Wastewater System with Sewer Flow Scheme Map', *King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, Wastewater Treatment Division*, May 2013, [online] <https://aqua.kingcounty.gov/gis/web/Web/VMC/utilities/system_flow_11x17.pdf>, [accessed 15 March 2018].

³⁸⁷ James R. Ellis, 'Dedication at West Point Address', 20 July 1966, reprinted from *Metro—the first ten years, 1958-1968*, (Seattle, WA: Metro, 1969), [online] <<https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/dnrp/wtd/about/history/west-point-dedication.aspx>>, [accessed 15 March 2018].



14. Aerial view of Fort Lawton site. 1970.³⁸⁸

During the 1960s, park planners once again eyed-up the sleepy military base as a place for nature in the urban confines. Seattle Parks Superintendent at the time of the Fort Lawton conversion, Hans A. Thompson, noted that New York had long had Central Park, and San Francisco enjoyed the green surrounds of Golden Gate Park, and the Golden Gate National Recreation Area which was created in the early 1970s, on the city's doorstep.³⁸⁹ Thompson argued that those 'magnificent' parks, 'tend to identify the city with the park.'³⁹⁰ Developing a large urban nature park for Seattle seemed too good of an opportunity to relinquish at the dawn of the 1970s, especially when the Parks Department had been rewarded with hundreds of millions of taxpayers' dollars, paid for by Forward Thrust. Parks have an extensive history as being couched in restorative terms for the human body and mind. Other Seattle parks, such as Volunteer Park and Seward Park with longer histories hark back to a generation of park creation in the Olmstedian tradition. The visions for a park at Fort Lawton, along with park

³⁸⁸ 'Fort Lawton. Aerial View,' 76375, Dec. 1965, 5804-04 Forward Thrust Photographs. Courtesy of the Seattle Municipal Archives.

³⁸⁹ Hans A. Thompson, *Letter to Robert Upright*, 18 March 1969, Box 25, Folder 2, Don Sherwood Parks History Collection, 1884-1979, Record Series, 5801-01, SMA; Of the numerous studies on New York's Central Park, Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar, *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), remains a seminal work. For more on San Francisco's Golden Gate National Recreation Area, see Hal K. Rothman, *The New Urban Park: Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Civic Environmentalism*, (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2004).

³⁹⁰ Thompson, *Letter to Robert Upright*, 18 March 1969.

developments at Sand Point (Magnuson Park), Brown Point (Gas Works Park), and Freeway Park all represented a new wave of parks which sought to provide physical and mental relief from the rigours of the late-twentieth-century city. Of those, the plans for the redevelopment of the Fort Lawton site into a natural park space, to then become Discovery Park in 1972, epitomised the largest of those spaces.

On a national level, Ann Louise Strong argued in *Open Space for Urban America* 'a continuing association with the natural world' should form the central focus of 1960s urban planning. Strong's publication was linked to the newly created Department for Housing and Urban Development by the Johnson Administration. Jeffrey Craig Sanders highlighted that 'beauty, blight, and open space formed a persuasive vocabulary' that citizen-based groups 'could use to guide the taste and aesthetics of local communities or advance other agendas.' Sanders concluded that 'open space offered a brake on development... and [an] alluring idea [that] would become a crucial part of the language of the modern urban environmental movement.'³⁹¹ On the ground in Seattle, by 1972, Strong's line of thinking equipped park advocates with the conceptual tools to shape the fledgling Discovery Park in the image of a wild space, that was reflective of the natural world, within the urban setting.

In alignment with local discussions on the future of Fort Lawton, city newspapers backed those professing the potential for a park at the site. The *Seattle Argus* pleaded that 'civic leaders should be considering the possibility that some of the land just might become available for a magnificent park,' and rallied against the 'real estate operators dream of tantalizing profits.'³⁹² By the end of the 1960s, the time had come for park ideas to become a reality. Federal urban policy directed by President Johnson was focused on the 'renewal' of cities and informed by voices such as Strong. While economic development remained a central feature of the Urban Renewal agenda of President Johnson, there

³⁹¹ Sanders, p.107.

³⁹² Quotations sourced from 'Will Fort Lawton Be Next Casualty of Economy Drive?' *Seattle Argus*, 27 December 1963 as quoted in Sanders, p.108 (p.257).

was a consideration by planners ‘to preserve nature and natural amenities’, and ‘to reserve large accessible areas for outdoor recreation and neighborhood playgrounds and parks’, that could prevent the sprawl and blight of ‘tomorrow.’³⁹³ Meanwhile local politicians and representatives within Seattle Department for Parks and Recreation possessed an appetite to engage in long-term open space planning at the Fort Lawton site, as the prospects for future military use diminished. Soldier training ended at Fort Lawton in 1959, and in August 1974 the small handful of the remaining Nike anti-ballistic missiles stationed at the base were deactivated. The Army Air Defense Command buildings lay derelict thereafter until their demolition in 2001.³⁹⁴ With impetus for future military planning at the site not forthcoming, the early 1970s effectively marked the end of the site as a functioning military establishment. Seattleites, both official and citizen, could draw upon national trends, and the broader thinking of the urban planning movement, to guide their efforts in their own city.

The transition of Fort Lawton to Discovery Park, from military use to park use, benefitted from in large part due to the efforts of local Senators, and a specific piece of federal legislation which related to creation of parks and recreational spaces in post-war America. The legislation in question referred to the Federal Lands for Parks and Recreation Act of 1969, which was absorbed into the Land and Water Conservation Fund program later. Senator Henry Jackson argued that ‘surplus military installations are located in or near major metropolitan areas and afford a great opportunity for urban park and recreational complexes.’³⁹⁵ The 1969 Act represented a national piece of legislation that resonated neatly with the feeling towards Fort Lawton’s surplus lands harboured by Senator Jackson, and a vocal group of concerned Seattle citizens. As a result, the precedent which informed the passing of the

³⁹³ Jan Z. Krasnowiecki and James C. N. Paul, ‘The Preservation of Open Space in Metropolitan Areas’, *University of Pennsylvania Law Review*, Vol. 110, No. 2 (Dec. 1961), 179-239 (p.180).

³⁹⁴ Mark L. Morgan, Mark A. Berhow, *Rings of Supersonic Steel: Air Defenses of the United States Army 1950-1979*, (Bodega Bay, CA: Hole in the Head Press, 2002), 166-167.

³⁹⁵ Senator Henry Jackson, introducing the bill to the Senate that would become the Federal Lands for Parks and Recreation Act of 1969, March 1969, as quoted in Appendix A of the Fort Lawton Park [Discovery Park] Master Plan 1972, prepared by Dan Kiley and Partners, [online] <<https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/ParksAndRecreation/Parks/masterplan1.pdf>>, [accessed 27 April 2018].

Federal Lands for Parks and Recreation Act came in large part from Washington state. Senator Jackson sponsored the Act and surmised that ‘the improvement of the environment... can mean the most to those who are most deprived.’³⁹⁶ The ‘deprived’ in Seattle’s case with Fort Lawton is debateable. Local voices pointed towards a deprivation of spacious and accessible park space, while other groups such as the United Indians of All Tribes went on to visibly protest their specific lack of recognition through the Fort Lawton site in 1970.

The new legislation, that was approved by Congress on 22nd October 1970, gave the Department of the Interior the power to relinquish ‘surplus real property, including buildings, fixtures, and equipment situated thereon... as needed for use as a public park or recreation area.’³⁹⁷ The Act effectively resurrected the repealed provisions that had previously been set out in the Surplus Property Act of 1944, which at that time was approved to deal with excess property assets linked to the war effort. President Harry S. Truman ‘liquidated’ the Act in a bid to streamline and modernise federal property management.³⁹⁸ The Federal Lands for Parks and Recreation Act specifically transferred federal property for the purposes of parks and recreation. Senator Jackson’s crusade to make federal property and lands available for public use legislatively took place on the national scale. Meanwhile the transition of Fort Lawton to Discovery Park epitomised a localised example of Senator Jackson’s vision, with the handover and conversion unfolding in the Senator’s own backyard.

³⁹⁶ Federal Lands for Parks and Recreation Act of 1969. Hearing, Ninety-first Congress, first session, on S. 1708. May 14, 1969. <<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/lwcf/upload/Public-Law-91-485.pdf>> [accessed 16 November 2019]; Henry M. Jackson remarks quoted in Sanders, pp.121-122.

³⁹⁷ Public Law 91-485, October 22, 1970, see <<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/lwcf/upload/Public-Law-91-485.pdf>>, [accessed 16 November 2019].

³⁹⁸ President Harry S. Truman, ‘Special Message to the Congress on the Need for a Modern System for the Management of Government Property’, 5 March 1948, Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. <<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=13123>> [accessed 20 February 2018].

The Early Years of Discovery Park: Transitioning from a Military Space to a Park Space.

The events that facilitated the opening of Discovery Park were couched in both national and local political trends, and sentiments that guided urban thinking during the 1960s. Returning to Hans A. Thompson's comments on the potential for the Fort Lawton site in shaping a Seattle parks identity, the Parks Superintendent conceded that:

the opinion is virtually unanimous that the highest and best use of this site is as a public park, and indeed the problem will be to find adequate space for all of the many commendable and desirable improvements which have been suggested for inclusion within the site.³⁹⁹

Thompson's candour in his response here to a Seattle constituent, while not aware at the time, foreshadowed the events of the coming decades following the transition of Fort Lawton to Discovery Park. Designs and visions for the space going into the later twentieth century revealed a multitude of desires for the Park. These stretched from a site of restored nature, through to traditional urban park functions that by the 1960s, typically included open space, recreational and public facilities such as sports spaces and public toilets, trails and paths, and areas to relax. Thompson meanwhile continued his response and remarked that the 'challenge' of the Parks Department was to 'protect the integrity of the entire site and prevent overdevelopment and consequent diminishing of the open space impact,' that the Fort Lawton site offered Seattle.⁴⁰⁰ It is at this juncture that the divergence in opinion begins and is subsequently played out during Discovery Park's history, as institutional sentiments for the purpose of Discovery Park, fall more on the side of undisturbed open nature space, rather than developing the Park for a range of natural and cultural functions.

³⁹⁹ Hans A. Thompson, *Letter to Robert Upright*, 18 March 1969, Box 25, Folder 2, Don Sherwood Parks History Collection, 1884-1979, Record Series, 5801-01, SMA.

⁴⁰⁰ Hans A. Thompson, *Letter to Robert Upright*, 18 March 1969, Box 25, Folder 2, Don Sherwood Parks History Collection, 1884-1979, Record Series, 5801-01, SMA.

