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Moore Park: Landscape Enhancements

Parks and Greens serve a wide variety of needs in our communities. They offer a place to sit in quiet solitude on a bench along a shady path, a moment for thought, a moment for reflection. And after that, they provide a setting for celebration - summer evening concerts; a Saturday afternoon wedding. They are sacred too, providing space where the community bears witness to the good and sacrifice of others who have contributed to the life of the community. And they sometimes save our lives - offering refuge from fire and high ground above flood waters.

Moore Park provides for all of these needs and more for the Westfield community and the purpose of this section of the study is to acknowledge the importance of the park in the life and landscape of the village and to suggest ways where the park may more fully meet the needs of the community. Considered here are ideas to improve accessibility and circulation, create more horticultural interest, and ways, generally, to see the green as a setting for a wider variety of use and community events.

Design Strategies

The plan to the right illustrates several design ideas that would improve both the use and functionality of the park. The ideas are based on a concept of the park that organizes the overall park space into three primary character areas. These include:

Public Garden

The Public Garden idea evolved from two functions of the park: the park provides an important visual setting for Main Street and especially at the intersection of Main and Portage Streets; and the park provides a collection of trees and shrubs that generate horticultural/seasonal interest for the village center area. These two functions along with a desire from the community to enhance the visual character of Main Street generated the idea of a public garden for Moore Park.

The Public Garden idea basically takes these two existing functions and enhances them to create a stronger visual image of the park at the intersection of Main & Portage Streets and a garden area along the Main Street sidewalk. The plan on the facing page shows where the garden would be located and illustrates the general landscape for the garden. A detailed plan for the garden is located on the overleaf.

The new garden would keep all existing plantings and park structures, memorial, flag pole, vineyard monument, etc. although the later maybe moved a bit further to the east. Garden elements would include:

1. New plantings including small flowering trees, shrubs, groundcover and displays of annual and perennial flowers both in planted beds and in decorative containers.
2. A new ornamental iron fence set parallel to the sidewalk and along the front of the park. The fence design would be sensitive to the historic character of the park and would be based on the historical use of such a fence as part of the McClurg Mansion landscape.
3. Several new benches, both backed and back-less, would be located along the sidewalk.
4. A village sign and/or a public clock may also be located in the garden most likely nearer to the intersection of Main and Portage Streets. See Section 3 for detailed description of the public clock.

See also other descriptive notes about the garden on the following drawings.

Museum Garden

A unique feature of Moore Park is the presence of the historic McClurg Mansion and indeed, the Park itself owes its existence to the lands of this regional landmark. The building and the museum it houses provide not only a valuable community and regional resource but also a wonderful opportunity to enhance the richness of the park through the landscape that was historically part of the its setting.

It is proposed here, as a strategy to enhance the function of Moore Park, to restore and/or create a landscape that was a part of the history of the mansion or the period of time when the McClurg Mansion was at its zenith of life. The Museum Garden would be based in this period landscape and as such would establish both an important historical resource to the region and delightful landscape character to the park.

The plan to the right broadly outlines the area of the Museum Garden (actual area will be based on historical research of the Mansion landscape) and illustrates how the garden can be integrated into the whole of the park. And this is a key point to this strategy: that the historic landscape be integrated into the park and not developed as a separate (or separated) entity within the park. Integration allows for a merging of landscapes, the old with the new and in that blending lies the potential for real excitement in the park experience.

Note:

Previous studies for the park have suggested a similar approach as well (Habitterra, 1995) through a restoration of portions of the McClurg Mansion grounds. Also note that other museums, notably the George Eastman House in Rochester, NY successfully restored the gardens of the Eastman Mansion (Breed, et.al., 1990) and conceived of the grounds as an aspect of the Museum's curatorial resources.

