

# Big Rock Park Master Plan



Submitted to:  
Bellingham Parks and Recreation  
June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2001

Prepared by:  
**Sharp and Diamond**  
**Landscape Architecture and Planning**

With assistance from:  
Urban Art Management  
Wilson Engineering

# Big Rock Park Master Plan Report

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## Final Report

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**ORIGINAL**

Prepared for:

**Bellingham Parks and Recreation**

Prepared by:

**Sharp & Diamond Landscape Architecture**

**Larry Diamond**

**Randall Sharp**

With assistance from:

**Urban Art Management**

**Leesa Strimbicki**

**Wilson Engineering**

**Bill Hunter**

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1. Summary of Community Consultation



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Owned and managed by the City of Bellingham's Parks and Recreation Department, Big Rock Park is situated in the northeast part of the City in the Silver Beach neighbourhood. It covers approximately 11 acres of wooded hillside overlooking Lake Whatcom. Adjacent school and City managed lands makes the park part of over 20 acres of green space and wildlife habitat in the Lake Whatcom watershed. Of the 11 acres of park, 8.29 acres are undeveloped forest. The remaining 2.7 acres are developed and comprise the Big Rock Sculpture Garden.

Big Rock Garden plays a unique role in Bellingham as its sculpture and botanical park. The existing tree cover consists of west of Cascades Douglas fir forest mix under-planted with numerous Japanese maple, rhododendron and other ornamental plant species. Existing park facilities offered in the garden include aggregate surfaced trails, parking, a restroom structure, an enclosed glazed gazebo, a small shrine (used as a volunteer's office), a small storage building, an arbor and sculptures. At the south edge of the park is a greenhouse which serves community gardening and horticultural groups including people with disabilities.

Big Rock's reputation in the Pacific Northwest art community (including British Columbia) as a place to exhibit artwork is growing. The annual Gardens of Art Exhibition features show pieces for display and purchase. The exhibition draws hundreds of people each year to celebrate art, to meet artists and to award individuals for their community contribution. The Garden currently contains 20 permanent and extended loan works of art and plans to include as many as 100 in the future. Most recently, an exhibition of sculptural works by the Canadian artist, David Marshall features thirty bronze and marble pieces. Local, regional and international visits are increasing every year.

Other important events include summer concerts (up to 250 people per concert), the annual Mothers Day celebration that draws many visitors and a special gardening program held at the greenhouse for the developmentally disabled. Anticipated developments include a Korean War Children's Memorial plus improvements to circulation.

Presently, there is no master plan for the park. There is no universally accessible pathway linking important parts of the Garden. Artwork and park facilities are being located without the benefit of a plan.

Following a competitive proposal call, the City's Department of Parks and Recreation selected a consulting team in April, 2001, headed by Sharp & Diamond Landscape Architecture of Vancouver, B.C. to undertake a master plan. Its intent, to guide future development in the park and to provide visitors with a high quality recreation experience. Key goals of this plan are a universally accessible route, new park uses, plus opportunities and recommendations for the display of artworks.

## 1.2 The Planning Process

The following steps have been followed in evolving a plan for Big Rock Park:

- An inventory and analysis of the park in coordination with the Department of Parks and Recreation and a Steering Committee;
- Development of three options for Park development including a Steering Committee review and a public open house to obtain comments and preferences from the community;
- A preferred plan that reflects comments by both the Steering Committee and public;
- A second public open house and staff review of the preferred plan;
- A computerized plan, phasing strategy and cost estimate plus a final report.

### **1.3 Acknowledgments**

The consultants would like to thank members of the Big Rock Park Steering Committee, members of the Sculpture Committee, staff of the Bellingham Department of Parks and Recreation as well as members of the public who attended open houses and who provided thoughtful, constructive comments to help guide the plan.

## **2. Big Rock Park: Existing Conditions**

### **2.1 Site Context**

Big Rock Park is located in the northeast part of the City, a short distance from the north end of Lake Whatcom. The park is accessed from Sylvan Street via Balsam Lane, a narrow paved public right of way. Balsam culminates in a modest hard surfaced parking area. A townhouse development abuts the north side of Balsam and then a wooded area, to the east. The Garden comprises a little over one quarter of the park.

Big Rock Garden has a number of aggregate surfaced trails. Most are flanked by trees, ornamental shrubbery and ground covers. These pathways date from the Garden's prior use as a nursery. As well, a trail leads eastward from the parking area, past a pump house and water storage tanks to an undeveloped woodland. This pathway splits in two, with one branch meeting Academy Street while the other loops around the north side of the Silver Beach Elementary School. There is also a street right of way east of the school that links with the Academy.

North of the park are several residential parcels on large lots and undeveloped woodland. Single-family residences lie to the south, east and west. The park is situated within the Lake Whatcom Watershed. Generally, the surrounding context is a mix of suburban and semi-rural landscape. From a view deck in the southern part of the Garden there are vistas toward Lake Whatcom and wooded hillsides beyond. From the west part of the Garden, there are several views toward Bellingham Bay and the San Juan and Gulf Islands.

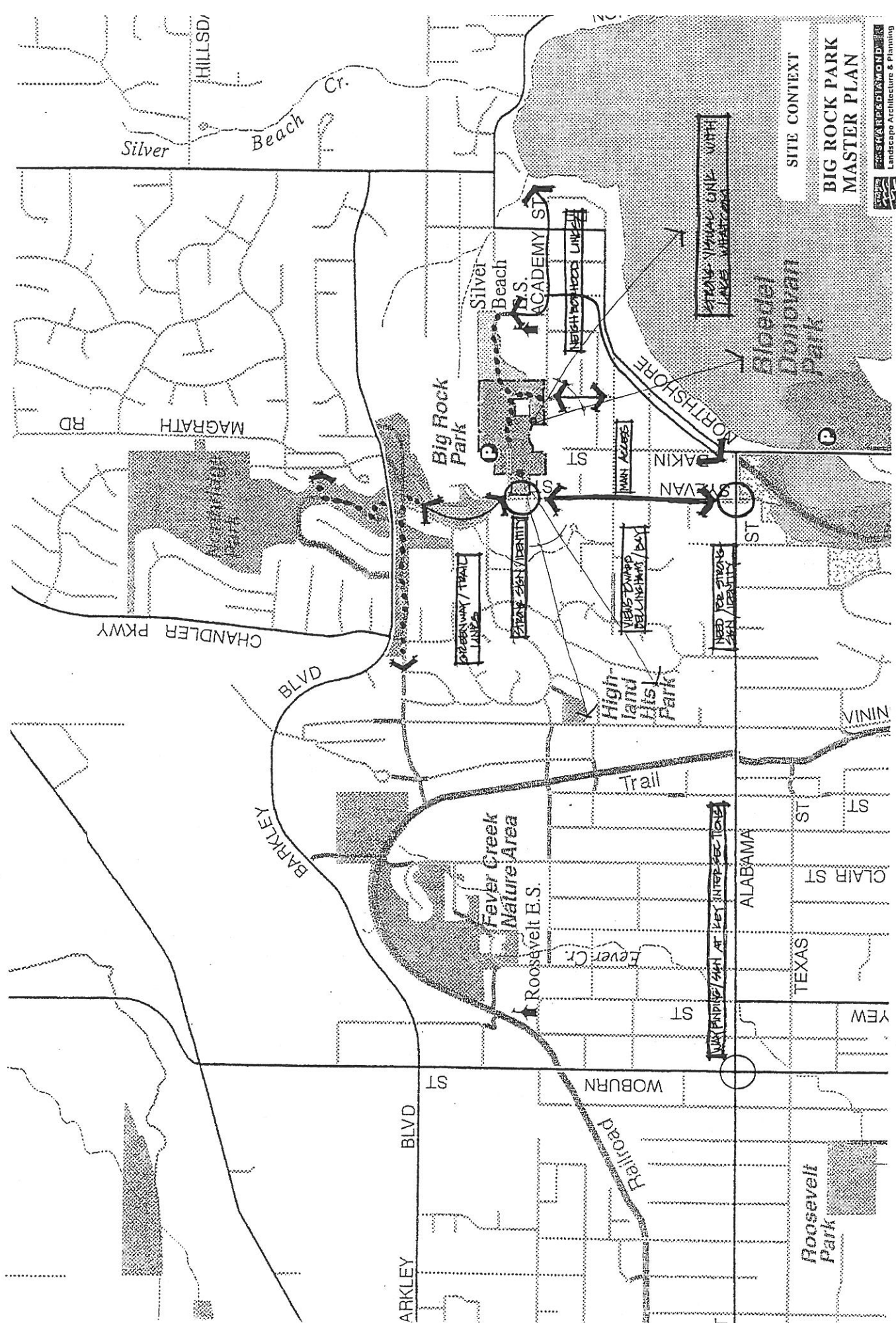
Currently, there is no immediate pathway connection to the City's extensive trail and greenway network. However, by proceeding north on Sylvan a short distance, there is a greenway with links to Northridge Park and the Railroad Trail. This trail provides connections to Fever Creek Nature Area, Bloedel Donovan Park, Whatcom Falls Park and Sunnyland Memorial Park.

