



BACKGROUND: Buhl Community Park Description

Contact:

Bill Schlageter, Director of Marketing

(412) 586-6023

The new design of Buhl Community Park at Allegheny Square brings together meadow-like expanses of native trees and grasses with walking paths, interspersed with bluestone walls and punctuated by the environmental artwork, "Cloud Arbor," by Ned Kahn. The remains of the concrete and brick landscape which previously occupied the space were crushed and recycled as fill beneath the new park.

In the new greenspace, two diagonal walking paths, which recall a historic design the park had until the 1930s, connect the northern corners of the space to a paved central plaza with moveable chairs near the center that serves as a gathering place for concerts and performances or more casual visits. The wider path toward the northeast frames a view of the Carnegie Library, emphasizing its architectural beauty and historical importance, while also making room for the temporary booths of frequent festivals. The path toward the northwest corner connects the Children's Museum to the central plaza. "We wanted to treat the park as a link that connects everything together," says Children's Museum Executive Director Jane Werner. "Historically, this has been the core of the neighborhood."

"Cloud Arbor," which consists of a grid of 64 fog-emitting poles, each of which is 32 feet high, is located just to the west of the central gathering space. Its slightly off-center placement allows it to serve as a focal point and a destination, while also accommodating groups for scheduled events and allowing expansive views of the neighboring historic architecture.

Trees return to the space, with 110 of them newly planted throughout, including river birch, American hophornbeam, ironwood, red maple and swamp white oak, all of which are native species. Three bald cypress trees on the western edge remain from the earlier design, which had very few trees to start with. The trees contribute substantially to the sense of renewed greenery, while also softening the connection to the tall, spare tower of Allegheny Center to the south.

For ground cover, Andrea Cochran explains, "We wanted something that would be more like a meadow," so meadow grasses and clover take the place of a lawn. These are also native species, so, like the trees, they eliminate the need for fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides. "We wanted a space where you could throw a ball or have a picnic," Cochran adds.

At the western portion of the park, the bioswale or watergarden acts as a natural treatment for stormwater runoff, absorbing rainwater and releasing it gradually, instead of dumping it immediately into storm sewers.

Several low bluestone walls running east to west occur at intervals throughout the park to provide informal seating areas. Made from a material native to this region, they are also faced with inscriptions of quotations from famous Pittsburghers. Their form and material harmonizes with adjacent historic architecture. "I wanted the history to be celebrated with the materials of the park," Cochran explains.