



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee
From: Dave Semple
Director, Parks Operations
Re: McLennan South Park Design and Public Consultation

To Parks, Rec & Culture - July 27, 2004
Date: July 15, 2004
File: 06-2345-20-MCLS

Staff Recommendation

1. That the Preferred Concept Plan for McLennan South Neighbourhood Park as outlined in attachment 4 be approved.

Dave Semple
Director, Parks Operations

Att. 5

FOR ORIGINATING DIVISION USE ONLY					
ROUTED TO:		CONCURRENCE		CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER	
Policy Planning		Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>			
REVIEWED BY TAG		YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO <input type="checkbox"/>	REVIEWED BY CAO	YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/>

Staff Report

Origin

In response a rapid rate of redevelopment in the area, the park planning process was initiated in 2003 with public consultation taking place in the Spring of 2004. McLennan South Park is located between Heather and Ash Streets in the block between General Currie and Blundell Road. As identified in the McLennan South Sub-Area Plan, the park will occupy approximately 3.2 ha (8 ac) of a combined school/park site of 4.9 ha (12 ac), see location map Attachment 1.

The purpose of this report is to provide a summary of the park planning and public consultation process, and to present the proposed final concept plan for Council approval.

Analysis

Guiding Principles And Existing Site Features

The properties that make up the McLennan South Park site have a wealth of unique existing features that illustrate the area's historical use of small commercial agricultural operations and "country estates". The goal of the planning process for the park has been to build on those existing features that are compatible with the desired open space requirements and neighbourhood uses in order to arrive at a park plan that will create opportunities for new neighbourhood pedestrian connections, provide local open space, and contribute to creating a unique neighbourhood identity. Detailed below are some of the existing site features:

- A large number of mature trees including a 2 acre block of conifers.
- A large ornamental garden that continues to be maintained by the former owner who has been retained as the park caretaker.
- Cultivated blueberries producing an abundance of berries as well as fruit trees and grapevines.
- Remnants of the Lulu Island Water Gardens (later the Granville Water Gardens), a commercial operation started in the late 1930's specializing in water plants, fish and frogs for residential ponds, and flowering bulb sales. The condition of the remnant ponds is not yet known although neighbouring residents have reported a frog population still inhabits the area.
- A large songbird population supported by the variety of trees and shrubs found on site as well as the large areas of tree and shrub cover currently found in the neighbourhood and to the north at Garden City Park. The McLennan South Park site will become an ever more important habitat area for songbirds in the future as the neighbourhood redevelops.

Guiding Principles

Through staff assessment of the park site it was concluded that the existing features could make a significant contribution to neighbourhood identity and enhance the recreational value of the future park. As a result, several guiding principles were developed to inform the park planning process. The guiding principles are:

- i. to retain the existing significant features (the woodlot and other mature trees, and the ornamental garden),
- ii. to interpret the history of the area (agricultural and cultural),
- iii. to facilitate neighbourhood connections (community garden, ornamental garden club, informal social spaces),
- iv. to retain and enhance existing songbird habitat.

The Public Consultation Process

Two public open houses have been held to solicit input from area residents on the types of elements and activities they would like to see included in the park. The first open house was held on April 29 and was attended by 25 people. Three conceptual plans (Attachment 2) were on display that presented three different approaches to the park:

- The Neighbourhood Backyards - focuses on informal social and family activities through lawn areas for picnicking, lawn games, etc, a children's play area and a network of trails.
- The Country Garden - retains more of the existing agricultural character of the area and enhances existing bird habitat while providing some informal lawn areas, children's play areas with a natural character, a community garden, and frog ponds.
- The Lulu Island Gardens - more formal in character and more intensely developed where the ornamental garden becomes the defining feature of the park; includes a formal water feature, lawn areas bounded by flowering trees and shrubs, numerous seating areas, and pathways that are organized in a more formal layout.

The results of the questionnaire are included as Attachment 3. A total of 27 people have completed questionnaires and the results indicate that a blending of the Country Garden concept and the Lulu Island Gardens concept is preferred.