At the time of the initial planning in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the planned park was known as Fort Lawton Park. It wasn't until 1973 that the transitioned site was formerly given the title of Discovery Park. Nonetheless, a process by which an architect would be selected was initiated in 1969 and was undertaken with ambitious intent.⁴⁰¹ Given the site's situation, geography and natural history, all within easy reach of Downtown Seattle, the potential for a large, bold, urban park was looked upon favourably. The call for architects' designs culminated in 1971, when Mayor of Seattle, Wes Uhlman selected Dan Kiley and his firm to spearhead the park project. Uhlman highlighted Kiley as 'one of the world's outstanding urban planners' and a press release by Seattle's Department of Parks and Recreation repeated the scope of the project which transcended Seattle's borders, stating that the 'major regional park... possesses the potential of becoming one of the world's great parks.'⁴⁰²

Dan Kiley and his architect firm produced a written document to accompany their winning presentation for the park bid entitled 'Memo on a Man-Nature Park for Seattle, Washington.' The memo, which preceded the publication of the Master Plan (which was drawn up the following year), outlined Kiley's intentions and thinking for the proposed park, placing Seattle's relationship with nature at the heart of the design plans. Kiley linked this to human desires for a physical space in nature, stating that 'the wildness of the fauna and flora is the great need.'⁴⁰³ For Kiley, the purpose of a park on the Fort Lawton site would transcend the traditional approach to urban park planning, which he highlighted as 'additions to the habitations of man, for instance, New York City plus Central Park,' and would instead be designed so that 'man and nature' could exist, 'as one.' The Memo laid the groundwork for the more detailed Master Plan in high conceptual terms, but in retrospect, the short document was vague. Kiley expanded on the Memo within the presentation to the Department of Parks and Recreation and ultimately convinced city officials. However, this Memo indicated a direction

⁴⁰¹ Robert Kildall, 'Discovery Park: A People's Park in Magnolia', *Magnolia: Memories & Milestones* ed. by Whitney Mason (Seattle, WA: Magnolia Community Club, 2000), 247-271 (p.266).

⁴⁰² Press Release from Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation, 7 December 1971, Box 25, Folder 2, Don Sherwood Parks History Collection, 1884-1979, Record Series, 5801-01, SMA.

⁴⁰³ Dan Kiley et. al., 'Memo on a Man-Nature Park for Seattle, Washington', *Office of Dan Kiley*, 1970.

of approach, but also left the door open to multiple interpretation as to what the future park, and urban parks in general, should represent for users and as representations of nature.⁴⁰⁴

It is important to note that in the intervening period between the awarding of Kiley's landscape architect firm the contract of designing Discovery Park and the publication of the Discovery Park Master Plan, the official handover of the future park, still referred to as Fort Lawton Park at that point, took place. On 1st September 1972, 381 acres of the Fort Lawton site was 'deeded to the city [of Seattle] as part of the federal government's "Legacy of Parks" program.'⁴⁰⁵ The ceremony was attended by Mayor Wes Uhlman, representing the city of Seattle, as well as Washington Senators Warren Magnuson and Henry Jackson. Also in attendance was Tricia Nixon Cox, the daughter of President Nixon, representing her father in an official White House capacity. [Sentence on Press Coverage/Tricia Nixon Cox]. Notably, the press release issued by the Mayor's office was clear in outlining that the deeded Fort Lawton lands would 'become a wilderness park within the city,' with Uhlman adding through his ceremonial remarks that the 'priceless open space' would be 'a place for peace and quiet.'⁴⁰⁶

What this effectively meant was that Seattle joined its urban Cascadian counterparts and acquired a vast park space within its city limits, as initially 391 acres had been ceded to the City. In nearby Portland, Oregon, over 5,000 acres of forest was incorporated into the city's Parks & Recreation Department portfolio in 1948, that has since constituted one of the largest areas of urban forest in

⁴⁰⁴ Edward O. Wilson has fleshed out some of the details which have subsequently informed the link between what Kiley termed 'man and nature' through the Biophilia Hypothesis. Wilson has argued that biophilia 'is the innately emotional affiliation of human beings to other living organisms' in *In Search of Nature* (Washington D.C.: Island Press, 1996), p.165, discussed later in this chapter.

⁴⁰⁵ Press Release from Mayor Wes Uhlman's Office, 1 September 1972, Box 25, Folder 3, Don Sherwood Parks History Collection, 1884-1979, Record Series, 5801-01, SMA.

⁴⁰⁶ Press Release from Mayor Wes Uhlman's Office, 1 September 1972, Box 25, Folder 3, Don Sherwood Parks History Collection, 1884-1979, Record Series, 5801-01, SMA.

the United States.⁴⁰⁷ Across the border in British Columbia, Canada, Vancouver had enjoyed close to 1,000 acres of green, publicly accessible, municipal park space in the form of Stanley Park, since it opened in 1888.⁴⁰⁸ Both the Portland and Vancouver comparisons illustrated the potential scope of Discovery Park in Seattle. Forest Park in Portland had taken on a more nature-centric, wild approach to large park design in the city, while Stanley Park evolved over the course of the twentieth century and invited human use through recreational initiatives. While the Discovery Park Master Plan does not directly reference either of the two other parks explicitly, the interplay between nature and human focused park design in Forest and Stanley Park was implicitly alluded to by Kiley's plan that catered for nature lovers and recreationalists alike.

In the years following the 1972 handover, and the creation of Discovery Park, the space was contested by those who held divergent opinions about what the Park should come to represent for the city of Seattle. Many historic military buildings remained intact, though deteriorating, within the new park boundaries. The question of whether Discovery Park's military past should be preserved and refurbished hung over the Park's transition during the subsequent decade. The fate of these relics of past military use was questioned as others advocated that the space should be sanctioned as a largely untouched wilderness, on the doorstep of Seattle's urban environment. This dual vision of Discovery Park's future, a space for nature, versus a space for historic preservation and human involvement, played out during the 1980s and 1990s, and continued to divide opinion into the current century.

⁴⁰⁷ 'Forest Park', *Portland Department of Parks & Recreation*, [online] <<https://www.portlandoregon.gov/parks/finder/index.cfm?&action=ViewPark&propertyid=127>> [accessed 21 February 2018].

⁴⁰⁸ Stanley Park, named after Lord Frederick Stanley, 16th Earl of Derby, and 6th Governor of Canada, was opened by Mayor of Vancouver David Oppenheimer on 27th September 1888, see Sean Kheraj 'Improving Nature: Remaking Stanley Park's Forest, 1888-1931', *BC Studies*, No. 158 (Summer 2008), 63-90; the European and Canadian interaction and exploration of the peninsula which is now known as Stanley Park pre-dates the park's opening in 1888. Kheraj has detailed the peninsula's environmental history prior to its designation as a park space in his book *Inventing Stanley Park: An Environmental History*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013), 13-55.

The Concept of 'Wilderness' In an Urban Setting

As far as traditional narratives towards natural spaces go, the concept of wilderness is usually applied to natural world spaces far beyond the periphery of human settlement. The very existence of the concept of 'wilderness' is a contested battleground over its parameters, scope, and continued relevance temporally as well as spatially. Alfred Runte has written about how early twentieth-century figures in the American environmental movement, viewed 'wilderness' as 'worthless lands.'⁴⁰⁹ Preservationists in this period placed wilderness in remote, isolated, and difficult to reach areas, and officials drew wilderness boundaries in locations that were not financially beneficial.⁴¹⁰ Later in the twentieth-century, the Wilderness Act of 1964, and later the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978, shifted notions and reframed public perceptions of what wilderness was, as the acts expanded the coverage of National Park and wilderness area to allow more Americans to use and enjoy such natural spaces. Couched against this backdrop, the concept of wilderness and open space around the time of the formation of Discovery Park took on new meaning. The terminology of 'wilderness', 'open space', and 'wildness' became intertwined with perceptions of park space. In American cities such as Seattle, groups and individuals concerned with the expansion and concentration of the urban landscape that occurred in the post-war period saw the application of terms such as 'open space' to non-National Park locations, such as large municipal park spaces.

Stanley Park in Vancouver, British Columbia, served as a precedent for establishing a level of urban wilderness through park space. Sean Kheraj, writing on Stanley Park, has observed that 'nature in the park is precious because most visitors believe it to be old and unspoiled,' that in turn 'has come to

⁴⁰⁹ Alfred Runte, *National Parks: The American Experience*, 4th edn (New York: Taylor Trade Publishing, 2017), 43-56.

⁴¹⁰ Kevin R. Marsh, *Drawing Lines in the Forest: Creating Wilderness Areas in the Pacific Northwest*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), deals with this throughout the monograph, in particular 'Activists have repeatedly used the rhetoric of a romanticized wilderness, falsely free from all human impact, to generate public sympathy for their cause,' (p.11), and 'the process of drawing wilderness boundaries is part of a long legacy of human decisions shaping the Cascades,' (p.16) with Marsh honing in on the Three Sisters, North Cascades, Mount Jefferson, Alpine Lakes, and French Pete wilderness areas in the Pacific Northwest to illustrate the decisions of siting wilderness and accommodating economic demands.

influence contemporary park policy.’ As a result, Kheraj adds, ‘many Vancouverites value the park for its perceived sense of naturalness, [coupled with] its proximity to a highly urbanized environment.’ But as Kheraj argues, ‘this perception is the disjuncture between public memory and the peninsula’s environmental history.’⁴¹¹ There are parallels which can be drawn between Seattle’s Discovery Park, and its northern neighbour in Vancouver’s Stanley Park on the topic of public perception of urban wilderness space.

While Stanley Park and Discovery are not officially linked or related to one another, their histories, and design are comparable. Both parks occupied a portion of urban space that is relatively close to the downtown hub of their respective cities and are expansive in their coverage. Similarly, the two parks share a degree of ‘natural’ or rather typically ‘non-urban’ geographical features within their boundaries, such as forest cover, exposed gradients and natural vegetation, beaches, and access to a shoreline for much of their limits. Added into this is the factor that both parks are also the home to a tapestry of ecological habitats for both plant and animal life. The two parks also utilised trails and pedestrian routes to allow city citizens access to these natural spaces, a stone’s throw from a bustling urban core. In this light, Stanley Park, the older of the two, offered an ‘open space’ approach to urban park spaces that served as a historical precedent for those involved in determining the trajectory of Discovery Park, in the early 1970s.

Jeffrey Craig Sanders has argued that the term ‘open space’, which crops up frequently in all manner of archival material, from departmental correspondence, to promotional material, to speeches and media commentary, represented a ‘ubiquitous phrase of the era,’ that ‘could encompass multiple meanings.’ The era in which Sanders refers to, the late 1960s and into the 1970s, is a time in contemporary American culture that witnessed the growth of both local and national environmental movements, as well as a growth in urban sustainability concepts. Sanders throws the net wide when

⁴¹¹ Kheraj, *Inventing Stanley Park*, 3-4.

exploring these topics in the city of Seattle by applying the ‘environmental’ and ‘sustainability’ labels to cover growing calls for green space, urban farming and cooperatives, and the preservation of community spaces such as Pike Place Market. Sanders surmised that ‘mainstream efforts to preserve nature or create urban parks occurred in a broader social and political context,’ with the events at Fort Lawton epitomising ‘the contested nature of sustainability.’⁴¹² Often, the call for ‘open space’ at Discovery Park chimed with the debates and discussions over the natural environment and the idea of wilderness that were taking place at a national level, and this can be seen through elements of the Master Plan for Discovery Park, and the constituencies that clashed over the status of Discovery Park in the 1970s, 1980s and beyond.