South of Big Rock Park, Sylvan Street intersects Alabama Street with vehicular connection to Bloedel Donovan Park, a lakefront community park with many facilities. Alabama is the main arterial traffic passageway that leads to the Sylvan Street intersection and Big Rock Park.

There is an urgent need for better signs leading to the park and to indicate its entrance. As well, trail connections to nearby greenways and other City pathways is needed to improve access.

### **2.2 Access and Parking**

The principal access for most visitors is via Balsam Lane. The initial part of this narrow street has a steep profile before assuming a more gradual slope. Therefore, Big Rock Park is not directly accessible by wheelchair occupants. Several car owners have also complained about "bottoming" on the steep rise while bicyclists must use a low gear.



Some local residents access the park on foot from the woodland pathways that link up with Academy Street. As noted, there presently is no pathway to the trails north of the park.

In addition to the modest hard surfaced parking area opposite the Garden entrance, there is some aggregate surfaced parking adjacent to the western most water tank. This parking is used extensively during major events. Beyond, is a narrow aggregate drive that encircles the second water tank. Therefore, parking on site is limited. During large events

such as the Mothers Day celebration, many people are bused to the park from the large parking lot at Bloedel Donovan Park. Others park in the parking lot of the Silver Beach Elementary School and walk in.

Analysis indicates a need for some parking expansion, clarification of entrance and new, prominent signs to assist in directions to and within the park. Access for wheelchair occupants, bicyclists, and pedestrians needs improvement.

## **2.3 Circulation**

The Garden is accessible through aggregate footpaths. Only portions of these are currently accessible for wheel chair occupants or others with limited mobility. The present pathway system, while offering many choices, has little sequence or clarity and it is difficult for a first time visitor to know where particular art pieces are located.

A steep pathway, which is normally, gated, links the sculpture garden with the greenhouse to the south. Several paths lead to the west area of the Garden that is currently under utilized. Several paths have low timber retaining walls, most of which are in poor repair as they are probably at least twenty five years old, dating from the site's original use as a nursery.

A review of the existing pathway system shows a need for clarification, the possible closing of some redundant routes and the establishment of a major ADA loop that accesses the entire garden.

## **2.4 Terrain**

Most of the Garden has low to moderate slopes of 10 percent or lower. However, there are several locations of steeper terrain, particularly along the south edge of the site and in the southwest corner. Immediately west of the present restroom location is another area of steep slope.

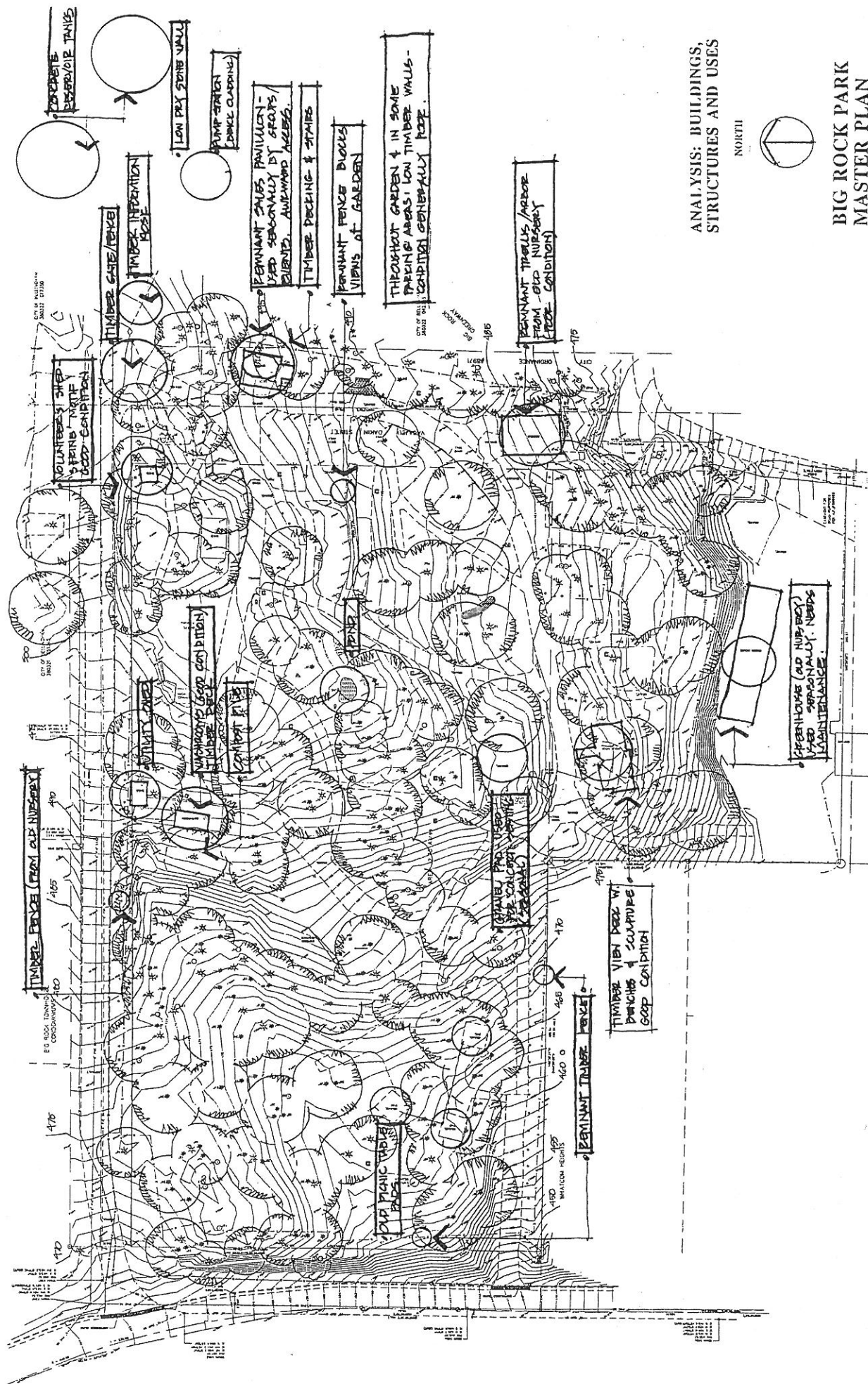
While the areas of slope over 10 percent are limited, the present paths have many sections that are not ADA accessible. To meet the ADA criteria, slopes should preferably not exceed 5 percent. A pathway can attain a slope up to 8.3 percent (1 foot rise for 12 feet of horizontal distance). However, it would require handrails to meet code.



# BIG ROCK PARK MASTER PLAN

ANALYSIS: BUILDINGS, STRUCTURES AND USES

NORTH



GREENHOUSE (AND NURSERY)  
USED SEASONALLY. NEEDS  
MAINTENANCE.

TIMBER VIEW BOAC W.  
BENCHES & SCULPTURE  
GOOD CONDITION

PERMANENT TRINER PENCE

GRAVEL PAD - USED  
FOR CONCRETE WORKING

OLD PICNIC TABLE  
FADS

WACHSBERG (Good condition)  
TIMBER DECK

VOLUNTEERS SHED  
"SKIN" WITH  
GOOD CONDICTION

PERMANENT STAGES PAVILION -  
USED SEASONALLY BY GROUPS/  
EVENTS. AWARD ACCESS.

TIMBER DOCKING & STAIRS

PERMANENT FENCE BLOCKS  
VIEWS OF GARDEN

THROUGHOUT GARDEN & IN SOME  
PARKING AREAS; LOW TIMBER WALLS -  
CONDITION GENERALLY POOR.

PENNANT TRELLIS / ARBOR  
FROM - OLD NURSERY  
(POOR CONDITION)

Pump station  
(check reading)

FROM BIRAS JAD NOT

CONCRETE  
RESERV/OIR TANKS

CITY OF KILLBUCK  
MAY 22 6 17 PM

The western portion of the Garden is at a lower elevation than the main part where most of the art is displayed. This part, although very attractive and somewhat more open, is under utilized. There is excellent potential to expand uses to this area.