From these results, a final concept plan (Attachment 4) was developed. It was presented at the second open house on June 29 and people were asked to provide comments. The Final Concept includes:

- Retention of as many existing trees and shrubs as is feasible
- A network of trails that provide choices of routes through and around the park
- Frog ponds that have an informal character
- Numerous seating areas throughout the park
- A small expansion to the ornamental garden so that it is well integrated with park and the trail system; a gateway at the Heather St. edge of the garden provides identity from the street.

- Flowering shrubs and trees and the inclusion of blueberry bushes in the planted areas.
- A tree house and other small pieces of equipment in a children's play area as well as a small mound.

Part of the programming for the park will include opportunities for community engagement. Public art, a community garden, or a garden club are some of the opportunities that will be explored through further public consultation throughout the proposed subsequent phases of park development in 2005 and 2006.

The park development phasing plan is included as Attachment 5. Park development in 2004 is proposed to encompass demolition of existing structures and clearing of dense brush areas as well as construction of the major trails through and around the park.

Design and planning for the frog ponds will begin in the Fall of 2004 and be constructed in 2005 along with improvements to the ornamental garden and the children's play area. Planning for community projects will begin in the Fall of 2004 and continue through 2005 with completion scheduled for 2006.

Financial Impact

Approved Parks Capital funding for McLennan South Park is set at \$300,000 in 2004. In addition, developer contributions to the park are now in excess of \$450,000. With the addition of the DCC funding, the opportunity exists to invest in park infrastructure to a greater degree than is typical in neighbourhood parks. This will provide for investments in irrigation, invasive plant management measures and community engagement projects that will contribute to the sustainability of the park and reduce operational impacts.

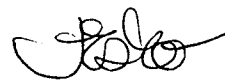
Conclusion

McLennan South Park has the potential to be one of the most unique neighbourhood parks in Richmond. The Final Concept Plan integrates new public recreational uses with the variety of extant mature landscapes that provide a link to history of the area and an opportunity to develop neighbourhood connections.

The initial phase of construction will open the park to the public and raise awareness in the neighbourhood about potential community projects. Staff will continue to work with the community as more residents become settled in the area to initiate and execute community projects.



Mike Redpath
Manager, Parks Programs, Planning & Design
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Jamie Esko,
Park Planner
(3341)