Whether wilderness exists or not is secondary to our concerns with its application to Discovery Park in Seattle as this chapter is focused upon how certain individuals and groups drew upon the idea of wilderness in their perception of what the new park should represent. Instead of wilderness being a set of natural conditions situated away from American cities, in this example, the term has been enthusiastically applied to a municipal park space, within the city limits, rather than beyond it. As Sanders has observed, ‘in the years since its [Discovery Park] origin, the city has defined and actively managed the park as a “wilderness,” restricting certain uses and taking great pains to remove non-native plant species.’⁴¹³ In summation, much of the basis for this approach to Discovery Park related back to the original design intentions of the landscape architect chosen to plan the park in the early 1970s, Dan Kiley.

This brief segue provides a framework for how Kiley’s Master Plan can be understood. The Master Plan for Discovery Park which was published in February 1972 fleshed out Kiley’s proposals to the City, and provided design specifics, as well as a long-term vision for the Park in subsequent decades that

⁴¹² Sanders, 11-12.

⁴¹³ Ibid., 127-128.

left the park open for competing interpretation and contrasting development. In terms of a 'primary function', Kiley's Master Plan outlined that the 'role should be to provide an open space of tranquility for the citizens of this city.' It is summed up in this one line, under the heading 'Primary Function – Central Purpose' that those who advocated the park should represent a wild space, untouched as much as possible from the human hand – notably the Friends of Discovery Park group formed in 1974 – drew their inspiration. This key tenet, in their view of the park space, formed the park's guiding principle, which tied neatly with how Kiley and his team waxed lyrical over the scenic beauty of the space:

The site is one of breathtaking majesty... the seclusion of the site, the magnificent vistas, the stretches of tidal beaches, the stands of native trees, the meadowlands – all combine to make this site one of surpassing beauty and serenity.⁴¹⁴

Kiley's Master Plan conceded that 'it is difficult, if not impossible, to create a long-range plan, the details of which will be valid for all time,' adding that ideas may eventually turn out to be 'unexciting or impractical or even impossible.' From the start of the Master Plan, the architect quickly established that 'the details of our plan will undoubtedly require revision from time to time.' The practicality of scoping out a long-term vision that was hoped would span decades proved difficult for Kiley and his architectural team, and it is implicitly suggested here that a change in use, or evolution in park use would occur as Discovery Park matured.

Prophesising on future uses and alterations, the Master Plan explained that utilising parts of the park for recreational activities and civic structures 'may constitute the greatest single threat to the park,'

⁴¹⁴ Dan Kiley, Ian Tyndall, and Peter Ker Walker, 'Discovery Park Master Plan', *Seattle Parks and Recreation*, (November 1972, repr. 1992) p.3. [online] <<https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/ParksAndRecreation/Parks/masterplan1.pdf>>, [accessed 21 May 2018].

and that 'only those activities and only those structures should be accepted which are in harmony with the overall theme, character and objective of the park.' The statement erred on the side of caution when contemplating future incursions into the 'solitude' space that Kiley imagined at Discovery Park. However, the language here is measured and accepted that to some degree, future development along civic and recreational lines would eventually pervade into the Park. 'Commercial intrusion' was strongly discouraged and could be more easily rallied against. Preventing attempts to limit recreational activity at the Park was considered a more arduous task, particularly when the status of the Park as a municipal entity and public space is respected. Galen Cranz labelled this era of park planning and function (c.1965-1990) as a period in which 'Open Space' systems were adopted which catered for multiple creative uses in urban park spaces.⁴¹⁵ Alan Tate has argued that the post-war period in terms of park spaces has represented a re-appreciation of 'traditional' park functions that viewed municipal green spaces as an 'urban safety valve' for local citizens against the pressures of the city.⁴¹⁶

Visual maps and accompanying commentary from the Master Plan highlighted specific areas of structures within the park boundary. One 'long range' map listed a nature interpretive area, an orientation center, vehicle access routes, parking lots, bus stops, and maintenance areas centred mainly around the existing Mall, in the northern reaches of Fort Lawton.⁴¹⁷ The Master Plan argued that the Mall area should be, 'the only formalized area in the park,' and would act as an 'entrance' to 'the rest of the dispersed park.'⁴¹⁸ It is in this area of the park which Kiley catered for the recreational elements accustomed to urban parkscapes that congregated individuals. This area, along with a small 'play area' to the extreme south-east of the park, concentrated these functions for the purposes of

⁴¹⁵ Galen Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982), see Chapter 4.

⁴¹⁶ Alan Tate, 'Urban Parks in the Twentieth Century', *Environment and History*, Vol. 24, No. 1, 81-101 (pp. 95-96)

⁴¹⁷ 'Long Range Master Plan Fort Lawton Park Map', *Dan Kiley and Partners*, dated 1972, Box 32, Folder 1, Jeanette Williams Subject Files, 1969-1993, Record Series, 4693-02, SMA.

⁴¹⁸ Kiley et. al., 'Discovery Park Master Plan', p.8.

‘promenading, sitting, people-watching, and quiet games like lawn bowling or croquet.’ Meanwhile, the play area, situated away from the scenic bluffs, native woodlands, and promontory views across Elliot Bay, for Kiley, served ‘for larger games of tennis, softball or baseball.’⁴¹⁹ Aside from this, much of the Master Plan commentary is devoted to discussing the natural landscape, and how interventions should be made to maintain these physical conditions and allow park users to reach and enjoy the various natural elements of the park.

Kiley’s Master Plan used trails to emphasise the natural condition of Discovery Park. For example, the original 1972 Master Plan stated that ‘bluffs on both north and south [edges of the park] will be undisturbed and only to the north will a few zigzag trails be developed.’⁴²⁰ Kiley included the establishment of trails through the park as a priority in the ‘Long Range Plan’ for the park. Trails offered the park user an opportunity to experience much of Discovery Park in its intended natural condition and stayed true to planners’ desire for minimal human intrusion of the park. In Kiley’s revised Master Plan in 1974, the architect stated that ‘a network of walk lines,’ would include ‘wilderness trails,’ that would take park users into the ‘hinterland’ of the park.⁴²¹ There would be some level of demarcation of routes, but with the maximum level of development being limited sections of ‘elevated boardwalks to preserve the [bluff] terrain down to the shoreland below.’⁴²² On a national, and more expansive level, the creation of the National Trails System in 1968 formed a blueprint from which hiking routes were administered in natural spaces. In this guise though, trails were often elements incorporated into National or State Parks, spanning hundreds, or thousands (in the case of the Pacific Crest Trail) of miles in length. Discovery Park mimicked these trails in composition and scaled them down to the urban park level and by using terminology such as ‘wilderness’ and ‘hinterland,’ planners and open space advocates alike further couched the park along natural lines. In 1975, the Discovery Park Loop

⁴¹⁹ Kiley et. al., ‘Discovery Park Master Plan’, p.9.

⁴²⁰ Kiley et. al., ‘Discovery Park Master Plan’, p.9.

⁴²¹ Dan Kiley, ‘Revised Master Plan’, 1 February 1974, p.3.

⁴²² Kiley et. al., ‘Discovery Park Master Plan’, p.9.

Trail was designated a National Recreation Trail, connecting with nine miles of traversable hiking routes within the park boundaries.⁴²³

The wording of Kiley's Master Plan is careful in balancing a preserved natural space and encouraging human use and interaction. 'The site is to be kept as open as possible... this makes a park that affords rest and relaxation, activities for varied tastes, and educational, cultural or scientific endeavours.'⁴²⁴ Kiley's Master Plan sought to design a park space that fulfilled a range of functions beyond the park solely being a wilderness space. As such, the Master Plan is careful in its terminology relating to wilderness, and refrains from using it. Instead, the intention of creating a 'civilized space in Nature' summed up this challenge of coalescing natural space and park space.⁴²⁵ This statement seemed noble on the part of the landscape architects but typified the subsequent contestation that took place at Discovery Park. The conceptual boundaries became blurred between what type of wilderness could be present within the park, as the architectural intentions, however measured and limited they may be in this instance, represented the human hand in shaping nature and the experience of nature for park users. In effect, what occurred at Discovery Park because of this Master Plan was a restorative exercise of removing as much human influence as possible, but a total re-wilding remained unattainable due to the constraints the space being a public park space.

The Magnolia Community Club, representing Magnolia residents, the Seattle district in which Discovery Park is situated, called for the Fort Lawton site to become an 'open space, [for] rest, and recreation,' in a letter to Mayor Wes Uhlman in 1970.⁴²⁶ This built on their recommendations issued in 1969 which stated that Fort Lawton should become 'a natural park,' and that 'buildings unsuitable

⁴²³ 'Discovery Park: Open Season on Open Space', *The Cultural Landscape Foundation*, [online] <<https://tclf.org/sites/default/files/microsites/landslide2017/discovery-park.html>>, [accessed 13 June 2018].

⁴²⁴ Kiley et. al., 'Discovery Park Master Plan', p.7.

⁴²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.7.

⁴²⁶ W. Eryle Day [President of the Magnolia Community Club], *Letter to Mayor Wes Uhlman*, 6 October 1970, Box 1 of 1, Friends of Discovery Park, 1968-1975, 2755-001, *University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections*.

to a park-like atmosphere [should] be razed.⁴²⁷ Those who advocated for an untouched natural space at the Fort Lawton location, including the Magnolia Community Club, also had the backing of the Sierra Club. During the 1960s, the Sierra Club took a proactive line of pursuing wilderness causes across the United States. In a letter to Mayor Uhlman, the local chapter of the Sierra Club spoke of ‘giving the public maximum access... with minimal damage to the environment and wildlife,’ along the Magnolia tidelands, the bluffs, and beach that were later incorporated into Kiley’s Discovery Park.⁴²⁸

During this period in the early 1970s, when the Master Plan for Discovery Park was published (and was receiving a degree of revisions that resulted in the 1974 Revised Master Plan for Discovery Park) and discussions over what the park should represent in the years ahead, a crucial step was taken to champion the cause of an open space, natural park. On the back of fresh concerns over the potential siting of a golf course within the boundaries of Discovery Park, one concerned local resident suggested the formation of a ‘Citizens for Open Space in Discovery Park,’ to rebut against the park being ‘misused in future years.’⁴²⁹ This call was taken seriously and on 4 December 1974, Donald Voorhees, a district judge and advocate for open space at Discovery Park, met with members of the Citizens for Fort Lawton Park and formed the Friends of Discovery Park.⁴³⁰ Voorhees and the Friends of Discovery Park’s mission was clear, ‘to defend the principles and philosophy found in the 1974 Discovery Park Master Plan.’ Building on this principle, the group’s by-laws cemented the Friends position both at the time, and for the decades to come:

⁴²⁷ Magnolia Community Club, ‘Ft. Lawton Recommendations’, 29 April 1969, Box 1 of 1, Friends of Discovery Park, 1968-1975, 2755-001, *University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections*.

⁴²⁸ Christina M. Powers [Chairman of Puget Sound Group of Sierra Club], *Letter to Mayor Wes Uhlman*, 13 January 1970, Box 1 of 1, Friends of Discovery Park, 1968-1975, 2755-001, *University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections*.