There are also several locations of exposed sandstone rock outcrop. Examples of this feature occur at the present entry to the Garden, on the north edge near the present restroom, in the west area and at the entrance where Sylvan and Balsam intersect. These outcrops, if exposed, could become park features.

## **2.5 Vegetation**

Overstory composition is mostly coniferous including Douglas fir, Western red cedar and Western hemlock with some Bigleaf maple. Over time, the Garden has been planted extensively with rhododendrons, azaleas and ground covers such as vinca. There are also extensive plantings of Japanese maples. In late April through early June, the Garden is at its brightest when most of the rhododendrons and azaleas bloom. A second period of accent color occurs in the fall when the autumn hue of the maples lends a beautiful note to the Garden.

The vegetation mix at Big Rock Garden is highly valued by Bellingham's residents. Comparisons are frequently made with Van Duesen Gardens in Vancouver, B.C. Future planning should protect overstory trees and build upon the color and themes of plantings already established.

## **2.6 Views**

Certain locations in the Garden afford views toward Lake Whatcom and toward downtown and Bellingham Bay.

In the southern part of the Garden, an existing view deck allows vistas of the lake, hillsides and the neighbourhood south of the park. From the western (lower) portion of the park, there are locations that offer excellent views to the west. In clear weather, even the Olympic Range on the Olympic Peninsula can be seen as well as downtown Bellingham and Bellingham Bay.

In developing a plan for the Garden, these and other views should be protected and enhanced.

## **2.7 Structures and other Built Components**

Most structures in the Garden are remnant from the site's earlier use as a nursery. Included are an information kiosk at the Garden gate (immediately south of the parking area), a timber fence which surrounds the Garden, a small glazed pavilion with a timber deck, a restroom building, a small shrine which also serves as a volunteer office, a small storage shed and a timber view deck overlooking Lake Whatcom. The shrine reflects a Japanese motif and is constructed without nails. Originally intended to be a pump house, it was donated by a local resident, Pat Moran. Some additional detailing is to be added, plus a memorial plaque. In the center of the

Garden is a small pond. In the southeast corner is an old arbor, once used for the sale of shade plants. In the western part of the Garden, there are three old concrete pads.

Behind the restroom is a steep pile of compost, the result of many years of storage. This material needs a more suitable location outside the Garden's boundary.

Below the steep slope in the southern part of the Garden is a greenhouse, used extensively by community groups.

Two large water tanks and one pump house are situated on public works managed land immediately east of the garden. The water tanks are concrete surfaced while the pump house is brick clad. A stone retaining wall forms part of its service access to the pump house. In addition, there are metal electrical kiosks, one immediately west of the water tanks and a second affiliated with the pump house. A tall pole serves as an aerial support for radio-telephone communication.

A site review of these built components suggests:

- The need for a new artist designed sign kiosk, gateway and fencing that reinforces the theme of this unique art park;
- A renovation or new restroom structure (there may be the need for more than one restroom);
- A more prominent and roomy volunteer office. The present shrine is small and cramped;
- A prominent pavilion for receptions and special events. The present glazed structure is small and not ADA accessible;
- A safe location for maintenance equipment and the storage of materials;
- The need for an outdoor place for concerts and talks;
- Improvements to the vicinity of the greenhouse that permits parking and also features the gardening activities that take place;
- Screening of the water storage tanks into the theme of the park through artist involvement.

## **2.8 Art and Sculpture Display**

The principal use of the Garden is the display of sculpture, permanent, on loan, and special exhibitions. While there are many fine pieces by local and regional artists (some which are on sale), it is difficult for the visitor to ascertain which are permanent, which are on loan and the significance of each piece. As well, it appears that some artwork is located by chance rather than by deliberate siting. When large visiting exhibitions occur, there appears not to be sufficient space for their display, although both Bellingham Parks and Recreation and the Big Rock Garden Sculpture Committee

have done an excellent job of responding to the challenging demands of such exhibitions with available financial and spatial resources.

There is a need to clarify the displays and perhaps separate the permanent collection from those on loan. If the circulation within the Garden is improved, major pieces could be used to define and terminate site lines along the pathways and reinforce the overall landscape sequence. The display of sculpture could also be extended into the western part of the Garden which is very beautiful yet presently under used. Extending the garden to the east would also add substantially to its ability to host visiting shows without crowding them and allow for better appreciation of individual pieces. "Outdoor rooms", spaces defined by vegetation and other landscape elements could be created to accommodate groups of sculpture on loan as well as alcoves whereby people could appreciate sculpture on a one to one basis.

The unusual setting of Big Rock Garden, its growing role in the community and in the Pacific Northwest also suggests that an integrated art approach, whereby all facets of the park reflect and reinforce its artistic potential be initiated in the design of all its components (see Section 4 of this report).

### **3. Site Issues**

Through site analysis, through meetings with the Steering Committee, through discussions with Bellingham Parks staff and through community consultation, a range of issues have been identified.

#### **3.1 Overall Access and Wayfinding**

- Big Rock Garden is a community resource of increasing interest to the broader population in Bellingham, throughout the northwest and internationally.
- There is a lack of directional signage from the Interstate 5 and from other parts of Bellingham to the park.
- The turn off sign from Alabama Street to Sylvan Street is small and obscure. It is easy to pass it without notice.
- There is a need for a distinctive logo or sign system and for a distinctive sign at the Balsam Lane entrance.

#### **3.2 Entrance, ADA Access and Circulation**

- If feasible, there is a need for improved parking.
- There is an urgent need for ADA access within the Garden.
- Bicycle, foot and transit access should be encouraged. Better links to Bellingham's trail and greenway network are desirable.
- Circulation within the garden should be clarified. Some paths could be closed while others are maintained.
- Low timber walls need replacement where they occur.
- Better integration of the east and west garden should be established.
- Improvements in the vicinity of the greenhouse should be encouraged.
- Exploit opportunities to improve seating along pathways and in relationship to sculptures.
- Re-organization of exhibits: positioning of sculpture along pathways to reinforce site lines, use of alcoves and outdoor rooms.

#### **3.3 Site Servicing**

- Location of hose bibs and irrigation improvements.



- Possible sewer and water extensions (if a new restroom is provided).
- Providing access for maintenance vehicles and for the delivery and removal of sculpture.
- Relocation of compost storage and other materials.
- Lighting: potential for up lighting or other accent illumination.

### **3.4 Structures and other Built Components**

- ADA Accessible restroom and volunteer office.
- Need for a new pavilion: receptions, Korean War memorial either combined or separate.
- New amphitheater and stage: potential of locating this amenity in the west portion of the Garden.
- New gateway and arrival/entry court. Location and character of this amenity.
- Materials and character of walls, fences and paved surfaces.
- The potential for new viewpoints and the exposure of natural rock outcrops.
- New uses for the west portion of the Garden, currently under utilized.
- Possibility of a water feature, active or implied.

### **3.5 Vegetation**

- Maintaining and enhancing the health of overstory trees.
- Possible thinning or removal of unstable smaller trees in expansion areas.
- Enhancing horticultural quality through additional understory plantings and color themes.

### **3.6 Integrated Art**

- Appropriate reinforcement of the art park image through shelters, signs, fencing, furnishings and other components.
- Involving the artistic community and educational resources.
- Potential treatment for the water tanks and Communication Tower.

### **3.7 Garden Expansion**

- The potential for garden expansion to the east to accommodate sculpture and other art works plus special exhibitions.
- Improved greenway connections and potential of adjacent watershed lands.

These site issues are addressed through the planning and conceptual design process.







The character of Big Rock Park includes a variety of views and experiences.

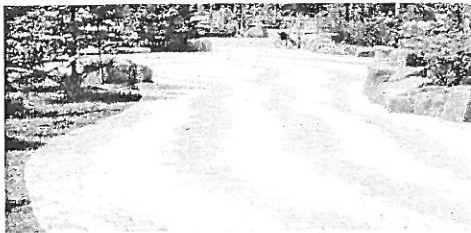
## 4. The Concept of Integrated Art

Big Rock's reputation in the Pacific Northwest as a place for the display of discrete pieces of art makes it unique and an asset to the City of Bellingham. Even more importantly, this park displays not only the work of local and national artists, but international artists as well.

The master plan recognizes this fact by enlarging the Garden in order to better accommodate the annual Gardens of Art Exhibition and other important exhibits as well as to enlarge permanent collection.