SITE CONTEXT MAP

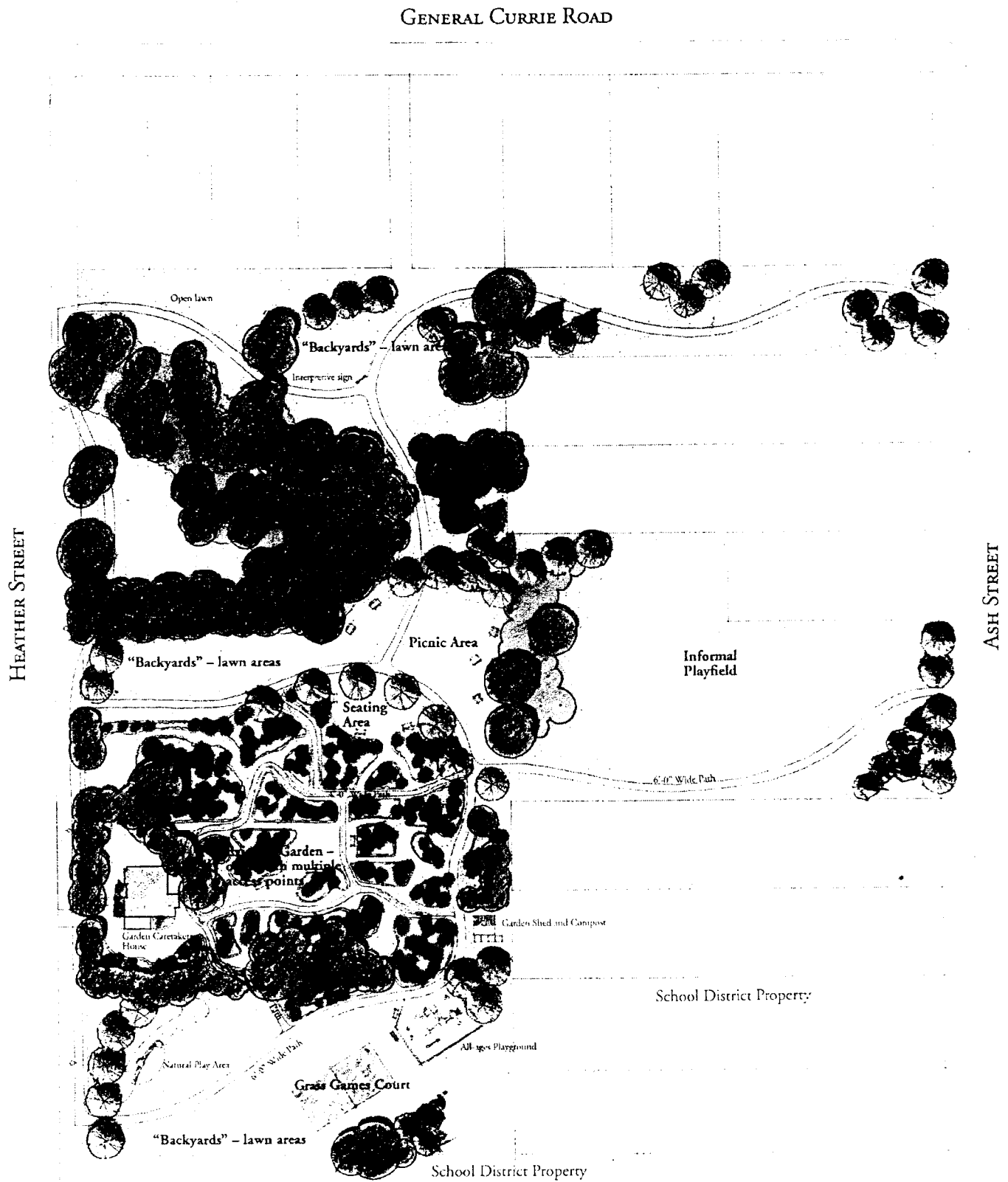


McLennan South Park Context Map

0 50 100 200 m



CONCEPT A: NEIGHBOURHOOD BACKYARDS



CONCEPT B: COUNTRY GARDEN

GENERAL CURRIE ROAD

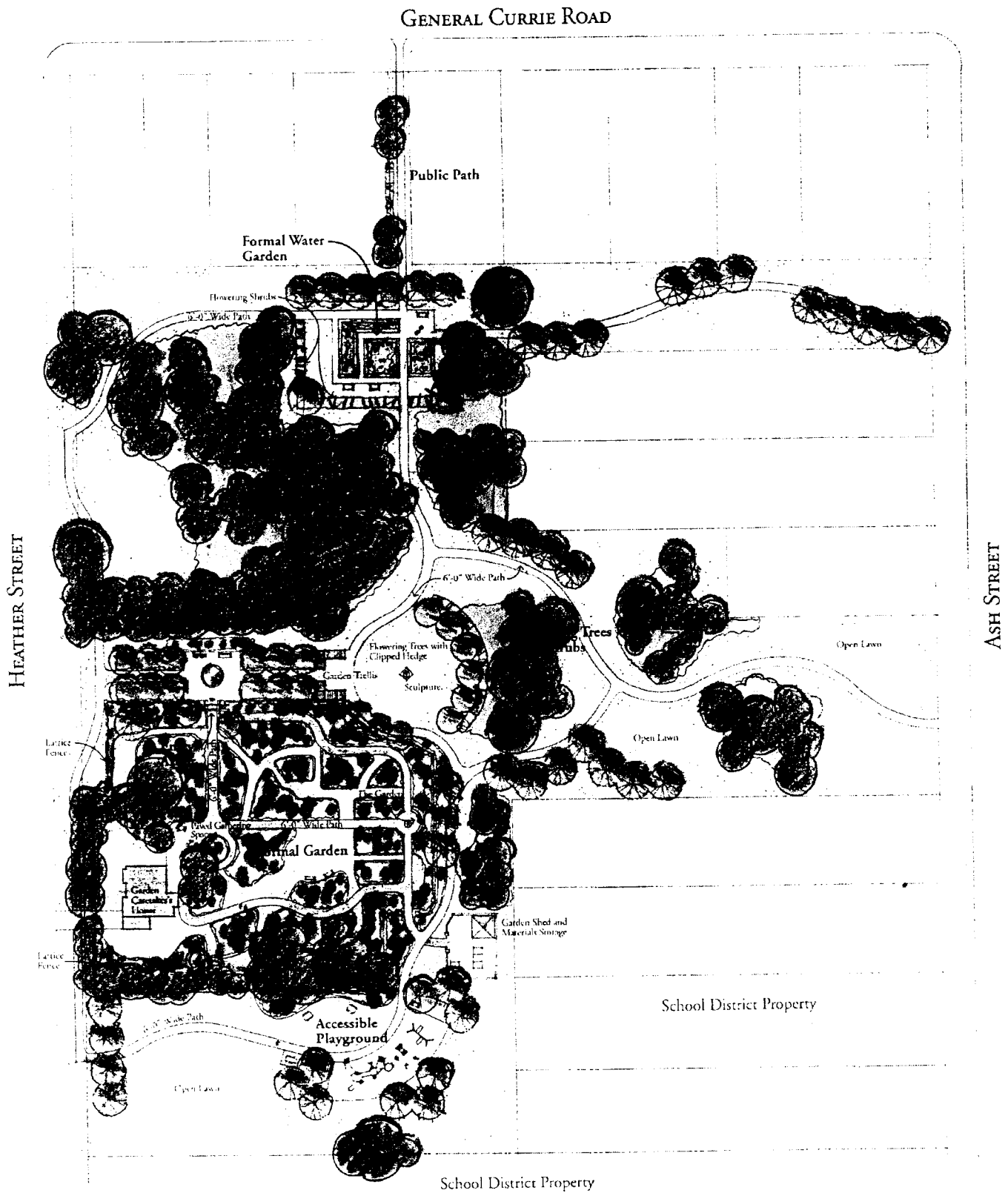


ASH STREET

School District Property

School District Property

CONCEPT C: LULU ISLAND GARDENS



Attachment #3

April 27, 2004 Public Open House Questionnaire Results

A total of 26 questionnaires were completed by area residents following the April 27 Public Open House. From those responses, a ranking of the three park concepts and the preferred elements and activities was obtained.

22 out of 26 people chose one of the concepts and 2 people chose two of the concepts:

Concept A - Neighbourhood Backyard <ul style="list-style-type: none">A series of "outdoor rooms" that are settings for informal social and family activities such as picnicking or informal ball games. The landscape is predominantly lawn and trees and the existing ornamental garden is open to the park.	2
Concept B - Country Garden <ul style="list-style-type: none">The existing agricultural character is enhanced by the expansion of the orchard, retention of the cultivated blueberries, and the addition of community gardens and small scale informal features like the frog ponds. Songbird habitat is enhanced yet integrated with other uses like lawn areas and children's play.	10
