

REPORT  
Parks, Playgrounds & Bluffs of Seattle, WA  
Board of Park Commissioners, 1909

→ Original Report of O.H. Stebbins

topography, in which a wild style and greater respect for the preservation of the natural forest undergrowth would be appropriate and most desirable. Another reason for eliminating most of the fir trees from this park is that they are associated in the mind with wild surroundings, and hence are not quite appropriate on clipped lawns. For the same reason the crowded, wild undergrowth should be gradually replaced by suitable exotie shrubbery. The different parks of the city should not be made to look as much like each other as possible, but on the contrary every advantage should be taken of differing conditions to give each one a distinct individuality of its own.

**Kinnear Park.**

While this park is equal to three or four blocks in area, much of it is so steep as to be unavailable, except to look over. It is situated southwest of the summit of Queen Anne Hill, on a steep bluff, which is here from 150 to 200 feet high. Most of the native forest which covered it is gone, but a few tall fir trees remain, and a considerable number of native deciduous and broad-leaved evergreen trees and shrubs survive. The moderately sloping area above the bluff which is not occupied by native trees and shrubs has been turned into lawns, with winding paths, and trees and shrubs of a more or less exotie character have been added. The park is pleasing in detail and extremely valuable, owing to the fine views which it commands over the Sound. It is a good sample of the miles of similar bluff parks which it is hoped the city will eventually have. Such parks will always be a great benefit to adjoining residential property, and will occupy land which it is rather desirable than otherwise to prevent being utilized by houses, since it is too steep or too subject to landslides to be suitable for such purposes.

The shrubbery which has been added in the park is perhaps open to the criticism that it is too miscellaneous, and that it repeats practically the same assortment used in Denny Park, and in many of the principal private grounds of the city. As before stated, each park should have an individuality of its own, and this idea should be acted on in the planting as well as in the constructive features. In seeking for some local conditions that will indicate an idea to be followed in the selection of plants, it seems that the fact that it is well sheltered from the north by the hill, and the fact that the ground is at the same time well drained, indicate that it would be a particularly appropriate idea to make a planting feature of the early-flowering shrubs and perennial herbaceous plants, omitting all tender bedding plants and all plants appropriately associated with low, moist ground.

**Queen Anne Hill Tract.**

This is a five-acre plot of ground two blocks east of Mt. Pleasant cemetery, well down the north slope of Queen Anne Hill. The ground is too steep and too much broken by a ravine to be fitted for use as

a playground. All of the original forest that had any commercial value has been removed from it. Until the neighborhood contains many more houses, it seems hardly worth while to undertake the improvement and maintenance of this park. When the time comes to improve this little park, perhaps the best scheme will be to preserve the ravine with its wild undergrowth, covering only the gentler slopes outside of the ravine with grass, confining the plantations mostly to broad-leaved evergreen shrubs and trees, grouped in masses, mainly along the south side of the walks, and in such a way that the lawns and masses of shrubbery will contrast with each other. To distinguish this little park from others where fir trees will be abundant, it might be well to eliminate all but the best of the fir trees, and on the parts not in the ravine to substitute broad-leaved evergreen trees. As this little park will be surrounded by houses, the walk system should be so arranged as to provide for short-cutting.

**Denny Park.**

This park contains about five and one-fourth acres and has already been improved, although some of the eastern and northern borders yet remain to be planted. John street, bounding the park on its north side, is too steep between Eighth and Ninth avenues to be of any use as a street. The northerly sidewalk may be improved and provided with a staircase down to Ninth avenue, but the rest of the street might better be thrown into the park. It is unlikely that fir trees will be permanently successful in this locality, as there will be more and more smoke from factories and from the numerous dwellings of the dense population likely to occupy the surrounding land; hence the fir trees, and in fact all coniferous evergreens, would better be eliminated at once. The little deciduous trees are much too numerous, and would better be thinned out to some extent at once, and considerably more within ten years. The shrubbery plantations in general are too miscellaneous in composition and too much like, in selection, many of the private grounds of the city. The proportion of very large-growing shrubs should be reduced, and the shrubbery plantations should be composed mainly of low-growing, compact, neat and healthy shrubbery. A distinctly informal style of design having been adopted, all rows of plants, and especially formal beds of tender bedding plants, should be avoided. Hardy perennial flowers, however, may be introduced when there is a guardian in charge to prevent the flowers from being taken by visitors. Many of the shrubbery plantations are on steep banks adjoining the walks, which brings the bare earth among the shrubs more than usually close to the eye. The earth should, therefore, be covered with dwarf periwinkle, or some other low, shade-enduring, ground-covering plant.

A more complete system of catch-basins and underground drains should be provided for the walks, which are now subject to excessive wash, or else the walks should be covered with cement concrete, which