⁴²⁹ Ruth Moore, *Letter to the Editor of the Seattle Times*, 5 July 1974, Box 1 of 1, Friends of Discovery Park, 1968-1975, 2755-001, *University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections*.

⁴³⁰ The Citizens for Fort Lawton Park had formed in 1970, to establish a park on the Fort Lawton site. The group later became the Fort Lawton Citizens Advisory Committee, followed by the Friends of Fort Lawton Park to reflect the changes taking place at the site, in both name and vision.

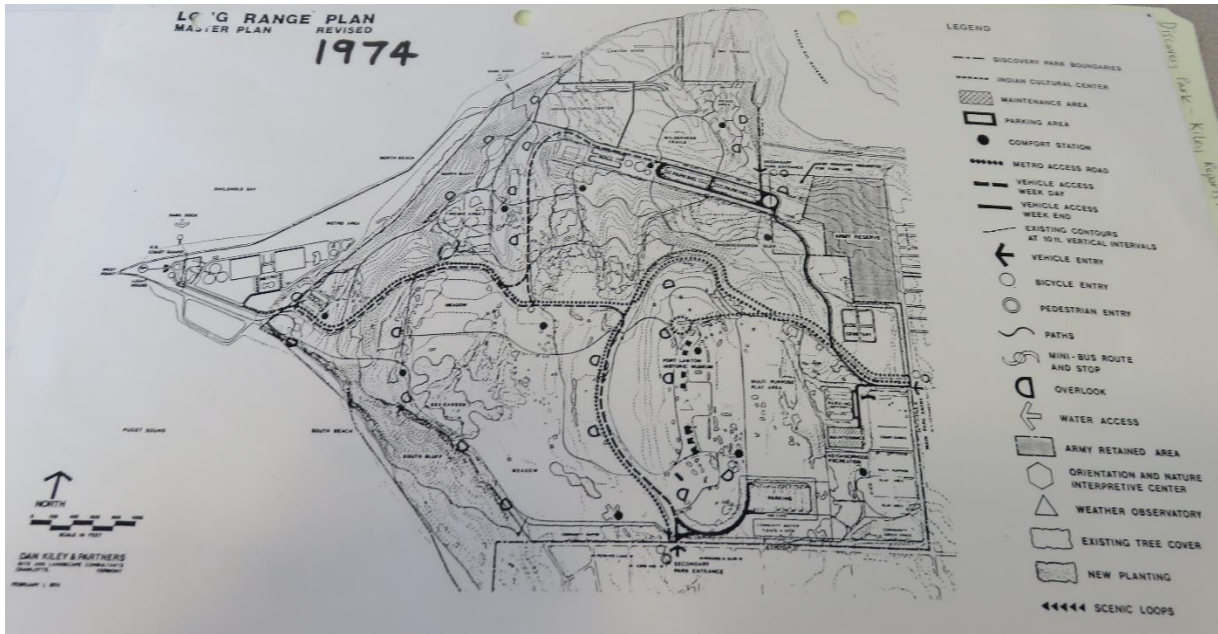
to defend the integrity of Discovery Park; to create and protect there an open space of quiet and tranquility, a sanctuary where the works of man are minimized, appearing to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, a place which emphasizes its natural environment, broad vista and unspoiled shorelines; and to promote the development of the park according to a master plan responsive to these goals.⁴³¹

The formation of the Friends of Discovery Park group occurred at a time when the cause for the creation of an undisturbed open space at the site began to be challenged by a handful of competing visions for the site. The most significant and drawn out of these contests centred around the fate of Fort Lawton's numerous military buildings.

The Challenge to an 'Open Space' future for Discovery Park

Largely absent from the 1972 Master Plan were detailed intentions on what to do with the considerable number of historic military buildings which were ceded to the city as part of the park space. Many of these buildings are excluded from the 1972 long range map that accompanied the written Master Plan document. However, when the 1972 long range map plan is compared against the revised Master Plan issued by Kiley's firm in 1974, a greater number of existing military structures are included and retained for long-term use, in addition to those proposed structures along the Mall. The existing buildings which are included in the 1974 revisions are located at the Parade Grounds in the heart of the Park. Within this collection of buildings, the map lists a 'Fort Lawton Historic Museum.'

⁴³¹ 'History', *Friends of Discovery Park*, [online] <<http://friendsofdiscoverypark.org/history/>>, [accessed 7 June 2017].



15. Long Range Plan for Discovery Park published in 1974.⁴³²

These buildings within the park did not fit into the ‘open space’ vision that many local citizens aligned with. For them, and groups such as Friends of Discovery Park, ‘Discovery Park is mandated as a “nature” park’ with the presence of the military buildings proving obstructive to their long-term view of the space.⁴³³ Photographic records illustrate the aesthetic and existence of Fort Lawton’s past in the park.

⁴³² ‘Long Range Plan, Master Plan’, 1974, 4693-02 Jeanette Williams Subject Files. Courtesy of the Seattle Municipal Archives.

⁴³³ Barbara McIntosh [President of Friends of Discovery Park], *Letter to Robert Kildall* [Chair of the Board of Park Commissioners], 13 January 1976, Box 50, Folder 6, Superintendent's Subject Files, 1936-1993, Record Series 5802-01, SMA.



16. Fort Lawton barracks buildings that remained after the transfer to Seattle Department of Parks & Recreation. 1 January 1972.⁴³⁴

Edward O. Wilson's studies on the relationship between humans and nature can give an insight into how wilderness advocates linked to the Discovery Park site came down on the side of argument that called for near, if not total, adjuration for wildness, and 'open space' in the park. The Biophilia Hypothesis posed by Wilson maintained that humans possess 'the innately emotional affiliation... to other living organisms.'⁴³⁵ The hypothesis continued that when separated from nature for a prolonged period (and Wilson couched this in generational terms):

The biophilic learning rules are not replaced by modern versions equally well adapted to contemporary technological features of life. Instead, they persist... atrophied and fitfully manifested in the artificial new environments.⁴³⁶

⁴³⁴ 'Discovery Park: Historic photos of Ft Lawton Buildings-- Ft Lawton barracks,' 170372, 1 January 1972, 5801-07 Department of Parks and Recreation Discovery Park Photograph Collection. Courtesy of Seattle Municipal Archives.

⁴³⁵ Wilson, *In Search of Nature*, p.165. Wilson also explored the concept of biophilia earlier during the 1980s in *Biophilia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984). More recently, Jeffrey Ackley has revisited the debates surrounding the biophilic hypothesis in relation to urban parks, see Ackley, 'Bringing Nature to Humans: How to Evaluate the Next Generation of Urban Parks and Green Spaces,' *Cities and the Environment*, 7, 1 (April 2014), Article 9, [online] <<http://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1145&context=cate>>, [accessed 26 April 2018].

⁴³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.165.

Those new environments have been interpreted by some, such as Alexander Wilson in *The Culture of Nature* to be theme parks such as Disney World, shopping centres, cinematic sets, touristic locations, and zoos.⁴³⁷ These types of public spaces, hatched and designed with the human hand, represented perfected versions of the original natural spaces, that are accessible and useable for the masses. The same vision of nature when layered into an urban park, such as Discovery Park, has been observable with the cause of pro-wildness advocates, such as the Friends of Discovery Park group. Though not taken to the extreme lengths as has been explored by Alexander Wilson and others, their cause to make nature the predominant focus of Discovery Park can be attributed to the fact that the Park itself was established against the backdrop of rapid urban growth, the expansion of suburbs and highways, and the perceived mounting disconnection between cities and nature in post-war urban America.

The 'biophilic' standpoint of those calling for the enhancement of nature above all other potential park uses in Discovery Park can be better understood when the trajectory of their efforts is considered historically since the 1970s through actions taken relating to design, form, and use. Parks, and in this case Discovery Park, offered a safety valve for citizens who felt the pressures of both city life and urban expansion. An attraction towards spaces of nature which some saw as being the primary function of a park, linked back to Dan Kiley's design intention to reconnect man with nature, in an age in which becoming increasingly associated with non-nature, through symbols such as vehicles, concrete, and environmental pollution.

The standpoint then for groups such as Friends of Discovery Park, and their open space allies when applied to the condition of Discovery Park in the early 1970s can be better understood in this light. For them, retaining or repurposing military buildings in the park would invite the prospect of greater

⁴³⁷ See Wilson, *The Culture of Nature*. Specifically, on the topic of authenticity and the restoration of nature, see Chapter 3, 'Nature at Home: A Social Ecology of Postwar Landscape design', 89-116, (114-115).

human use, the need for civic infrastructure, the invasion of automobiles and concrete into the park, and the potential for the commercialisation of a hitherto 'natural space.' Ensuring the survival of the military buildings could provide an opportunity for local historical education on the one hand. But on the other hand, it was felt that embarking on such a programme would detract from the natural credentials the park offered, as the City had invested time, money, and resources into the upkeep of the aging buildings.

In broad terms, the conflict over the fate of the former military buildings fell into two camps. Local media, such as the *Magnolia-Queen Anne Today* newspaper, couched the division between two influential city boards – the Board of Parks Commissioners, and the Landmarks Preservation Board. Reporting on proceedings in July 1976, the newspaper highlighted that 'the Seattle Parks Board [had] not supported the idea of a historic district in the park'; while the Landmarks Preservation Board 'favour[ed] the idea of carving out an area of the park and giving it historic designation.'⁴³⁸ While these positions are largely correct, and this reportage foreshadowed the disagreements that followed, there was a wider cohort of groups and individuals involved in the discussion over Discovery Park's future, with a varying degree of positions on the issue of retention or removal.

Illustrative of this was the Discovery Park Advisory Committee that stated in 1976, after consultation with its members that only a selection of buildings at the Park should be retained, notably those that were 'compatible' with the Master Plan (1974), and that any protected district should remain 'fairly small', and that the area not be labelled a 'historic one.'⁴³⁹ The Friends of Discovery Park group went further calling for 'all existing structures west of Washington Blvd [sic] be removed as soon as they come into the control of the city,' admitting that 'it is not possible to removal all structures from the

⁴³⁸ Bruce Olson, 'Another Challenge for Discovery Park,' *Magnolia-Queen Anne Today*, 28 January 1976.