Concept C - Lulu Island Gardens <ul style="list-style-type: none">The entire park is developed in a more formal and garden-like manner with the existing ornamental garden becoming the defining feature of the park. The ornamental garden has a perimeter fence with a formal entry courtyard that will allow controlled access. The formal water feature and the use of architectural and sculptural features represent a higher degree of development and refinement.	14

These results indicate that a blending of Concepts B & C would be most preferred.

The top 5 most preferred elements or activities were:

(18 people responded to this part of the questionnaire)

Elements and Activities	
Flowering Shrubs & Trees	13
Walking the Network of Trails and Paths	12
Small Intimate Spaces With Seating	12
Frog Ponds	11
Enhanced Bird Habitat	11

Several people provided specific comments on their views for the park:**Other Comments:**

"It is very important that the walking paths be made of bark mulch or the soft walking surface you have at the Minoru tracks."

"Because this is a neighbourhood park, please don't put any big parking area around it."

"I hope there will be a beautiful water park."

"Large trees should be kept, and any bushes cleared out."

"I would like open lawn space to throw a Frisbee around."

"Kids play areas (climbing, playground) and perhaps facility for teenage children as well."

"I would like to see some form of habitat connection between this and the McLennan North Park."

"Fencing and controlled access to the park at night are preferred."

"No paved paths – use crushed limestone or similar."

"No walkway to General Currie – concerns of vandalism or theft."

"Place a muskrat trap display... as this was the first stop on Muskrat Bill's (Bill Thomas) trap line as he pushed his homemade 2 wheeled cart throughout Richmond."