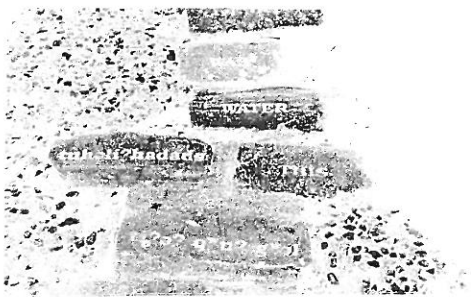
The consultant team has identified the opportunity for Big Rock Park to become a total art experience. In other words, many parts of the park such as fencing, pathways, and benches could become art "pieces", or, what is referred to as "integrated public art".

The last decade has witnessed an evolution in the role of the artist with regard to the definition and enhancement of the urban and natural environment. There is increasing emphasis on artistic statements, which are more encompassing, and inclusive of the communities that use and visit a place. Artists have begun to enter into a more collaborative process with designers, public leaders and the communities that use a space. This collaborative effort generates a process of "integrated" art and creates public places, which are more relevant to the community and the people who use it.



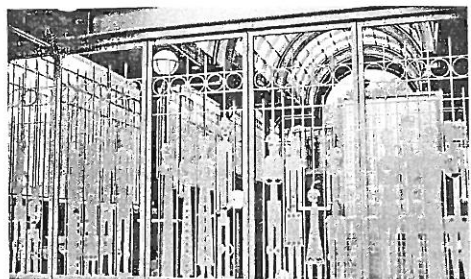
Integrated public art is about the ability of an artist to work together with a community in identifying ideas and concepts, which affirm an increased sense of identity for the people who use and populate a space. It is creating public art, which is integrated into the site both contextually and visually.

Integrated art has the ability to provide a memorable experience, create a sense of discovery, and above all to be timeless. In effect, public art can become the stepping-stone for creating a dynamic community and fostering cultural tourism.



The integrated art opportunities for Big Rock Park can serve to strengthen the discrete sculptural works and the natural environment.

This can be achieved by adding artists to the



design team during the detailing and construction phase. What transpires is a more enhanced landscape treatment. Walkways could be of varying materials with more interesting textures and colour while still addressing the need to ensure universal access.

Fencing could still have an Asian flavor but with a different emphasis in terms of what takes place between the posts and the top and bottom rails.



What is especially unique about integrated art is that it provides an opportunity for the community to get involved. Community art is especially significant with respect to the water tower at the entrance to the park. The community could create an art piece with the help of an artist to enhance the water tower and many of the landscape elements.

Community art increases ownership of the site, and develops closer relations among community members thereby fostering safer neighborhoods and reducing vandalism. It also helps to strengthen neighborhood relations by encouraging more social interaction. These relations alleviate concerns cited by parks maintenance staff relative to the safety and upkeep of the park.

In order to successfully initiate public art within an urban context it is important to create a Public Art Master Plan. The Master Plan sets the framework for the art pieces by indicating the art opportunities, an associated budget, method of competition to select artists and a phasing program, which would coincide with the overall development of the park. Generally, the master plan is developed prior to the construction and detailing phase of the project. The plan establishes the opportunity for an artist to be added to the design team and sets the tone for budgeting requirements and further artistic involvement.

## 5. Conceptual Options

Through discussions with the Steering Committee and Bellingham Parks and Recreation three concept options were identified for investigation. These are:

- Modest Improvements
- Cul de sacs (or Alcoves)
- Eastern Garden Expansion

### 5.1 Modest Improvements (Enhance Existing Garden)

The existing boundaries of the garden remain. The pathways are made more universally accessible by introducing a 5 percent main pathway that is partially shared by existing pathways. The west part of the Garden is utilized for a small amphitheater with a platform for talks or small musical performances. A viewpoint is introduced to enjoy the vistas to the west. A river rock swale becomes an implied water feature. Sculpture is also expanded into this lower area.

Larger sculptures are re-organized along the main pathway so that the permanent collection occurs at key locations such as where the pathway changes direction. A series of outdoor rooms are organized beneath the trees for the display of traveling or special exhibits.

This scheme also suggests an improved entrance and possible re-location of the restroom toward the entrance. Several options for a new park pavilion and for integrated art in new Garden appointments and signage are depicted. The scheme also tests the idea of expanding the existing parking area to the north.

### 5.2 Cul de sacs (Relocate Entrance/Alcoves)

This scenario explores the creation of a network of alcoves, which encourages a more intimate viewing for sculpture. Again, a new ADA accessible pathway becomes the organizing spine for these alcoves. The pathway accesses the lower garden for displays. However, the existing area in the vicinity of the view deck is improved for an outdoor performance venue. Several of the steeper minor paths are recommended for closure. New fencing, an entry sign and other improvements are illustrated.

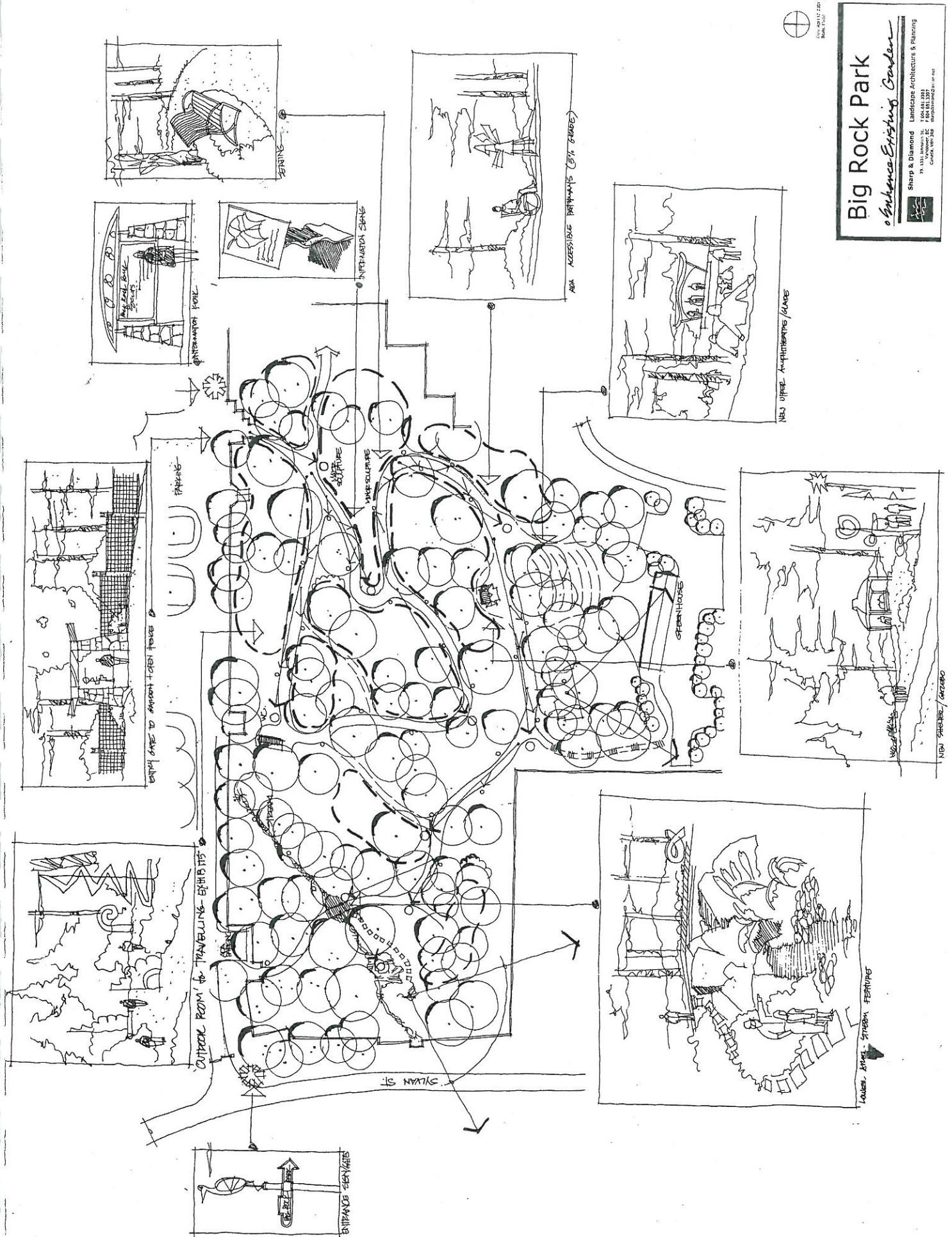
### 5.3 Garden Expansion (Terraces and Expansion)

A more ambitious proposal entails expanding into parkland immediately to the east, creating a new garden entrance, court space and ADA loop pathway. It links with an existing path near the old arbor (which becomes a new display site). This expansion creates additional opportunity for display of sculpture although some smaller (less than 6 inch diameter) trees may be lost.