⁴³⁹ Clayton Young, *Letter to David L. Towne* [Parks Superintendent] and *Robert E. Kildall* [Chair of the Board of Park Commissioners], 30 June 1976, Box 50, Folder 6, Superintendent's Subject Files, 1936-1993, Record Series 5802-01, SMA.

park, however desirable that might be.⁴⁴⁰ This accompanied a statement by Friends of Discovery Park group published in June 1976, that was categorical in its position. The statement communicated that ‘the City continue to adhere strictly to the Master Plan for Discovery Park as originally conceived, calling generally for the removal of Army structures from the Park.’ These positions were reflective of a broader constituency of vocal residents who wrote letters to official City offices related to the developments of Discovery Park, as well as the local media. Writing in January 1977, one resident argued that it was ‘premature... to create a historic district at the heart of Discovery Park.’⁴⁴¹

By 1976, Mayor Wes Uhlman acknowledged that ‘a great deal of interest and concern has been expressed... in recent months over the question of historic preservation at Discovery Park.’ Uhlman highlighted how two major City boards – the Landmarks Preservation Board, who advocated the retention of existing military buildings at the former Fort Lawton site; and the Board of Park Commissioners – a volunteer board that advised the City on parks issues – had ‘disparate positions with respect to the Discovery Park development.’⁴⁴²

Open space advocates benefitted from the fact that Robert E. Kildall, a long-time supporter of the natural space cause at Discovery Park both was on the Board of Park Commissioners and was that Board’s chairman during the 1970s. The Board’s position as an advisory group, composed of citizen volunteers, informing the Mayor, City Council, and Seattle Parks and Recreation, helped channel groundswell views on Discovery Park, up to the top echelons of Seattle governance and planning. The continuation of these calls throughout the 1980s and up to the present will be picked upon throughout

⁴⁴⁰ Barbara McIntosh [President of Friends of Discovery Park], *Letter to Robert Kildall* [Chair of the Board of Park Commissioners], 13 January 1976, Box 50, Folder 6, Superintendent's Subject Files, 1936-1993, Record Series 5802-01, SMA.

⁴⁴¹ Janet Anderson, *Letter to the Board of Park Commissioners*, 6 January 1977, Box 50, Folder 6, Superintendent's Subject Files, 1936-1993, Record Series 5802-01, SMA.

⁴⁴² Wes Uhlman, *Letter to J Meier*, 20 August 1976, Box 50, Folder 6, Superintendent's Subject Files, 1936-1993, Record Series 5802-01, SMA.

the rest of this chapter, but their open space position, that placed nature ahead of historic preservation was formulated during the 1970s.

Kiley and his firm submitted a revised Master Plan for Discovery Park in 1974, and his revisions incorporated much of the original Master Plan from 1972. Changes made to the Plan related mainly to park access, 'uses of future acquisitions of Army property', and the 'desired character' of other design elements including public amenities, Mall design, and recreational facilities.⁴⁴³ Building upon his earlier comments at the time of his selection as lead architect, Dan Kiley, in the revised plans was careful to highlight that

the quality of the Park landscape is due not to nature alone. Man and nature together have created much of the visual attraction of the Park, with a sense of continuity, evocative of the past. Today, better than ever before, we appreciate that no landscape is static – today's is a legacy from previous generations of Seattle.⁴⁴⁴

Here, it can be observed that Kiley's principle intentions and philosophy, first professed in his Man and Nature essay, threaded through the various phases of the design process. The 1974 revision document ought to be read in conjunction with the 1972 Master Plan to gauge the alterations in context. However, while both documents present Dan Kiley's ambitious vision for Discovery Park, the catch-all approach that sought to champion the site's natural credentials alongside efforts to appreciate historical *in situ* elements and cater for public needs, allowed for numerous groups to lay claim to the Park's long-term future.

⁴⁴³ Dan Kiley, *Letter to Wes Uhlman*, 1 February 1974, Box 32, Folder 1, Jeanette Williams Subject Files, 1969-1993, Record Series, 4693-02, SMA.

⁴⁴⁴ Dan Kiley, 'Master Plan 1974 Update', 1 February 1974, p.3, [online] <<https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/ParksAndRecreation/Parks/masterplanupdate.pdf>>, [accessed 27 April 2018].

Around the period in which Dan Kiley submitted his revised Master Plan for Discovery Park, the natural space constituency faced a new battle over what the space should represent and be used for. During 1975, proposals were put forward to construct a 150-acre golf course within the boundaries of the fledgling park. The back and forth tussle between open space advocates and golf course proponents played out internally through correspondence between the various parties, the city of Seattle, and the Parks Department, but also through local newspaper commentary. The West Point Golfers Association had by April 1975 amassed enough signatures to require a vote on whether an 18-hole course had public support. The President of the Friends of Discovery Park group, Barbara McIntosh pushed back against the growing calls for a golf course by stating that such a proposal would end up being ‘the first of many assaults’ Discovery Park would face, and questioned ‘will the original philosophy of the park design be followed?’⁴⁴⁵

One resident decried the attempts to ‘slice up Discovery Park for all kinds of special interests.’⁴⁴⁶ Their sentiments reflected the fact that in the relatively short space of time that Discovery Park had been planned and the space transferred from the military to the City of Seattle to 1977, several land use and spatial battles had been contested at the site. Against this backdrop of the Friends of Discovery Park group were held up as ‘revolutionaries’ by environmental attorney, Marvin Durning. Durning highlighted that by the mid-1970s, the group were part of a ‘quiet revolution’ in which ‘citizens have shown [that] they rank their concerns about the environment very high on their priorities.’ Durning encouraged the Friends of Discovery Park group and surmised that ‘people can see [that] this city is spreading out and they know they’re going to need somewhere they can walk outside among trees and sunlight and grassy meadows.’⁴⁴⁷ Durning’s remarks along with the lobbying of the Friends of Discovery Park group championed the cause for unimpeded access to open space at the Discovery

⁴⁴⁵ ‘Discovery Park Group Urges Vote on Golf Course’, *Seattle Times*, 4 April 1975.

⁴⁴⁶ Ruth Moore, *Letter to the Editor of the Seattle Times*, 5 July 1974.

⁴⁴⁷ Marvin Durning was a Seattle-based attorney who was named the Environmentalist of the Year for 1965 by President Lyndon B. Johnson. Marvin Durning as quoted in David Gering, ‘Durning Encourages Work of Friends of Discovery Park’, *Seattle Today Queen-Anne Magnolia*, 4 June 1975.

Park site, and that any attempt at development was in violation of that vision. Their cause had successfully secured hundreds of acres of parkland function from military hands, and in Kiley's Master Plan could see their open space dream becoming a reality.

Far from a done deal however, there was a divergence of opinion over a range of issues, including the siting of a building for the United Indians of All Tribes; a fervent campaign to prevent the construction of a golf course; the resistance of the expansion of the West Point Sewerage Treatment facility; as well as what would turn out to be only the first round of deliberations and debate over the fate of old military structures within the Park still jeopardising the open space plan. For some, the answer was simple, Discovery Park should have a flavour of everything for the enjoyment of all citizens. Seattle resident Ira M. Porter wrote to the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* newspaper to say that the 'citizens of Seattle to vote on how the land... is to be utilized... Give us the room for kids, picnic tables, games, museums for preserving the heritage of the old Fort Lawton.'⁴⁴⁸ A chorus of 'letters to the editor' during 1975 followed in a similar vein. 'Discovery Park should be "for everyone"... a well-kept revenue-producing golf course would be far more attractive along the southern boundary of the park than they unkept fields and bushes that we have now,' remarked one resident, while another asked 'how can anyone be opposed to tennis courts and a golf course in a huge park like Discovery Park that would benefit everyone?'⁴⁴⁹

The recurrent theme of such correspondence was that Seattle's newly acquired public lands should be put to use for the enjoyment of all city citizens, and that meant a park with a multitude of functions. This view illustrated the flexible and porous meaning of what an urban park should be and proved a headache for the open space purists. Later in 1975, plans for an 18-hole golf course that would have been developed on 150 acres of the Discovery Park site were rejected by a two to one margin when

⁴⁴⁸ Ira M. Porter, 'Chance for a Great Park', *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 8 April 1975

⁴⁴⁹ 'Park for Everyone', *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 10 April 1975; Mrs C.N., 'Discovery Park', *Seattle Times*, 9 April 1975.

put to voters.⁴⁵⁰ However, the problem of land use and development at Discovery Park persisted long after the decision. Fearing that the future development was in store for Discovery Park, Seattle writer Brandt Morgan argued that ‘nature’s power to reclaim and rejuvenate a civilized area and its civilized visitors with a sense of wildness’ was the Park’s major selling point.⁴⁵¹ In February 1977, an extended piece in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* on the state of Discovery Park surmised that:

Seemingly unending pressures to make the park into something besides a clean-air oasis in the municipal desert give naturalists nightmares and set people like Bob [Robert] Kildall, outgoing chairman of the Board of Park Commissioners, musing.⁴⁵²

Jeffrey Craig Sanders has explored the issue of Discovery Park as an open space, natural park and who that vision intended to serve in another struggle for spatial meaning that the site. Earlier in 1970, parts of Fort Lawton were occupied by over one hundred members and supporters of the United Indian People’s Council (later the United Indians of All Tribes, UIAT) that called for the land to be reclaimed as they argued that the land was formerly native land. Led by Bernie Whitebear, their vision for the Fort Lawton site was set out in a proclamation disseminated through *Helix*, an underground publication based in Seattle. The proclamation stated that the Council felt ‘this land of Fort Lawton is more suitable to pursue an Indian way of life,’ and proposed the establishment of an Indian University, an Indian Center for Ecology, and an Indian School, all-encompassing the aim of ‘show[ing] the beauty, dignity, and the spirit of our traditional Indian ways.’⁴⁵³ The clash between UIAT and the City culminated in an agreement in July 1971 to provide a 99-year lease for an Indian Cultural Center at

⁴⁵⁰ ‘Discovery Park History’, *Seattle Parks and Recreation*, [online] <<https://www.seattle.gov/parks/find/centers/discovery-park-environmental-learning-center/discovery-park-history>>, [accessed 4th August 2018].

⁴⁵¹ Brandt Morgan as quoted in Frank Zoretich, “‘Wilderness’ Use For Discovery Park Backed at Hearing’, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 18 May 1977.

⁴⁵² ‘Demands for Space Disturb “Quiet and Tranquility” of Discovery Park’, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 20 February 1977, p.82.

⁴⁵³ ‘Proclamation’ and ‘Geronimo’s Revenge’, *Helix*, 20 March 1970, *University of Washington Seattle Civil Rights and Labor History Project*, [online] <http://depts.washington.edu/civilr/FtLawton_press.htm>, [accessed 7 June 2018].

Discovery Park, which was opened as the Daybreak Star Cultural Center in 1977.⁴⁵⁴ The preamble of the lease agreement stated that the Center be 'Indian in spirit, simple, and honest in design, to enrich and be in harmony with the natural setting and uses of a city park at Fort Lawton,' highlighting a degree of accord with open space concepts that had been included in Kiley's Master Plan for Discovery Park.⁴⁵⁵

The National Historic Preservation Act passed in 1966 came to the fore during this next period of debate over the future of military property at Fort Lawton. Many of the buildings within Discovery Park had been constructed seven or more decades earlier and by the early 1980s, had deteriorated and required immediate attention should they fall into further disrepair. The National Historic Preservation Act sought to preserve historical sites across the country and set up a series of designations to aid the retention and preservation of sites and property deemed to be of historic value. One such designation was the National Register of Historic Places. On a city level, Seattle had set up a programme of historic preservation during the 1970s using 'Historic District' designations to support this aim.

In 1977, the first legislative steps to securing a future for the military buildings were taken. The Fort Lawton Historic District was established in January of that year by the Landmarks Board and set in motion what became a drawn-out process of historic preservation at the park.⁴⁵⁶ In April 1978, the United States Department of Defense nominated the Fort Lawton Historic District to the National Register of Historic Places. A total of 25 buildings were to be within the Historic District and they were

⁴⁵⁴ For more on the UIAT occupation of Fort Lawton and its subsequent engagement with Discovery Park see Sanders, 99-130 (p.128 and p.260 refer specifically to Daybreak Star).