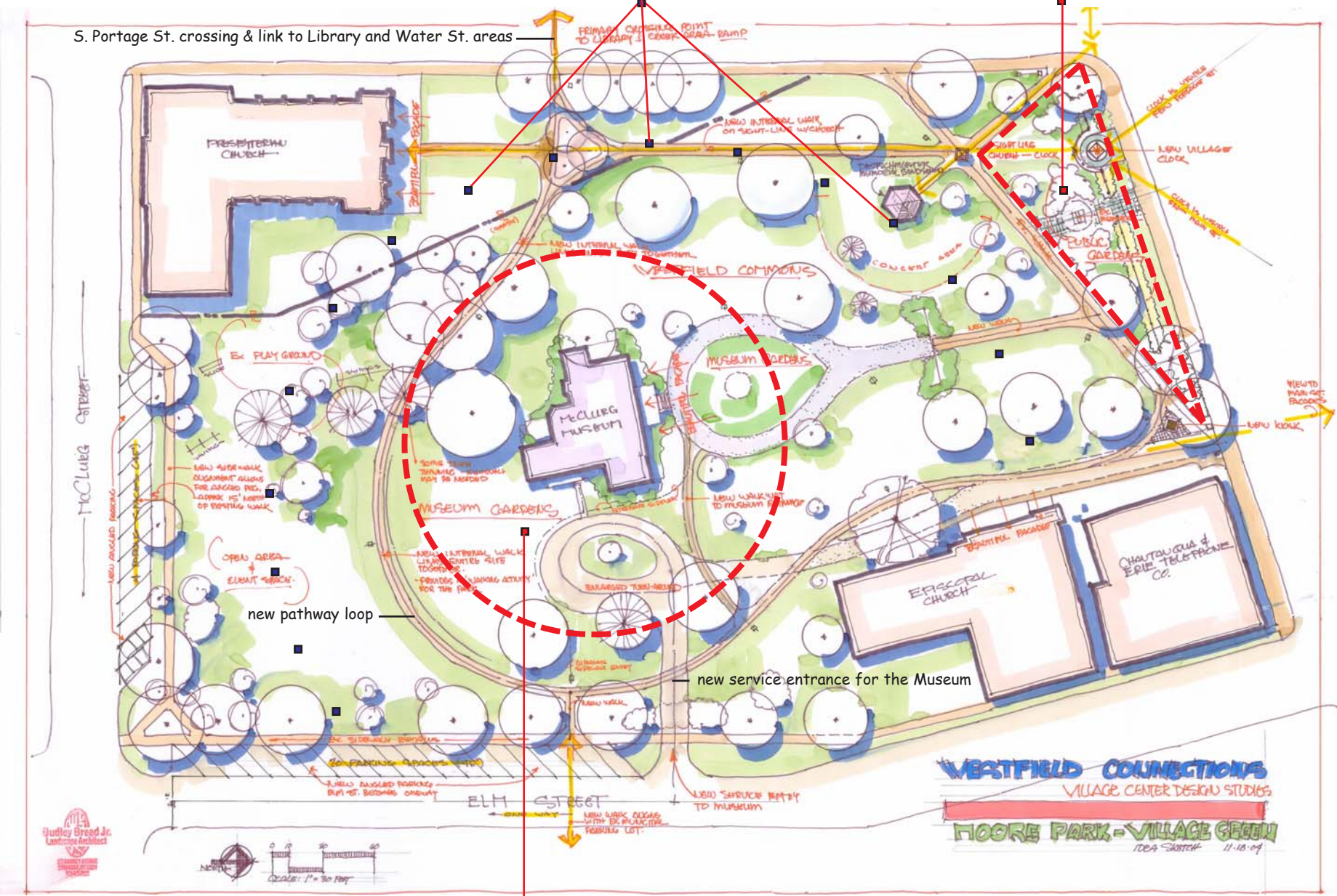
Westfield Commons

The land that connects and ties together the two gardens, and to a larger extent, ties together adjacent neighborhoods surrounding the park, is what is herein defined as the Westfield Commons. This is the general-use land that offers park space for both individual use, larger public gatherings and pathways to enter the park and traverse the park to adjoining parts of the village. On the plan, this area is roughly a crescent shaped area denoted by the blue dots and includes the existing Gazebo/Bandstand, angled walkway, play ground adjacent to the church and open lawn areas.