The present parking area is maintained with some modest eastward expansion. However, parking is increased in the aggregate surfaced area near the water storage tanks. A promenade of trees forms a floral link with the rest of the park. Two ADA spaces are proposed with a second gate in the west part of the garden off Balsam Street.

A new park pavilion and a combined new restroom and volunteer office are illustrated along with new entry signs, seating and a new equipment storage structure.

These three options have been color rendered for review by the Steering Committee, Parks staff and the public in an advertised open house.

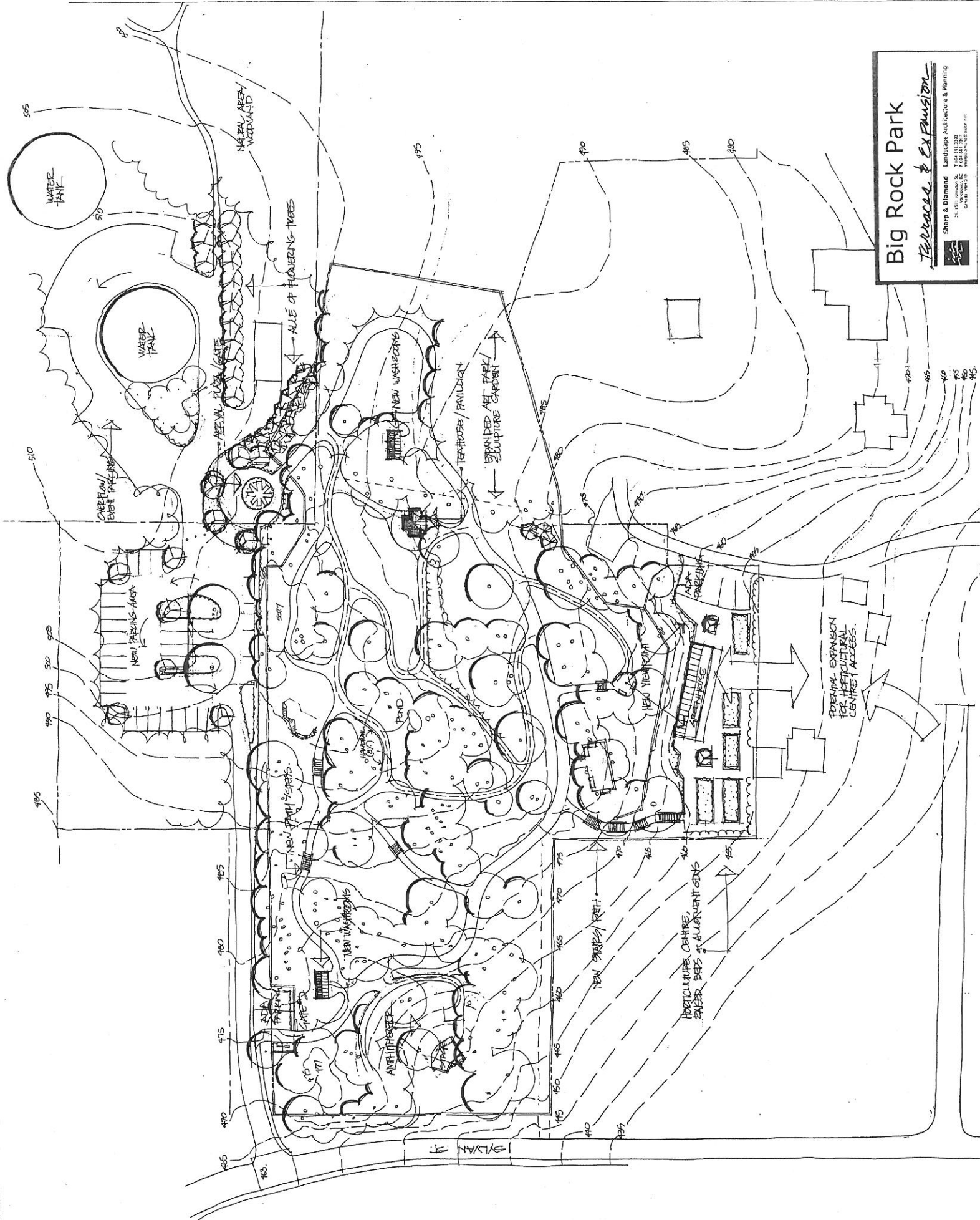


# Big Rock Park

*Enhance Existing Garden*

Sharp & Diamond Landscape Architecture & Planning  
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## 6. Preferred Plan

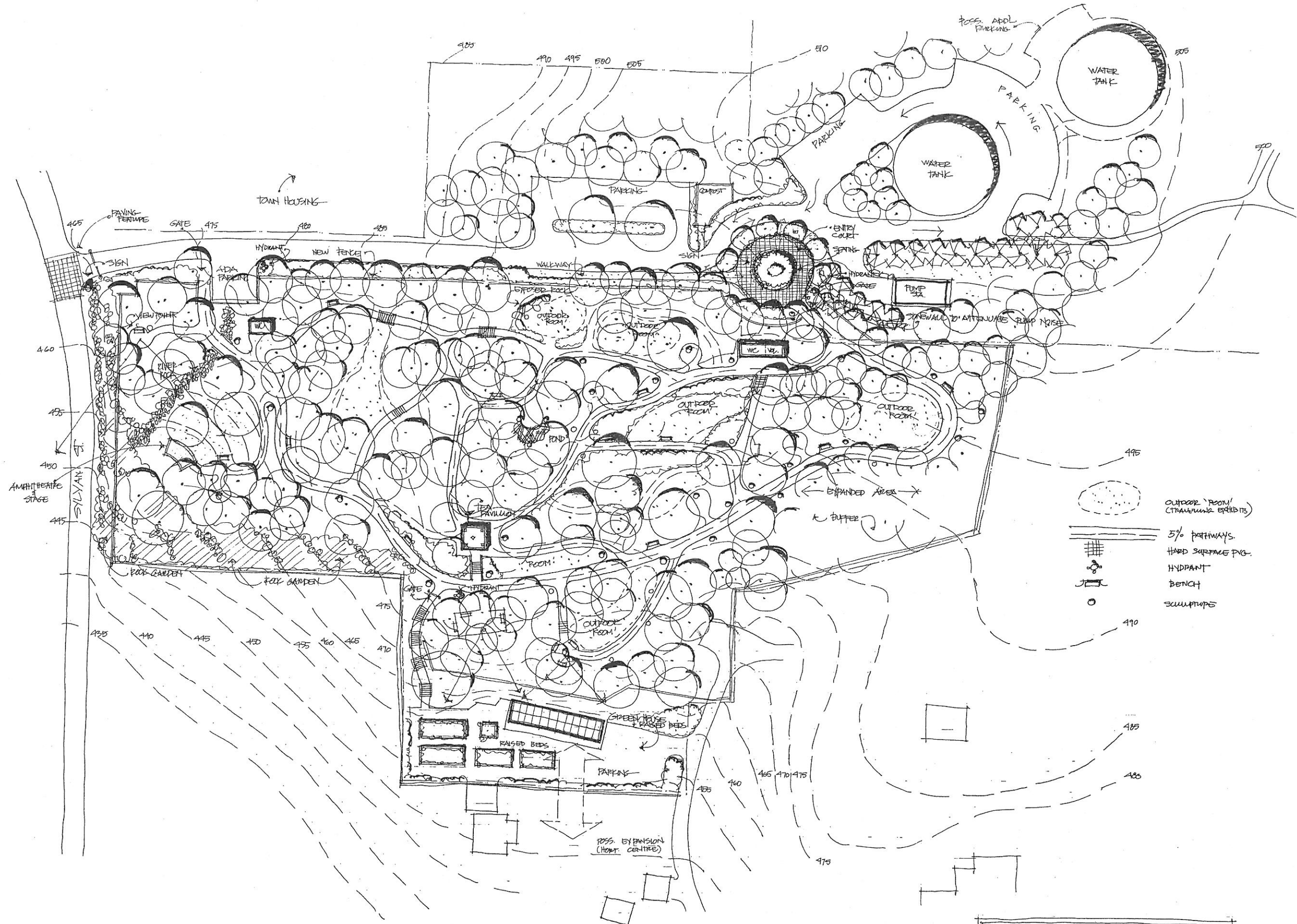
### 6.1 Features of the Plan

An open house with the public, workshops with the Steering Committee and with Park Staff resulted in a consensus that the overall plan of Concept 3 was most appropriate with some modifications. There was a desire to expand eastward thereby increasing capacity for exhibitions, improve the entry experience and offer added amenities such as a pavilion structure, perhaps an added restroom, better seating and most importantly, ADA accessible pathways wherever feasible. However, there was also concern about the cost of extending sewer service further along Balsam with its aggregate surfacing. It was felt that renovating the existing restroom would be more cost effective and at a later date, extending sewer north from Dakin Street to a combined new restroom/supply storage structure.