⁴⁵⁵ 'Preamble to the Agreement between United Indians of All Tribes and the City of Seattle, November 1971, Box 34, Folder 1, Jeanette Williams Subject Files, 1969-1993, Record Series 4693-01, SMA.

⁴⁵⁶ Dates mentioned within City Ordinance 114013 (1988), SMA.

duly added to the Register in August 1978.⁴⁵⁷ The future of existing buildings not within the nominated district was in doubt. A Memorandum of Agreement was signed in October 1978 that required the City of Seattle to liaise with the Washington State Historic Preservation Officer about what path to take with regards to the nominated buildings.⁴⁵⁸ The main issue that arose from these decisions related to which properties would remain intact within the park, and then what would be done with them. In what followed, the Landmarks Board and the Parks Department faced a difficult conundrum with how each of their imperatives squared with the other's vision of the park. Debates over how historic preservation operated in-line with an open space vision for the park, especially as the latter had already been set in motion for several years by this point and Kiley's Master Plan was beginning to be adopted on the ground.

Heightened Divide: The Fate of Military Buildings at Discovery Park during the 1980s

Photographs of Discovery Park taken in the intervening period illustrated that some military buildings were demolished during this time. However, others attest to their continued presence during these ongoing discussions between the various constituencies involved in determining their future.

⁴⁵⁷ 'National Register of Historic Places – Nomination Form for Fort Lawton', 15 August 1978, *National Register of Historic Places Digital Archive*, [online] <<https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/a7de14be-51b5-4d65-b367-5a821bdec128/>>, [accessed 27 June 2018].

⁴⁵⁸ Dates mentioned within City Ordinance 114013 (1988), *SMA*.



17. Discovery Park: Officer and NCO quarters - Officers' quarters. 1981. ⁴⁵⁹



18. Building demolition at Discovery Park. 1980. ⁴⁶⁰

These photographs exemplified the lack of coherency towards siding with either an open space or historic preservation vision for the park. Jeffrey Craig Sanders has argued that the 'symbolic and physical triumph of the urban wilderness aesthetic in Seattle was never complete', adding that 'tensions between wilderness and history persisted.' Tensions not only persisted but exacerbated

⁴⁵⁹ 'Discovery Park: Officer and NCO quarters-- Officers quarters, 1981', 170312, c. 1981, 5801-07 Department of Parks and Recreation Discovery Park Photograph Collection. Courtesy of the Seattle Municipal Archives.

⁴⁶⁰ 'Discovery Park: Building Demolition-- Demolition, 1980,' 170393, 1 January 1980, 5801-07 Department of Parks and Recreation Discovery Park Photograph Collection. Courtesy of the Seattle Municipal Archives.

during the 1980s. There exists a cache of constituent letters regarding the status of Discovery Park during the early part of the decade, as well as responses to proceedings of the City, the Parks Department and Landmarks Board, and the familiar advocacy groups that were vocal during the 1970s which illuminate the clash over park function during the 1980s.

The Magnolia Community Club raised the issue of incompatibility between the recent historic designations and the Discovery Park Master Plan in 1979, arguing that it believed ‘that it is not necessary for the City to create a local historic district in the center its unique open space park.’ The Club also argued that there were historical inconsistencies between what and what was not designated a historic district in wider Seattle region in relation to military buildings, adding that ‘Lawton was never fully developed’ as a fort.⁴⁶¹ A document published by the National Parks Service, entitled ‘National Urban Recreation Survey’ in 1978 produced findings that further supported the open space advocates at this juncture. The report stated that ‘people expected’ that ‘open space lands should be recognized as essential components of urban growth and of efforts to revitalize our cities.’⁴⁶² The report went on to add that ‘the primary value of most open space (as compared to recreational lands) in and near urban areas is not recreational; it is environmental and economic.’⁴⁶³

The question over who should administer preservation efforts, and determine their course was raised by the Discovery Park Advisory Committee, who argued that ‘since the Department [of Parks and Recreation] was responsible for the fiscal management of the park including any structures therein,

⁴⁶¹ Joel Haggard [President of Magnolia Community Club] to [Councilmen] *Letter to George Benson, Tim Hill, Sam Smith, and Michael Hildt*, 27 January 1979, Box 17, Folder 6, Michael Hildt Subject Files, 1973-1985, Record Series, 4636-02, SMA.

⁴⁶² ‘Findings’, *National Urban Recreation Study: Summary Report*, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978), p.12

⁴⁶³ ‘Technical Report Number 1’, *National Urban Recreation Study: Executive Report*, (Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1978), p.59.

that it should be in the position to make decisions.⁴⁶⁴ The Discovery Park Advisory Committee had allied itself to the cause of open space and strongly supported the overtures of this park vision set out in both the Master Plan (1972) and the Revised Master Plan (1974).⁴⁶⁵

A document published by the National Parks Service, entitled 'National Urban Recreation Survey' in 1978 produced findings that further supported the open space advocates at this juncture. The report stated that 'people expected' that 'open space lands should be recognized as essential components of urban growth and of efforts to revitalize our cities.'⁴⁶⁶ The report went on to add that 'the primary value of most open space (as compared to recreational lands) in and near urban areas is not recreational; it is environmental and economic.'⁴⁶⁷ The Survey gave national credence to the supporters of open space at Seattle's Discovery Park and voiced a broader undercurrent of public concern for the future of such spaces in the American city. It's careful separation of environmental values from recreational purposes fed into the discussion over the future of the protected buildings in the Fort Lawton Historic District. Plans were tabled that explored opportunities to adapt and reuse the buildings, for historic, educational, and recreational use. Not only had the buildings received a level of city and national protection, open space advocates feared that their future reuse would clash with the tranquil and minimalist approach to park creation outlined in Kiley's Revised Master Plan (1974).

In February 1983, an 'Adaptive Reuse Study for the Fort Lawton Historic District' was published that explored future options for the remaining military buildings within Discovery Park, that had been included in the Fort Lawton Historic District, designated in 1977. The report, prepared by Richard C.

⁴⁶⁴ Sue Fleming [Chairperson of Discovery Park Advisory Committee], *Letter to Walter Hundley* [Parks Superintendent], 30 January 1979, Box 17, Folder 6, Michael Hildt Subject Files, 1973-1985, Record Series, 4636-02, SMA.

⁴⁶⁵ Sue Fleming, *Testimony before Sub-Committee on Parks and Recreation*, 17 January 1979, Box 17, Folder 6, Michael Hildt Subject Files, 1973-1985, Record Series, 4636-02, SMA.

⁴⁶⁶ 'National Urban Recreation Survey: Summary Report', p.10.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.28.

Locke, a city consultant, found that the 25 buildings earmarked for Historic Districting were in 'relatively good shape' and 'in need of only minor repair.' The upshot for the City in preserving the buildings went beyond the historical motives, as Locke also found that the barracks building, once renovated could be repurposed as a 'park interpretive center and a conference and environmental center.' Retained officer's quarters were envisioned as having a new lease of life in the form of 'vacation housing. Total renovation costs were estimated to be in the region of \$3.4 million.⁴⁶⁸ Nestled in the heart of Discovery Park around the former parade grounds, the buildings that were included within the Historic District were argued to have the potential to serve environmental, educational, and according to Locke's report, economic benefits for the city.

The backlash against Locke's reuse survey was immediate. Robert Kildall, the long-standing advocate for Discovery Park's undisturbed nature credentials raised concerns over Historic Seattle's handling of the historic preservation efforts. He hypothesised the potential selling of the buildings to another developer and profiting from 'Historic Property investment and tax credits', as the organisation was a 'quasi public-private' venture. The potential for further development aggrieved the open-space lobby and for Kildall, 'the public outcry would never stop.'⁴⁶⁹ Following this, in July 1983, 'A Response' document was presented to the Parks Department by those groups traditionally opposed to historic preservation attempts. The response, which coalesced the views of the Discovery Park Advisory Council, Friends of Discovery Park, the Seattle Audubon Society, and Magnolia Community Club was forensic in its deconstruction of Locke's reuse report. Not only would such a vision for the park chime against the original intentions of Kiley's Master Plan of 'an open space of quiet and tranquillity for the citizens of this city,' it 'threatened' the vision of an open-space natural park', and conflicted with existing park programs. The response highlighted how environmental education programs were already in operation at the Park, and how historical displays 'could easily be accommodated in one or

⁴⁶⁸ 'Keep the Buildings at Lawton, Report Says', *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 4 February 1983.

⁴⁶⁹ Robert Kildall, 'Unending Outcry', *Seattle Times*, 29 March 1983.

two of the Officer's Quarters,' as 'a full-scale museum would also duplicate the Fort Lewis museum,' located in neighbouring Tacoma.⁴⁷⁰ Other concerns raised in the Response related to traffic congestion, vehicular parking issues, overreach in expected services offered by the District reuse in relation to existing infrastructure, and 'adverse impacts' on the surrounding Magnolia community.⁴⁷¹

At this juncture the battle lines between the long-standing contingent of 'wilderness' advocates and the historic preservationists were stark. This moment illustrated the conceptual conflict ongoing in what an urban park should represent, especially when one of Discovery Park's size and scope is concerned. Also drawn into this disagreement were character assertions of either camp. Local journalist, Cynthia H. Wilson captured the heightened divisions and wrote at the time that 'some old fort buildings in a wilderness park provoke a civil war between nature lovers and historic preservationists.'⁴⁷² In her article she attempted to address the perception of the battle being waged over the future of Discovery Park. By the mid-1980s, the 'nature lovers' were increasingly cast as the 'elitist', 'wealthy residents of Magnolia' who sought to 'keep the public out of their neighbourhood.' Wilson quoted city historic preservationist Art Skolnik in the piece, with Skolnik remarking that 'It's [Discovery Park] an urban facility and [the idea] of minimizing the number of people in a city park is un-American, even almost racist.'⁴⁷³ Increasingly, the image of the dispute over Discovery Park's form was being branded as an affluent neighbourhood protecting their local park from wider city interests, an example of what is often called NIMBYism ('Not In My Back Yard') in a depreciative fashion.⁴⁷⁴ In response, Wilson argued that the efforts of championing 'wilderness' over 'traffic and organized activity' was 'not an elitist stance.' She also pointed to how Stanley Park in Vancouver, British Columbia

⁴⁷⁰ Seattle Board of Park Commissioners, et. al., 'Fort Lawton Historic District Adaptive Reuse Survey, A Response', (July 1983), p.1, 3, Box 35, Folder 5, Jeanette Williams Subject Files, 1969-1993, Record Series, 4693-02, SMA.

⁴⁷¹ Ibid. p.3-20.

⁴⁷² Cynthia H. Wilson, 'The Battle of Discovery Park', *Seattle Weekly*, c. 1983, Box 35, Folder 5, Jeanette Williams Subject Files, 1969-1993, Record Series, 4693-02, SMA.

⁴⁷³ Art Skolnik as quoted in Wilson, 'Battle of Discovery Park'.