Westfield Commons

The Public Garden

S. Portage St. crossing & link to Library and Water St. areas



The Museum Gardens

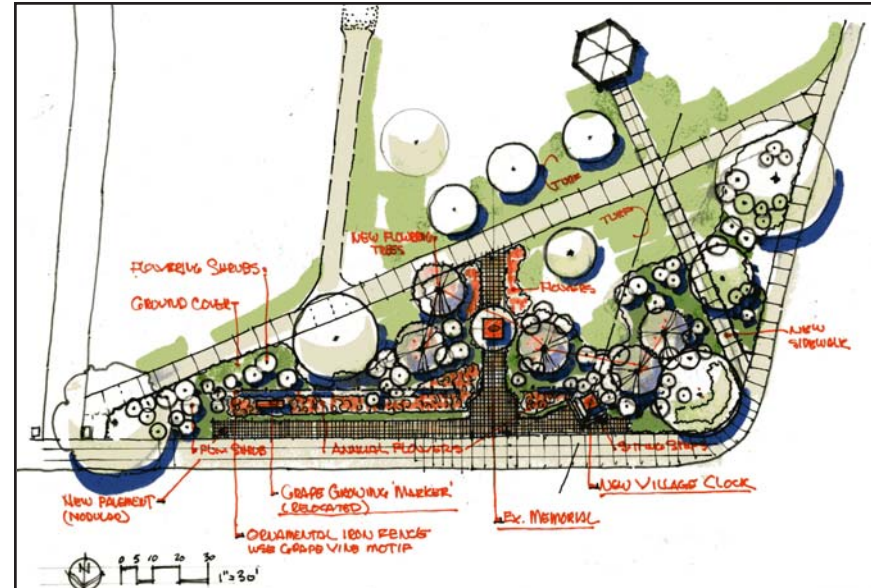
Two suggestions are offered here to enhance the function of the park and access to and through the space.

1. The park has a somewhat limited path system with just one paved walkway that angles in a NE-SW direction across the northern end of the park. The remainder of the park, with the exception of the loose gravel driveways adjacent to the Episcopal Church and in front of the McClurg Mansion is accessible across the lawn areas and it seems, at least at times, it may be difficult for some residents and visitors to navigate the turf areas.

One suggestion would be to establish a paved pathway that circulates through the entire park making connections to the existing perimeter sidewalks, other garden areas and to adjoining neighborhoods. The plan on the previous page illustrates a concept for such a walkway. The walkway improves access to and into the park and allows not only movement to a particular place but also creates an opportunity to circulate around the park in a continuous loop. This would greatly improve the use and enjoyment of the park. Park users can enjoy a walk through the park, stop to sit if they choose or continue to walk making several loops to get a bit of exercise.

2. The second suggestion would be to give consideration to a wider variety of uses or events for the park. Village parks tend to be considered "soft" spaces with uses limited to casual sitting or an occasional summer event like a band concert. But parks such as Moore Park can provide space for wide variety of community, tourism and commercial uses. Part of the strategy underlying the desire for enhanced tourism in the area will be development of events that can draw visitors to the area. Those events will require various venues in the village and town and Moore Park can play an important role in this regard. Art, music, craft and antique festivals would be appropriate uses for the Park. Consider also a farmer's market like the one in Hamilton, NY pictured to the right. (Breed, Village Green Restoration Project, 2002)