THE PREFERRED CONCEPT PLAN

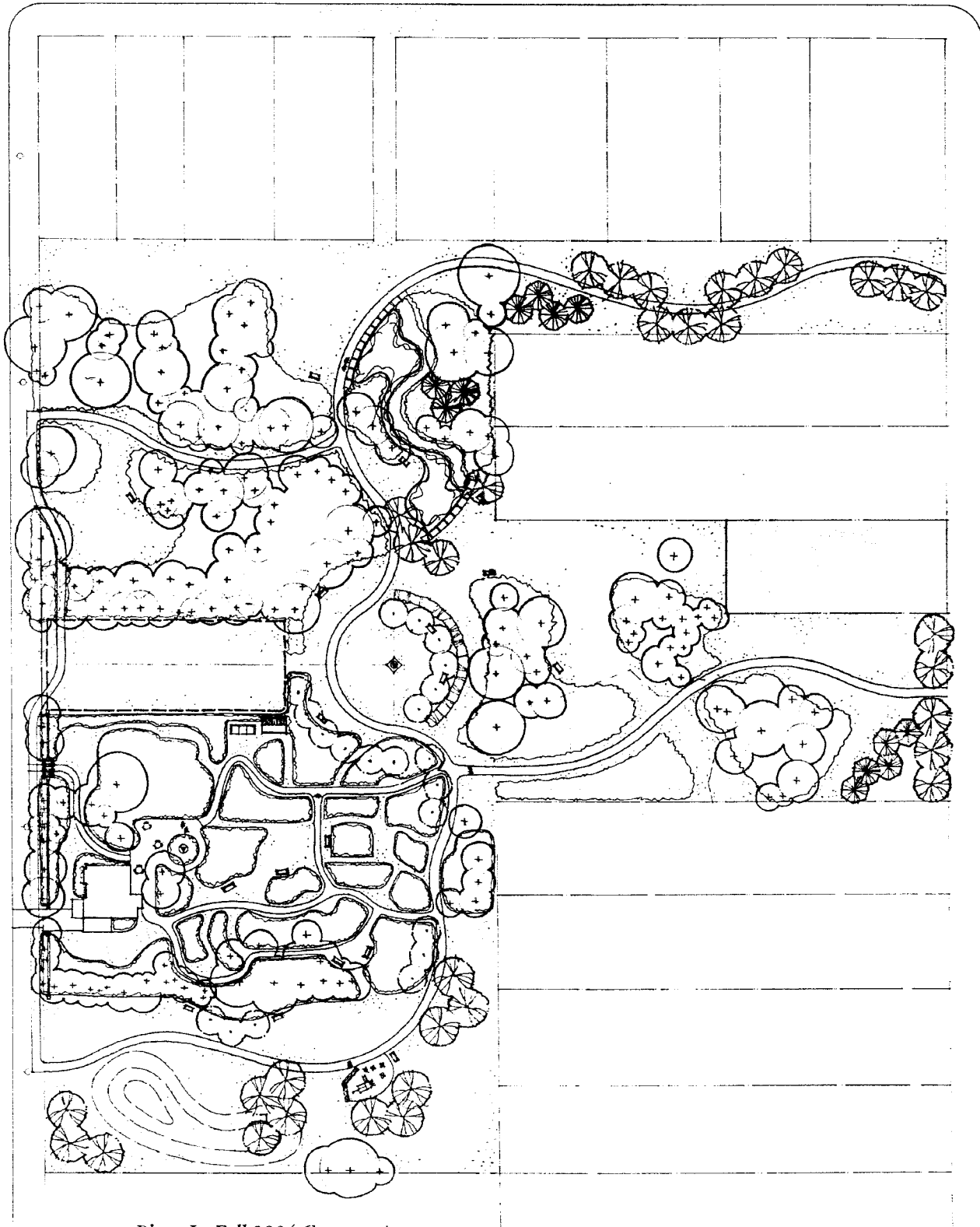
General Currie Road

Heather Street

Ash Street



CONSTRUCTION PHASING



Phase I - Fall 2004 Construction

Phase II - Fall 2005 Construction

Phase III - Future Phases