⁴⁷⁴ "Nimby, n." *OED Online*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, June 2018), [online] <www.oed.com/view/Entry/245895>, [accessed 12 August 2018].

managed to deftly balance leisure functions ‘without losing [the] value of open spaces.’ Wilson added that ‘the question is not whether history should be forgotten, but how it should be remembered on a site of incomparable natural beauty.’ The question is a central one, and a conceptual one too. Finding an answer for how to serve the needs of the public, and the needs of nature proved to be a long, continuous headache for Seattle’s Department of Parks and Recreation.’ For Wilson, ‘the fact that environmentalists... have taken extreme anti-development positions... should not obscure the fact that this time they are right.’⁴⁷⁵

In the Response report to the Adaptive Survey proposals put forth by Richard C. Locke, the authors point out that one group involved in crafting the document, Friends of Discovery Park, had a membership of ‘over 300 persons.’⁴⁷⁶ On the whole, that number seems both sizeable locally, but not fully representative of neither Magnolia, nor Seattle as a whole. What does come across more clearly is that the Friends of Discovery Park contingent, along with the other pro-open space groups (which no doubt included crossovers of membership), had a strong voice in proceedings. Adaptive reuse did not continue apace, and as further correspondence to the Parks Department shows, the Department was capitulating too easily to the concerns of a vocal minority. Writing to the then Parks Superintendent Walter Hundley, two Magnolia residents, Margaret Coughlin and L.M. Shoemaker expressed their dismay at three issues within the handling of the Fort Lawton Historic District and Discovery Park plans. Chiefly, they charged that Hundley’s Department were not giving ‘sufficient information’ to residents relating to the wider design and documental history of the site. They requested that Magnolia residents received information on Environmental Impact Surveys (EIS), historic Olmsted reports from 1910 on adaptive reuse and Army proposals for reuse in a nature setting

⁴⁷⁵ Wilson, ‘Battle of Discovery Park’.

⁴⁷⁶ Seattle Board of Park Commissioners, et. al., ‘Fort Lawton Historic District Adaptive Reuse Survey, A Response’, (July 1983), p.3, Box 35, Folder 5, Jeanette Williams Subject Files, 1969-1993, Record Series, 4693-02, SMA.

that had been published in 1974.⁴⁷⁷ Olmstedian visions of nature and park space had often informed park policy and thinking in Seattle, and Coughlin and Shoemaker felt that this tradition was being sidelined during anti-development proceedings.

Secondly, Coughlin and Shoemaker argued that 'The Parks Department refuses to consider alternatives' in terms of how the park could be used for the enjoyment of the wider public. Boy scout events, hiking enthusiasts, landscape gardeners, and caretaking all require a level of facilities which could be housed in existing military buildings, according to Coughlin and Shoemaker. Finally, the pair were troubled by the Parks Department's handling of EIS's which they felt should be written to accommodate a broader spectrum of environmental and planning views, in which local citizens could 'offer their assistance in Fort Lawton/Discovery Park planning.'⁴⁷⁸ The delay in finding a solution to what to do with the former Fort Lawton buildings meant that their continue non-use led to them to fall into further decay. In the summer of 1984, urban historian and local planner Arnold F. Swanberg was that concerned that the balance was shifting towards the demolition of further military buildings within the park that he wrote to Dan Kiley to intervene. Swanberg argued that designers 'have a responsibility to history at least to the point where a design is not manipulated to suppress the and deny the historical record.'⁴⁷⁹ His letter to Kiley was damning of the efforts to sink plans of adaptive reuse and historic preservation:

Open space parks and historic preservation are not incompatible goals; your plan is being exploited by those selfish few who actually to see Discovery Park used as little as possible by as few people doing as few things as possible.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁷⁷ Margaret Coughlin and L.M. Shoemaker, *Letter to Walter Hundley*, 18 May 1983, Box 35, Folder 5, Jeanette Williams Subject Files, 1969-1993, Record Series, 4693-02, SMA.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁹ Arnold F. Swanberg, *Letter to Dan Kiley*, 18 June 1984, Box 17, Folder 7, Michael Hildt Subject Files, 1973-1985, Record Series, 4636-02, SMA.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

The problem of finding a workable solution of what to do with the buildings protected in the Fort Lawton Historic District continued through the mid-1980s, and into the latter part of the decade without a compromise or resolution. However, a renewed effort to find a middle ground that reflected Swanberg's remarks of compatibility between open space and historic preservation came in May 1986, when the Discovery Park Development Plan was published. This Plan built upon the 1972 and 1974 Master Plans and aimed to reflect the change in both vision and park function that had manifested in the intervening period. While taking a lot of inspiration from Kiley's original Master Plan, it read as a more conciliatory document than its predecessor, and included several key concessions from the earlier design statements that pushed for a solely open space aesthetic.

Chiefly, the 1986 Discovery Park Development Plan sought to present a 'flexible' vision for the Park while simultaneously it stressed that 'the guiding principles that were valid in 1972 are still valid today and will retain validity in the future.'⁴⁸¹ When Kiley submitted the 1972 Master Plan to the City of Seattle, his accompanying letter was careful to note that while 'the plan is intended as a framework which should be maintained,' during the redevelopment of Fort Lawton into a municipal park, the plan should be 'kept in line with changing conditions, that cannot be foreseen.'⁴⁸² The changing conditions in hindsight came in the form of the myriad of land use conflicts that played out during the 1970s and 1980s, which have been detailed above. In that respect, the 1986 update document had validity, and grounding as a mechanism for governing the shifting interests that were present in the park, notably the need for historic preservation, recreational facility, and the original intent for open space wildness.

⁴⁸¹ 'Discovery Park Development Plan', May 1986, *Seattle Department for Parks and Recreation*, [online] <<http://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/ParksAndRecreation/Parks/MasterPlan1986.pdf>> [accessed 27 August 2018].

⁴⁸² Daniel Kiley, Letter to Mayor Wes Uhlman, February 1972, part of Dan Kiley, Ian Tyndall, and Peter Ker Walker, 'Discovery Park Master Plan', *Seattle Parks and Recreation*, (November 1972, repr. 1992) 2-3. [online] <<https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/ParksAndRecreation/Parks/masterplan1.pdf>>, [accessed 27 August 2018].

When it came to the scenic and natural beauty of the park, much of the 1986 Discovery Park Development Plan document reiterated the details given by Kiley in the earlier 1972 Master Plan:

The greatest single attribute of this site is its natural beauty. In the development of this park the most important signal consideration must therefore be the preservation and enhancement of that beauty. The inclusion of any improvement which detracts from that beauty must be weighed with the greatest of care.⁴⁸³

However, there were several additions to the vision that concerned the Fort Lawton Historic District, and the idea of 'structured open space', the latter of which will be explored shortly. The developmental objective intent continued to say that:

The aim of design for all structures shall be to be compatible with the site and subordinate to the natural environment; any structures that cannot do this or that should be hidden must be screened and buffered so that they will have the least adverse effect upon the natural beauty of the site.⁴⁸⁴

The document, and therefore Seattle's Department of Parks and Recreation recognised that the Fort Lawton Historic District had a place within the boundaries of the park, and planned for its future place as such.

The 1986 update was keen to stress that future stakeholders in the Park's development over subsequent years had an 'obligation', and must 'respect the concerns of the surrounding neighborhood and any residents within the Park.' The Magnolia Community had their 'concerns' regarding the development of this now 'regional park' but understood the trappings that came with

⁴⁸³ 'Discovery Park Development Plan', May 1986, p.4.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

this status.⁴⁸⁵ The report added that “Discovery Park is intended to be an open space park with only those facilities and developments, which are absolutely necessary for the enjoyment of the open space, experience.”⁴⁸⁶ By adding in extra facilities or park furnishings, the charge could be made that the scope for the Park to be viewed as a wilderness space was diminishing, meanwhile some within the Magnolia Community feared that these additions would attract greater numbers of visitors, further denting the ‘wild’ principles that pro-open space advocates called for.⁴⁸⁷

Two years after the 1986 update, Ordinance 114013 ‘approv[ed] a plan for the preservation of certain structures in the Fort Lawton Historic District in Discovery Park.’ The Ordinance built upon the foundations of the pro-preservation contingent that had secured city Landmark Status in 1977 and listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. As such, city and state funds would put set aside for the preservation of six buildings, that would be ‘maintained at a reasonable cost and without significantly affecting the open space concept of the Park.’⁴⁸⁸

The six buildings that would receive funding for preservation were The Administration Building (Building 417), The Post Exchange Gymnasium (Building 733), The Band Barracks (Building 734), The Civilian Employees Quarters (Building 755), The Guardhouse (Building 759), and The Stables (Building 916). However, preservation efforts would be limited to exterior presentation and measures to improve security and prevent potential criminal or fire damage.⁴⁸⁹ Reading through the wording of the Ordinance, it is evident that efforts were being made to follow a course that met the needs of preservation concerns without antagonising the proponents of open space in the Discovery Park

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., p.16

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., p.3.

⁴⁸⁷ Magnolia Community Club president, Mike McGavick feared greater parking, park traffic, and leisure facilities linked with the Park and the Indian Cultural Center would ‘violate the basic goals for the Park for quiet and tranquillity, see Mike McGavick, Letter to City Council, Box 32, Folder 9, Jeanette Williams Subject Files, 1986-1986, Record Series, 4693-02, SMA.

⁴⁸⁸ Seattle City Council Ordinance No. (1988), p.3.

⁴⁸⁹ Seattle City Council Ordinance No. 114013 (1988), p.4.

environs. 'Adaptive reuse' was not recommended or sanctioned in this Ordinance as it was argued that the minimal preservation of the six buildings would 'better enhance' the 'historic character' of the District.⁴⁹⁰ Considering earlier developments, the contested nature of the site on the whole may have also factored into the proposed action. Writing as the Ordinance bill was about to go to a vote, Swanberg wrote to the *Post-Intelligencer* that the 'compromise' of preserving the six buildings was only taken as it matched the costs of demolishing all the structures. Swanberg added 'too bad the structures aren't appreciated for historic value.'⁴⁹¹ Almost two decades on from the initial plans to open the former military site as a Park, longstanding conflicting issues over place, preservation, and nature seemed to be continuing into another decade.

By the mid-1990s, Friends of Discovery Park were more pre-occupied with the encroachment of other city services on Discovery Park's open space. Metro, the organisation running the West Point Sewage facility to the North of the Park had its expansion proposals approved. Between 1991 and 1995, a secondary sewage treatment facility was constructed. In spite of the decision, Friends of Discovery Park played up the Park's natural credentials hailing that since the verdict was taken to expand the treatment plant many other Seattleites enjoyed the Park. At the turn of the century, the Army turned over more acreage to Discovery Park which was followed by the immediate 'reforestation' of the 500 Area Block wood for park use.

More recently, adaptive reuse of the retained historic buildings at Discovery Park have resurfaced. Initially this came in the form of proposals to allow the city's homeless population to have access to a portion of these buildings. The Base Reutilization and Closure recommendation in 2005 included provisions to provide housing for homeless individuals as part of a 38-acre site that contained the U.S.