It was also felt that a single pavilion, which served the need for reception and for a Korean War memorial was preferable to having a series of structures. The concept of extending uses to the lower garden received strong endorsement. The amphitheatre, improved pathways, a viewpoint, a second service gate and sculpture displays were thought to be important. In summary, the Preferred Plan features:

- A new entrance and court with feature paving, floral displays, a new gateway and sign kiosk;
- A main pathway loop, accessible by wheel chair at 5 percent plus a pathway segment at 8 percent to access the restroom;
- Restroom renovations, a new volunteer office and a possible second (future) restroom combined with a storage structure;
- Demolition of old obsolete structures;
- A new pavilion for receptions and as a Korean War memorial;
- A new rock garden along the southwest slope and new entry sign;
- A new amphitheater in the lower garden;
- Benches located approximately every 200 feet;
- Some increase in parking;
- Irrigation improvements and new hose bibs;
- A new fence to reflect an Asian theme, mostly solid except for specific view slots;
- Exposure of rock outcrops;


- Creation of new "outdoor rooms" and several alcoves for more intimate viewing of sculpture.



1

## Big Rock Park

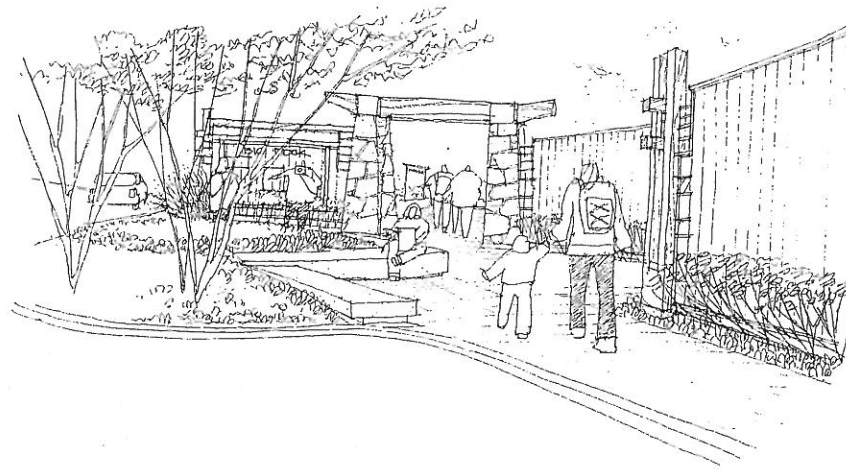
### Draft Preferred Concept



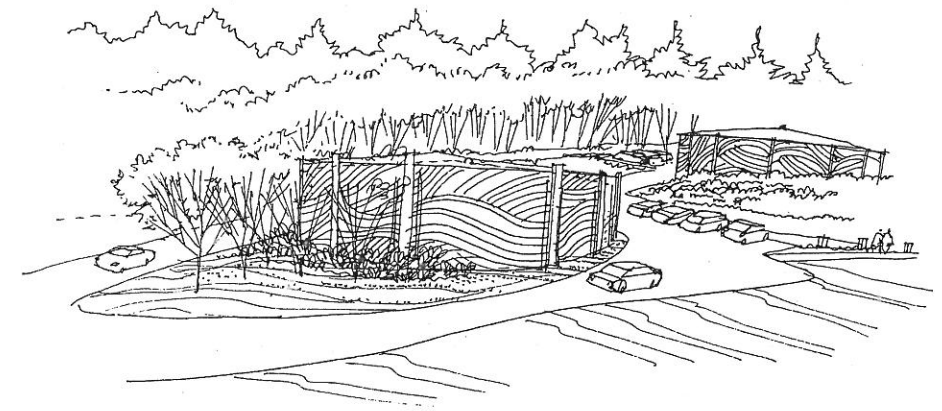
Mary & David  
 at BSA Johnson & Co.  
 Vancouver  
 2001-2002

Landscape Architect & Planner  
 SCALE: 1" = 20'  
 MAY 20, 2001

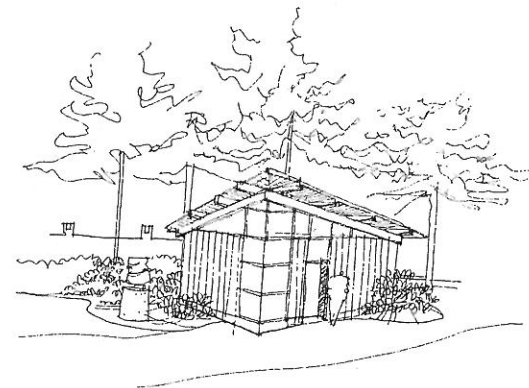




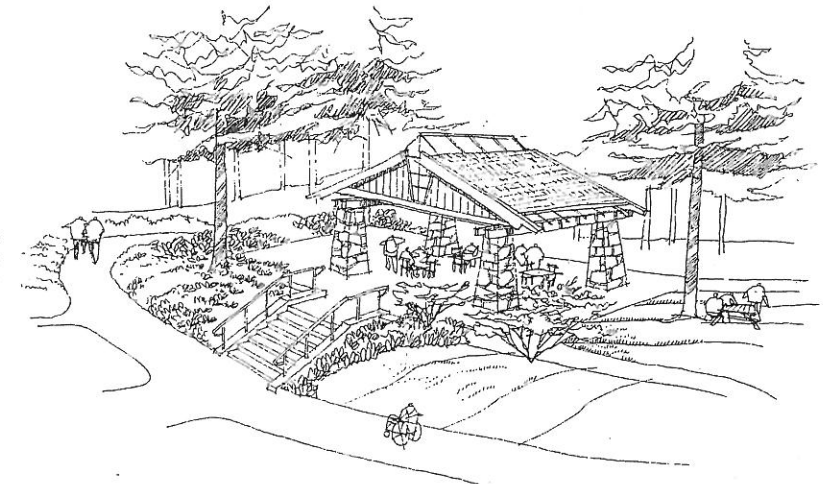
ENTRY COURT AND GARDEN GATE



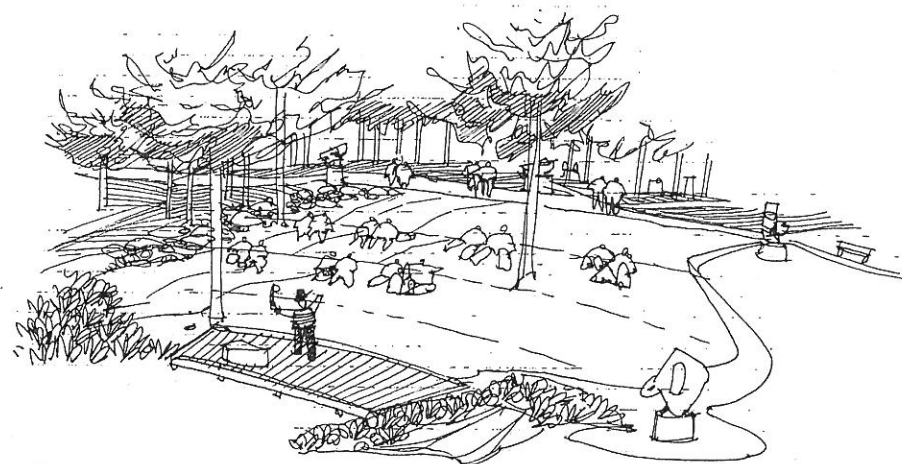
PARKING AND POSSIBLE TREATMENT OF WATER TANKS



NEW VOLUNTEER OFFICE (OR WASHROOM STRUCTURE)



GARDEN PAVILLION



LOWER AMPHITHEATER





## 6.2 & 6.3 Phasing and Costing

The following tables indicate the recommended phasing and costing for Big Rock Garden.





