

City of Madison Landmarks Commission
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (1)

I. Name of Building or Site

(1) Common
GLENWOOD CHILDREN'S PARK

(2) Historic (if applicable)

II. Location

(1) Street Address
Borderness on Glenwood, Cross,
and Glenway Streets

(2) Ward (available @ City Clerk)
Aldermanic District - 20
Ward # 1

III. Classification

(1) Type of Property (building, monument, park, etc.)

Park

(2) Zoning District
R - 2

(3) Present Use
City Park

IV. Current Owner of Property (available at City Assessor's office)

(1) Name(s)
City of Madison

(2) Street Address

(3) Telephone Number

V. Legal Description (available at City Assessor's office)

(1) Parcel Number
0709 - 282- 18 12-6

(2) Legal Description
Briar Hill lot 12 Block #5 and
Glenwood out lots A, B, and D.

VI. Condition of Property

(1) Physical Condition (excellent, good, fair, deteriorated, ruins)

Fair

(2) Altered or Unaltered?
Altered

(3) Moved or Original Site?
Original Site

(4) Wall Construction

(5) On a separate sheet of paper, describe the present and original physical construction and appearance (limit 500 words).

City of Madison Landmarks Commission
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (2)

VI.(5) Describe Present and Original Physical Construction and Appearance:

Glenwood Children's Park is a glen between Glenwood, Cross, and Glenway Streets, and the Illinois Central Railroad tracks. The slopes of the glen remain natural with many plantings native to Wisconsin. The central portion is a grassy area used for pathways through the park.

The original plans for the park show that you enter through a rose meadow. This meadow is surrounded by *Rosa setigera* (prairie rose) and *Rosa blanda* (smooth rose). From this meadow the plans show three more meadows proceeding through the park. Flowering cherry are interspersed throughout the second meadow. The third meadow is a plays meadow with one side adjacent to a rock ledge beyond which is a players green with a dressing circle off it. The fourth meadow is for croquet and other games.

On the east side of the meadows are rings; a dancing ring, a singing ring, a mother's circle, and a ring for a clay modeling table and shelters. These rings are surrounded by june berry bushes, sugar maple and crabapple trees. The Hepatica trail leads around the back of the council ring which has a central position in the park north of the meadows. The trail leads to an acrobatics field, the players green and the dressing circle.

Today the meadows are still distinguishable but many of the plantings were either never planted or have since been taken out. The rings are intact except for the shelter and clay modeling ring and acrobatics area. These have become a drainage ditch for part of Westmoreland.

Our organization is interested in restoring the park with its original plantings and seeing that it is maintained properly.

City of Madison Landmarks Commission
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (3)

VII. Significance

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| (1) Original Owner Purchased by
Ruth Gardner Reese, Louis Gardner Jr.
and Martha Gardner Wernig and donated | (2) Original Use
to the city |
| (3) Architect or Builder
Jens Jensen | (4) Architectural Style |
| (5) Date of Construction
Dedicated October 7, 1949 | (6) Indigenous Materials Used |
- (7) On a separate sheet of paper, describe the significance of the nominated property and its conformance to the designation criteria of the Landmarks Commission Ordinance (33.01), limit of 500 words.

VIII. List of Bibliographical References Used

1. Land scape Artist in America; the life and work of Jens Jensen
by Leonard K. Eaton University of Chicago Press, 1964
2. Original Plans for Glenwood Children's Park by Jens Jensen
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

IX. Form Prepared By:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| (1) Name and Title
Mona Cline - Chairman of the parks committee | |
| (2) Organization Represented (if any)
Dudgeon Neighborhood Association | |
| (3) Address
2406 Gregory St. Madison, 53711 | (4) Telephone Number
238-4506 |
| (5) Date Nomination Form Was Prepared | |

Jan. 16, 1975

City of Madison Landmarks Commission
LANDMARKS AND LANDMARK SITES NOMINATION FORM (4)

VII. (7) Significance of Nominated Property and Conformance to Designation Criteria:

Jens Jensen, the landscape architect for Glenwood Children's Park, was born in Dybbol, Denmark in 1860. He immigrated to the United States with his wife in 1884.

He eventually settled in Chicago where he worked for the West Park Commission. He soon rose to be superintendent of Humboldt Park.

Jensen did a great deal of studying of the midwestern landscaping and flora. Like Frank Loyd Wright and his prairie house, Jensen thought of himself as creating prairie landscapes which were appropriate for the region in which he had settled. He was puzzled by the change of colors in the fall. He and his family picniced and botanized in the open country near Chicago until his knowledge of midwestern plant materials was unsurpassed.

After trying to keep graft out of his park in Chicago from 1890-1900, he was fired from the city job and turned to independent landscaping. From 1900-1906 he worked on private estates.

In 1906, Jensen was again back in public life as superintendent and landscape architect for the West Park Commission in Chicago. Among his accomplishments in the West Parks was the construction of a huge conservatory in Garfield Park with a series of restorations of the prairie in various stages of its geological development. In Humboldt Park he created a prairie river using only plant materials native to Illinois. In smaller neighborhood parks his emphasis was more on recreational facilities such as wading pools, sandpiles, and playgrounds. In a proposal for a larger park system Jensen's philosophy of city planning is written: "it is evident the first consideration must be given to the aesthetic in our parks - play being at all times subservient. There are multitudes who rarely get beyond the city limits and who obtain a great amount of physical exercise in their daily work but lack mental stimulus. They need the out of doors, as expressed in beauty and art and a broader interest in life. They need the quietude of the pastoral meadow and the soothing green of grove and woodland in contrast with the noise and glare of the great city." He put greater emphasis on passive recreation than active and our Glenwood Park is a fine example of this. Most of his Chicago parks have been changed to active recreational lands. Only a handful of his parks using native material remain. One is the Lincoln Garden in Springfield, Illinois. Others are the entire parks system of Racine, Wisconsin. And, of course, Glenwood Children's Park here in Madison.

Again in 1920 Jensen left public life for private landscaping. He

worked on many estates in the Chicago area but very few remain intact today. Among his worksware Fair Lane, Henry Ford's estate in Dearborn, Michigan, which is still intact. Also the Ryerson Estate in Lake Forest, Illinois, is now a seminary and is beautifully maintained.

In 1935, Jensen decided to give up his home in Wilmette and his office in Ravinia and move to Door County, Wisconsin. The Jensens had a summer place near Ellison Bay and had acquired most of the land which now constitutes The Clearing where he established a school.

Jensen wrote in a letter to Edsel Ford: "The purpose of this school is to disseminate the message of the great out-of-doors in its various moods as a fundamental principle to all arts and clear thinking". It was not a school of landscape architecture which he believed could not be taught, but for the students to follow their own arts.

Glenwood Children's Park is a fine example of Jens Jensen's work. It is composed of plant material native to the midwest. It was designed using the geologic shape of the land to its greatest advantage. Jensen used the council rings in many of his parks as he did in Glenwood. He saw the ring as a place for friendly gatherings within the garden or park. He wanted to facilitate the gatherings associated with the Indian campfire. He used it also on many estates and on his own property in Ellison Bay.

Glenwood Children's Park was dedicated October 7, 1949, and must have been one of Jensen's last works before his death October 1, 1951, in Ellison Bay.