⁴⁹⁰ Seattle City Council Ordinance No. 114013 (1988), p.4.

⁴⁹¹ Arnold Swanberg, 'Too Bad Structures Aren't Appreciated for Historic Value', *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, 26 June 1988.

Army Reserve Center.⁴⁹² What exists of the historic buildings today include the Fort Lawton Chapel building along with structures that used to house the officers during military use. When visiting the site in 2017, it was evident that development of the retained buildings had gone beyond the ‘minimal’ preservation recommendations outlined in City Ordinance 114013. The officer quarters have been converted into well-presented private accommodation that are considered prime real estate within the green surrounds of Discovery Park.

Maya Leites, who wrote a thesis on the historic preservation of the Fort Lawton buildings outlined the opportunity to create a multi-use arts venue within the remaining structures.⁴⁹³ Leites, when interviewed for by the Queen Anne and Magnolia News, remarked that

Historic preservation is the most sustainable way for us to use buildings... It makes more sense to restore buildings, even if they are un-updated, and to allow the communities to use those existing buildings. You can look at it as a sustainable act. Instead of continuing to build new buildings, why not use the ones that you have?⁴⁹⁴

Leites went on to establish the Discover Arts in the Park group in 2018, a non-profit that supported community-based concert, with the intention of hosting further arts and educational events at Discovery Park in the years ahead.

⁴⁹² For more specific and technical detail on the existing buildings, see the Fort Lawton Landmark District document, [online] <<https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/Neighborhoods/HistoricPreservation/HistoricDistricts/FortLawton/FortLawton-Guidelines.pdf>>, [accessed 4 August 2019].

⁴⁹³ Maya Leites, ‘A Music Campus at Fort Lawton in Discovery Park’, (masters thesis, University of Washington, 2014). [Online] <<https://digital.lib.washington.edu/researchworks/handle/1773/26549>>, [accessed 4 August 2019].

⁴⁹⁴ Leites, as quoted in Danielle Chastaine, ‘Discovery Park’s debatable future’, *Queen Anne and Magnolia News*, 14 April 2019, [online] <<http://www.magnolianews.net/Content/News/Homepage-Rotating-Articles/Article/Discovery-Park-s-debatable-future/26/538/40158>>, [accessed 30 July 2019].

When observing the situation of Discovery Park at the time of writing, it is clear to see that the contested visions for the Park have not been resolved. The original conflict between open-space nature and historic preservation during the late-1960s through to the 1980s has morphed into a more complex disagreement over place at the Park. It appears that today, there are more stakeholders, agents, and interests over the Park than at any other point in its tumultuous history. Where this chapter began its story, the intersection between pro-open space and pro-historic preservation on the one hand looks as though compromise, in some sense has won out. However, the totality in which the open-space advocates and related groups viewed the space that was slowly abandoned by the military in the latter half of the twentieth-century is what has been compromised. Their mission to preserve the entire site for the purposes of wildness, nature, and tranquillity have gradually ebbed away.

That is not to say that there is no open space left at the Park. In fact, hundreds of acres of natural space have been left untouched at the Park, and look set to remain that way for years to come. Nature trails, both intentional and ad-hoc have been created at Discovery Park which takes the Park user on a meandering jaunt through the depths of nature's overgrowth and towards pristine vistas. It is easy to get lost within the Park boundaries, find quiet spots and promontory points that overlook Elliot Bay. However, the presence of human habitation is also evident. Daybreak Star remains a focal point for Indian culture, West Point Sewage facility still operates and cleans Seattle's waste, former military buildings have been converted into family homes and are marketed for would-be buyers. Similarly, dog-walkers bring their pets, sports and leisure facilities allow for the undertaking of recreational activity and games, and the Discovery Park Visitor Center attracts people to understand the educational and environmental merits of this vast urban park. After all, that is what Discovery Park is. It is an urban park, located on the fringes of one of Seattle's wealthiest residential districts. It is easily accessible by car or by public transport, and the heart of the downtown is within reach.

More broadly, the trajectory of Discovery Park, from planning to conception and from opening to the present, has provided a large cohort of interested parties to ponder over and investigate the meeting point between nature and urban. It's contested history has been an intriguing experiment in the making of place and how spaces that would traditionally be off-limits to human understandings of nature – that of a military site – are reimagined in the minds of their users, and refashioned in a post-military time. Jeffrey Craig Sanders argued, in relation to native spaces and wild places in Discovery Park that 'the symbolic and physical triumph of the urban wilderness aesthetic in Seattle was never complete.'⁴⁹⁵ Cast more extensively both across the city and beyond the 'battle' between Native American claims and the Friends of Discovery Park's vision of uninterrupted wilderness, this sentiment is acutely applicable. As was the case with Gas Works Park, when one land use came to an end, some wanted to re-place that's space with nature that had occupied the space prior to the human land use. Similarly, others appreciated that vision, but sought to preserve the human history of the site. At both Gas Works Park and Discovery Park, finding the place of both nature and human land use proved a difficult task – one in which a viable solution that appeased all involved would be unlikely to obtain, and as time has progressed, has proved contentious too.

⁴⁹⁵ Sanders, p.128

Conclusion:

The park as a contradictory or conflicted space

As this survey of selected Seattle parks has shown, perceptions over what a park should look like and what it constitutes is a conflicted topic. From their earliest conceptions, parks have been contradictory spaces in several ways. Early park creations were quite different from the conception of parks today. Rather than being public, parks of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries were private, and very little urban land was public. Ornamental gardens and country parks were lined with walls, hedgerows, fences, and gates, providing an enclosure for private consumption. Yet even in more recent times, parks represent both a public space and a private place. Numerous individuals roam through parks, passing one another, even interacting. But parks are often the place of collective private activity, be that in the form of an individual seeking solitude, or a group of people who are familiar with one another using the park as a site of contact.

In the three types of parks explored in this thesis, the spaces created became points of contact for communities of individuals, where such focal points hitherto existed for the general public. Gas Works Park today represents a thriving, adaptable green space that hosts city-wide occasions, but is enjoyed perhaps more privately for a Seattle citizen walking their dog on a weekend afternoon. Freeway Park in the heart of the downtown has increasingly crafted out a place for itself that encourages the coming together of different Seattleites. Whilst also being a useful pedestrian conduit between districts that had been dissected in the 1960s, the park now prides itself as an outdoor community hub for residents. It holds regular events that explore themes of art and nature, music and dance, and simply just meet and greets for anyone who desires a momentary escape from urban life to enjoy a quiet conversation in the now matured nature-meets-concrete space. Meanwhile at Discovery Park, the broad cohort of users referred to earlier is testament to the importance of this park's place in Seattle's urban fabric. The existence of such a large-scale green space so close to the centre of the city means that it receives regular recreational use and is of interest to nature enthusiasts alike.

Parks have also been given labels such as 'green space,' or 'the lungs of the city,' yet they are created landscapes, inventions which reflect our ideals of perfect nature. At all three of the examples included here, the spaces have very much been created in the image of human thought. They offer an idealised place (and in the case of Discovery Park perhaps a compromise on space) that has attempted to use the concept of nature in the park to establish a new social area for the people of Seattle. For Gas Works Park and Freeway Park, the nature credentials often attached to parks have been adopted as the choice antidote to the excesses of urbanism, industrial legacy, and freeway connection. This is particularly pertinent in a time when Seattle is facing rising land values, increasing competition for space in a crowded urban centre. It is, in my view, a legacy of a century-long undercurrent of a parks culture that has been established and nurtured through a tumultuous twentieth century for Seattle. A city that had its origins as a provincial outpost for hinterland resource extraction, in the course of a century and a half, has grown exponentially into an icon of utopia for some, and a world-recognised urban location for business, culture, and politics.

This was a parks culture that was first conceived in the grandiose designs of the Olmsted Brothers, of which their legacy has proved a mixed one in the city. While not all their grand boulevards and sprawling parks came to fruition in Seattle, a great number of them did either shortly after their report was presented to the city, or in spirit through the myriad of subsequent park ventures, both large and small. The parks culture that has been cultivated slowly over the course of the twentieth and twenty-first century has interwoven itself into wider perceptions of the city both locally and beyond. A city that has for a while now been held up as a tech-focused (IT and communications), forward-thinking (liberal politics), future-gazing (1962 World's Fair and the Space Needle), trend-setting (Starbucks and cool-living) city has viewed park experimentation and expansion favourably and embraced the aforementioned park spaces as part of the wider Seattle image.

In returning to some of the comments I made in the opening remarks of this thesis, Seattle reacted to the reorganisation of its urban form in the mid-twentieth century in innovative ways. First, that the parks raised here have often proved to be some of the earliest, or perhaps even the first examples of their kind. In doing so, the concepts of the parks mentioned in this thesis became example-setters for later parks elsewhere. The adaptive reuse of decaying industrial spaces has been embraced across the world, particularly in North America and Europe as a way of reconciling with the loss of a past industrial heritage. Gas Works Park was created as the crest of the regeneration wave rose in world cities following deindustrialisation. Its experimental concept of using natural means to deal with contamination informed environmental scientists of a potential new way to deal with the toxic by-product of previous industrial success. Likewise, a number of US cities have begun to seriously consider the option of 'lidding' sections of freeways that pervade their urban centres, with Seattle weighing up the option of extending Freeway Park to create a ribbon park lid along the downtown section of Interstate 5.

Secondly, this thesis has attempted to show Seattle park spaces as a means of bridging the divide in oppositional views of space. Across the city, Seattle used the concept of the park as a mechanism for reconciling conflict in urban space. At times, conflict has taken the form of a conceptual conflict between what constitutes a park space, while other times this notion has played out through disagreement between groups on the ground and how spaces should be physically designed. On a conceptual level, the seemingly polar distance between what industry is and what nature is was one conflict that would be taken on by Richard Haag and Gas Works Park. The result was a space that retained industrial iconography of the past, set within carefully considered natural surrounds. Nature also reclaimed some of the industrial space at Gas Works Park both through soil remediation and the visible presence of vegetation wrapped around rusting boilers and machinery. At Freeway Park, pedestrian access was restored to a place that had been rendered devoid of anything that was not vehicular use. The conflict that required reconciling subsequently at this park was the aspect of safety

in a largely concreted space, and to an extent the pervasion of road noise into a park space. Active disagreement over the trajectory of the Fort Lawton site brought out into the open a very public conflict of views over historic preservation in an untamed natural space. It can be argued that at Discovery Park, the debate continues as to the accommodation of recreation and historic preservation within the Park boundaries, which recent attempts to establish a music venue there being met with fierce opposition.

One aspect that is clear through these park spaces is that the ideal of a park is not strictly defined. Parks are malleable spaces, and ultimately, they are of human creation and desire. The case for this has been made in terms of large-scale national parks around the United States and the World, but the same can be said for urban parks too. Often, the park is seen as the cure to the ills of urban life, or a contrasting vision of what constitutes the city and the urban environment. Nature in urban park spaces will continue to be a contentious and conflicting topic. However, the Seattle-based examples that have been under discussion here, offer an insight into how parks are fluid in concept, and can provide an opportunity for both reflection on urban design and a means for compromise and reconciliation in the urban realm.

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