## Preliminary Landscape Cost Estimate

Date: June 27, 2001

Project: Big Rock Park, Phase One Basic Landscape ConstructionClient: City of Bellingham  
Parks Department

Item	Description	Unit	Qty.	Cost	Total \$
<b>1</b>	<b>Soft Landscaping</b>				
	Groundcovers/Rockery Plants	sq. foot	3,000	\$4.50	\$13,500.00
	Growing Medium	cu. foot	1,800	\$2.00	\$3,600.00
				<i>Sub Total</i>	<b>\$17,100.00</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Associated Items</b>				
	Boulders for Rockery along Sylvan Street	each	400	\$25.00	\$10,000.00
	Hose Bibs	each	20	\$250.00	\$5,000.00
	Irrigation	lump sum	1	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
				<i>Sub Total</i>	<b>\$30,000.00</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Hard Landscaping/Site Furnishings</b>				
	Benches	each	10	\$900.00	\$9,000.00
	Trash Receptacles	each	10	\$350.00	\$3,500.00
	Bicycle Rack	each	1	\$800.00	\$800.00
	Lighting (uplights in trees)	each	12	\$350.00	\$4,200.00
	Aggregate Pathways				
	Reclamation of Existing Pathways	sq. foot	66,000	\$0.75	\$49,500.00
	New Pathways	sq. foot	11,000	\$0.75	\$8,250.00
	Resurfaced Pathways	sq. foot	8,200	\$0.40	\$3,280.00
	Stone Retaining for Pathway Edges	lin. foot	2,000	\$2.50	\$5,000.00
	Timber Steps	lin. foot	1,500	\$20.00	\$30,000.00
	Parking Area				
	Fill Material and Grading	cu. foot	10,000	\$1.20	\$12,000.00
	Timber Retaining Wall (3' ht.)	lin. foot	100	\$28.00	\$2,800.00
	Parking Aggregate Surfacing	sq. foot	15,000	\$1.20	\$18,000.00
				<i>Sub Total</i>	<b>\$146,330.00</b>



**4 Structures**

## Washroom Structure

Renovate Existing Structure	allowance	1	\$35,000.00	\$35,000.00
Interpretive Sign/Kiosk	allowance	1	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
Entry Sign	lump sum	1	\$3,500.00	\$3,500.00

*Sub Total* \$41,000.00

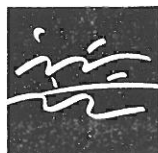
**Sub-Total** \$234,430.00

**10% contingency** \$23,443.00

**Sub-Total** \$257,873.00

This Cost Estimate excludes professional consulting fees and provision of site servicing or connection to existing servicing, except as otherwise noted.

Sharp & Diamond Landscape Architecture does not guarantee the accuracy of this estimate. Exact costs will be determined only when tenders have been received for the Work.



## Preliminary Landscape Cost Estimate

Date: June 27, 2001

Project: Big Rock Park, Phase One Optional Landscape ConstructionClient: City of Bellingham  
Parks Department

Item	Description	Unit	Qty.	Cost	Total \$
<b>1</b>	<b>Soft Landscaping</b>				
	Entry Plaza				
	Flowering Deciduous Trees	each	15	\$200.00	\$3,000.00
	Large Shrubs	sq. foot	2500	\$2.50	\$6,250.00
	Small Shrubs/Groundcovers	sq. foot	2500	\$4.50	\$11,250.00
	Growing Medium	cu. foot	3,000	\$2.00	\$6,000.00
				<i>Sub Total</i>	<b>\$26,500.00</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Hard Landscaping/Site Furnishings</b>				
	Entry Plaza				
	Unit Paving	sq. foot	2,000	\$3.50	\$7,000.00
	Entry Gate	allowance	1	\$10,000.00	\$10,000.00
	Wood Fencing				
	Primary Decorative Fence	lin. foot	570	\$70.00	\$39,900.00
	Primary Decorative Gate	allowance	1	\$15,000.00	\$15,000.00
				<i>Sub Total</i>	<b>\$71,900.00</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Structures</b>				
	Volunteer Office	allowance	1	\$35,000.00	\$35,000.00
	Tea House Structure	allowance	1	\$25,000.00	\$25,000.00
				<i>Sub Total</i>	<b>\$60,000.00</b>
				<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$158,400.00</b>
				<b>10% contingency</b>	<b>\$15,840.00</b>
				<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$174,240.00</b>

This Cost Estimate excludes professional consulting fees,  
and all Mechanical and Electrical, except as otherwise noted.

Sharp & Diamond Landscape Architecture does not guarantee the accuracy of this estimate.  
Exact costs will be determined only when tenders have been received for the Work.

**Preliminary Landscape Cost Estimate****Date:** June 27, 2001**Project:** Big Rock Park, Phase Two Landscape Construction**Client:** City of Bellingham  
Parks Department

Item	Description	Unit	Qty.	Cost	Total \$
<b>1</b>	<b>Soft Landscaping</b>				
	Groundcovers/Rockery Plants	sq. foot	3,000	\$4.50	\$13,500.00
	Growing Medium	cu. foot	1,800	\$2.00	\$3,600.00
				<i>Sub Total</i>	<b>\$17,100.00</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Associated Items</b>				
	Boulders for Rockery Expansion	each	400	\$25.00	\$10,000.00
				<i>Sub Total</i>	<b>\$10,000.00</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Hard Landscaping/Site Furnishings</b>				
	Ampitheatre				
	Grading	cu. foot	10,000	\$0.40	\$4,000.00
	Granular Paving	sq. foot	66,000	\$0.60	\$39,600.00
	Timber Stage	sq. foot	11,000	\$1.00	\$11,000.00
	Lighting	sq. foot	8,200	\$0.65	\$5,330.00
	Parking Area				
	Fill Material and Grading	cu. foot	10,000	\$1.20	\$12,000.00
	Timber Retaining Wall (3' ht.)	lin. foot	100	\$28.00	\$2,800.00
	Parking Aggregate Surfacing	sq. foot	15,000	\$1.20	\$18,000.00
	Wood Fencing				
	Secondary Perimeter Fence	lin. foot	1,400	\$17.00	\$23,800.00
	Secondary Gate	each	1	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
	Dry Stream - Boulders/Rocks	sq. foot	700	\$5.00	\$3,500.00
				<i>Sub Total</i>	<b>\$122,530.00</b>

**4 Structures**

## Washroom Structure

Build New Structure

allowance

1

\$85,000.00

\$85,000.00

Equipment Storage Shed

allowance

1

\$15,000.00

\$15,000.00

*Sub Total* **\$100,000.00****Sub-Total** **\$249,630.00****10% contingency** **\$24,963.00****Sub-Total** **\$274,593.00**

This Cost Estimate excludes professional consulting fees and provision of site servicing or connection to existing servicing, except as otherwise noted.

Sharp & Diamond Landscape Architecture does not guarantee the accuracy of this estimate. Exact costs will be determined only when tenders have been received for the Work.



## Appendix 1

# Summary of Community Consultation

# Big Rock Park Master Plan

Bellingham Parks and Recreation  
Bellingham, Washington

A total of 6 people filled out and returned the second Open House Preferred Plan Comment Form on June 12, 2001.

## Overall Comments:

- This is a wonderful gem of Bellingham parks, and it was one of our earliest discoveries since moving to the city 2 months ago. I appreciate the efforts to make it even better.
- I enjoyed looking at it. Parking is better, entrance is ok though in my mind I question its location. The overall plan takes in a lot of what I wanted to see.
- Looks great- The plan really looks like comments were listened to.
- Increased trails work well in site. Don't like the painted water towers, would feel a neutral color with vegetation cover would fit the feel of the park better. A pond for a water feature is a great addition.
- Continue and accent the themes established by the Drake family-Japanese theme, use rocks in design, make paths look natural, use native plants. Improve ADA access. I like the idea of a garden pavilion "if" it's kept small and doesn't dominate the park.
- Seems quite well planned-probably very expensive! How about working on the entrance on Sylvan and Balsam Lane first.

## Are there any aspects you would like to see refined or changed?

- New Volunteer Office and Garden Pavilion are very ANGULAR structures, and contrast with the natural environment. Bamboo pillars would fit here better than the massive, over-built masonry pillars of the Garden Pavilion.
- Too many steps, need to slope the trail instead (though others differ with me on this). Another, covered only, garden pavilion. Do need another restroom and do need the equipment storage shed.
- No grass (turf) in park.
- Maintaining the existing feeling of serenity. Part of this master plan needs to be the trail tie ins with neighborhood trails (Using Dakin St. or area, if purchased to go to the Greenways trail along Barkley Blvd & one toward Watcom Falls)
- Don't paint tanks to feature them. Explore ways to make tanks disappear i.e. planting to hide them, etc. The treatment in the "tank" drawing is awful!