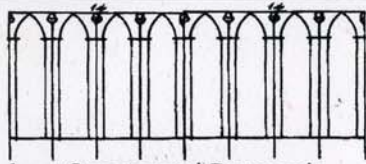
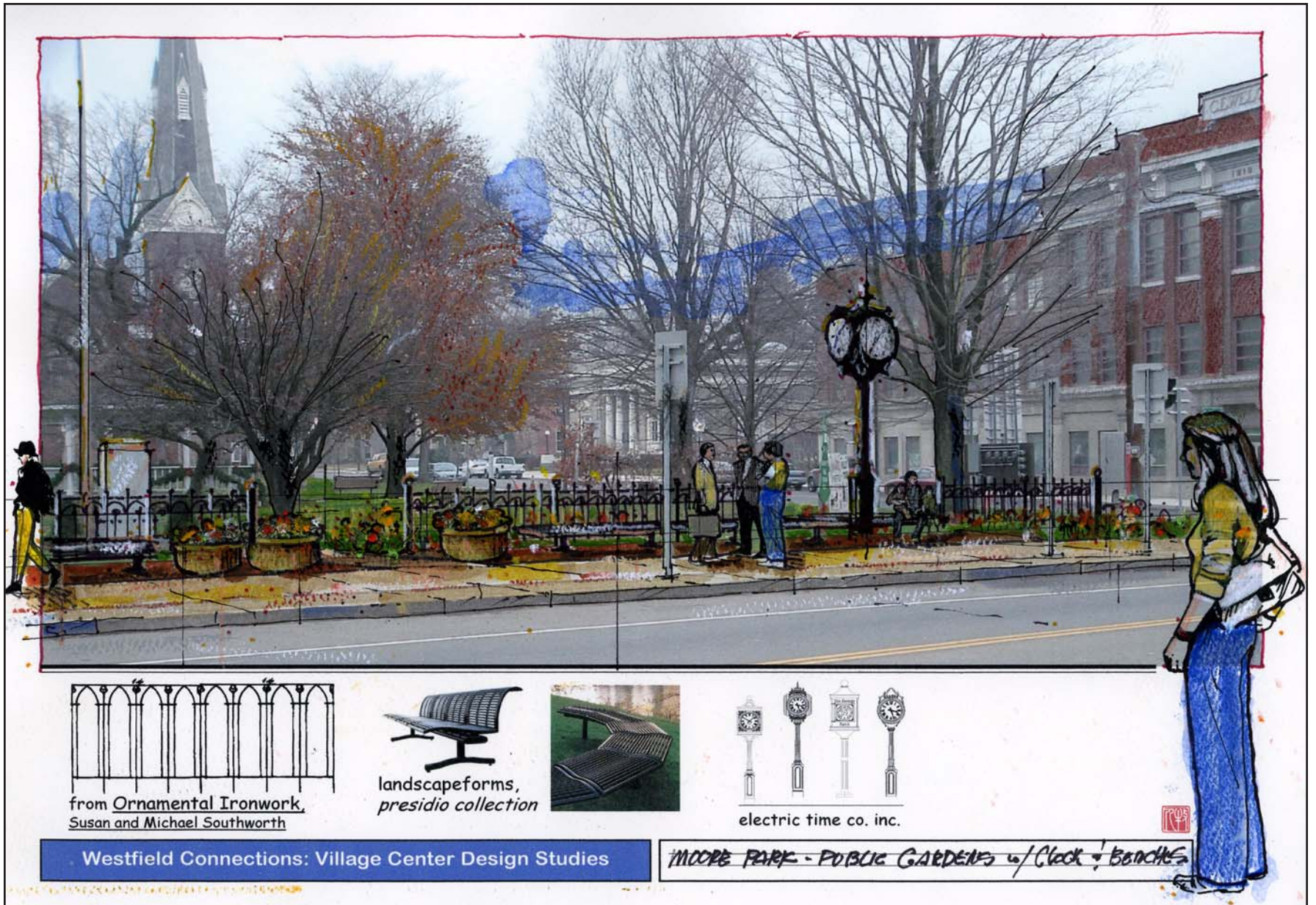
One of the hurdles in the design and renovation of traditional village parks is simply getting to a point where the community can see the park as being or functioning differently from past patterns. It is hoped that this study has encouraged the residents of Westfield to explore new opportunities for Moore Park and perhaps see ways that the Park can continue to live and grow along with the community.



Public Garden concept sketch illustrating a garden development along the north side of Moore Park. The garden enhances the existing memorial and viticulture exhibit while providing a richer horticulture setting along Main Street.



Hamilton Village Green: internal walkway opens the park to a broader array of use and enjoyment of the park setting.



from *Ornamental Ironwork*,
Susan and Michael Southworth



landscapeforms,
presidio collection



electric time co. inc.

Westfield Connections: Village Center Design Studies

MOORE PARK - PUBLIC GARDENS w/ Clock & Benches

Above is an illustration of how the public garden will look along Main Street. The fence, benches and bedding plants create an elegant backdrop for the sidewalk space and a more formal transition from the street into the park proper. However, overall views into the park are not blocked or diminished. One can still see into the park and view the McClurg Mansion, church facades and gazebo as before. This view also shows a new community clock as discussed in the previous section of this report.

Just below the illustration are samples of site furnishings that would be appropriate for the streetscape and the park.