Are there any aspects you would like to see that are not included in the plan?

- Murals would look nice on the wooden walls of the Entrance Court. Victor F. Marx

P.S. : Please add labels of plant names in the garden

- Just add another restroom please Know do it!
- Budget
- Trail connections!
- We have an amphitheatre in Maritime Park and its little used. There isn't enough room for it here.
  - Where are the trail connections?
  - Greenways doesn't seem to have a presence here.
  - Stan Snapp, Greenways Committee Chair
- I would appreciate a couple simple covered areas in strategic positions for the public to view the garden in the rain – with a bench or two.

# Big Rock Garden Park Master Plan Comment Form Results

May 16, 2001

A total of 13 people filled out and returned the questionnaires at the first Big Rock Garden Park Open House.

## 1) How do you know about Big Rock Garden?

- |                             |           |
|-----------------------------|-----------|
| a. Parks and Recreation map | <u>0</u>  |
| b. Word of mouth            | <u>5*</u> |
| c. Radio or TV              | <u>0</u>  |
| d. Newspaper or Magazine    | <u>5</u>  |
| e. Flyer                    | <u>0</u>  |
| f. Other                    | <u>8</u>  |
- E.g.: Mom  
Live next to it  
I'm a volunteer gardener  
Live there  
Visiting George and Mary Ann  
Next door to me  
Live in Big Rock Garden condos  
On Park Board\_

\*One form also read, "Signage is Inadequate" beside check mark.

## 2) Typically, what brings you to the Garden?

- |  |           |
|--|-----------|
| a. Recommended by friends or relatives | <u>0</u>  |
| b. Reputation for art and sculpture    | <u>11</u> |
| c. Nature and flowering plants         | <u>11</u> |
| d. Celebrations (i.e. Mother's Day)    | <u>4</u>  |
| e. Exercise                            | <u>1</u>  |
| f. Place to show off to visitors       | <u>7</u>  |
| g. Other                               | <u>4</u>  |
- E.g.: Mom forced me  
Live there  
Relaxation  
Quiet



### 3) How often do you visit the Park?

- |               |          |
|---------------|----------|
| a. Daily      | <u>0</u> |
| b. Weekly     | <u>2</u> |
| c. Monthly    | <u>5</u> |
| d. Seasonally | <u>3</u> |
| e. Yearly     | <u>1</u> |
| f. Other      | <u>2</u> |
- E.g.: First time!  
First time

### 4) Where do you live?

- |                         |           |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| a. Bellingham           | <u>13</u> |
| b. N.W. Washington      | <u>0</u>  |
| c. Vancouver, B.C. area | <u>0</u>  |
| d. Other                | <u>0</u>  |

### 5) What features or aspects in the Garden do you like the best?

- I. Timeless!!! Yume!!! Gaia's Breath. Joshua Lucas bronze sculptures!!! (#1 Seated man, #2 Adam)
- II. Serenity and quiet, trees and plants, art.
- III. The Japanese Garden with sculptures.
- IV. Landscaping. Various paths around and through.
- V. Natural woods atmosphere for a sculpture museum.
- VI. Sculpture. Peaceful and quiet – tends not to have screaming kids.
- VII. Seclusion, rocks, trees.
- VIII. Serenity. Natural art of nature and artisans.
- IX. Integration of art and nature.
- X. Rock gardens, flowers. Sculptures.
- XI. Combination of nature and art. Attempts to make it a community meeting place
- XII. I really like the information area and also the music place. I feel it needs more art.
- XIII. Incredible art. Beautiful, artistic landscaping.

**6) Are there any features or aspects of the Park which you did not like?**

- I. Mosquitoes in Summer. Parking; bit of an invitation to skate-boarders (not bad tho'). Too much of mixture of types of art unintegrated into landscape. Area of lily garden (is this gone now?)
- II. Nothing. I even like it that this is the best least known park in Bellingham – no tour buses!
- III. Area to the west is neglected.
- IV. Poor accessibility, inadequate parking, inadequate signage at road intersections.
- V. Not accessible. Dogs not allowed – understand it though, people drive fast up the hill.
- VI. Chrysanthemum and Lily Gardens.
- VII. More seating.
- VIII. Hard to find.
- IX. Seating for viewing and relaxing is needed <-Did not understand question.
- X. Parking difficult. Walking with elderly relatives is difficult.
- XI. I think there should be some refreshments, more art options to show your own art talents, music. This place should sell some small art pieces, and let others occasionally.
- XII. O

**7) Of the three Concept Options shown, which do you prefer? Why?**

- I. I find value in all of them.
- II. #3 It means that plants can be started in a green house and more people have places to sit and enjoy.
- III. #3 Expanded Garden. Enlarge the available space for art and less crowding for people. Amphitheatre in western side. Better circulation.
- IV. #3 Expanded Entrance. Better circulation pattern. Expanded parking. Specified handicapped main trail.
- V. I like all – they almost seem like progressions 1 to 2 to 3. #2 seems more secluded, but (I) like the overview of #3
- VI. Enhance existing garden simplicity
- VII. #3 Additional area, smart planning
- VIII. #3 Wheelchair access is important to me for a dear friend of mine. Expansion is wonderful!
- IX. #3. I just think the layout looks to be the most interesting.
- X. View #3. Good layout – lots of interest and variety. Greenhouses, pond.

**8) From an overall perspective, which three features of any of the Concept Options do you like the best?**

- I. Oriental theme repeated. New entrance. Alcoves. Art expressed in signs, garbage cans, etc.
- II. I like enjoying art outdoors
- III. Incorporation of art into all features
- IV. Additional restroom facilities. More central entrance. Handicapped parking and access
- V. Accessibility. Like the art incorporated into all aspects – fences, etc. Open fencing – more inviting. More entrances.
- VI. Alcoves. Signage. Amphitheatre.
- VII. Accessibility
- VIII. Wheelchair access. More parking. Picnic shelter.
- IX. More pathways. More exhibit options. Improvement in parking.
- X. Pond. Wheelchair grade paths. Expanded parking. Teahouse pavilion.

**9) Which three features of any Option do you like the least?**

- I. Big area of parking across from entrance (water tower parking preferred)
- II. Changing the paths to make them easier to navigate. Part of the charm is the narrow paths.
- III. Alcoves, too many dead-ends.
- IV. #2 has too many alcoves, too busy, too cluttered.
- V. Obliterated pathways. Expanded parking. Moving main entrance.
- VI. Any over-clearing of foliage.
- VII. Hours are too short.
- VIII. Too many blind alleys. I do not feel changing music area is a good idea. I do not like bigger water areas at all.
- IX. Water tanks and antennas incorporated. Information signs and seating.

**10) Which three art ideas do you like the best?**

- I. Sylvan Street unlandscaped area – landscaped. Alcoves, Oriental entrance. Oriental shelter.
- II. Artistic seating and signage. Visual distinction between main path and secondary paths.
- III. New entrance. Art rooms and alcoves.
- IV. Oriental entrance and fencing.
- V. Extend art into all buildings-signs-walkways.
- VI. Entrance. Alcoves. Integrating art and utility.
- VII. Marble tile. Palm trees. Gecko's and fish.
- VIII. Water sculpture garden

**11) Do you have any other comments?**

- I. Excellent approach – some fine ideas.
- II. Integral to getting the public to the gardens is better street signage on Alabama and Sylvan, Alabama and Woburn: More visual signage at entrance. Any way to create parking off Barkley Blvd at walk trail entrances?!
- III. Gorgeous plans. Doggie-do Bags station – outside would be nice. Lots of people walk dogs – but no “facilities”.
- IV. Nice job.
- V. Just found this park – we’ll be back often! Evening hours w/lighting would be a plus – special occasion evenings?
- VI. I really like having literature available, and allowing many types of art options, and open discussions are great.



**People who filled out questionnaire #1**

**Mickey Voegtlin**  
MickeyV@peoplepc.com  
2918 Sylvan St. #108  
Bellingham, W.A. 98226

**Richard W. Snook**  
DickSnook@Hotmail.com  
6324 Pony Place  
Maple Falls, W.A.. 98226

**James Guzman**  
glaciertreader@aol.com

**Judy Dight**  
3058 Barkley Meadows Circle  
B'ham, W.A. 98228

**Nadine Kaalan**  
\*No address was given, but she mentioned she was on the Park Board.

**Debbie Davis**  
VAVZ  
Claudia Ct.  
Bellingham, W.A. 98226