

Dickenson Memorial Park

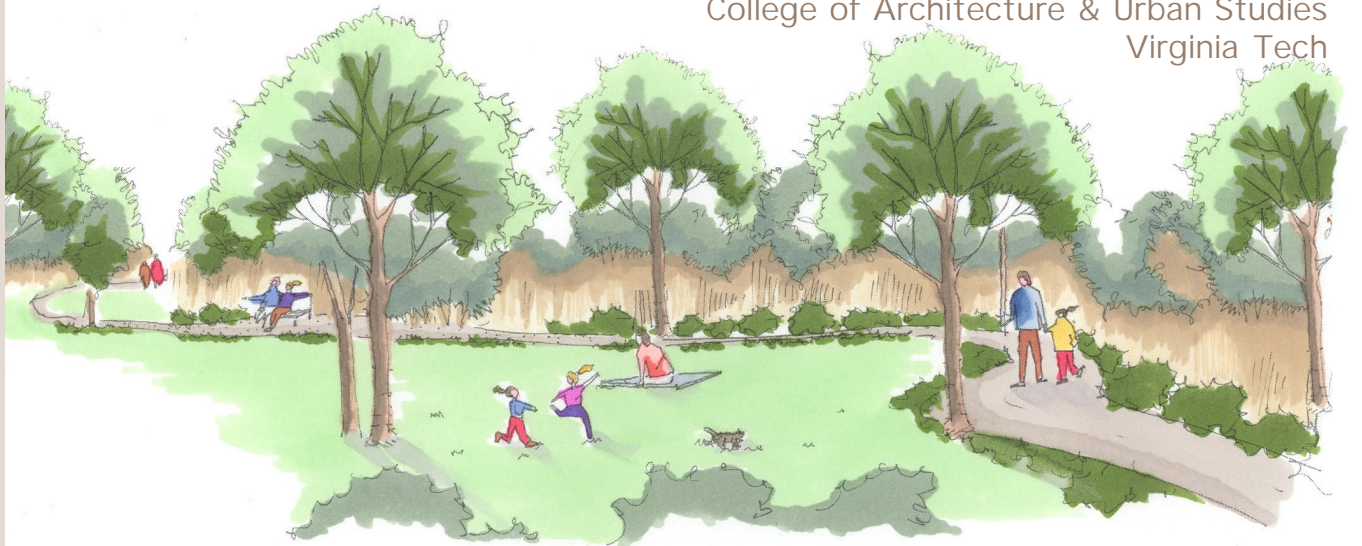


January 2004

A Conceptual Master Plan For



Community Design Assistance Center
College of Architecture & Urban Studies
Virginia Tech



Project Team

Design Team: Michele Dawson, Graduate student, Landscape Architecture
Ok-Hyun Lee, Graduate student, Architecture
Shawn Tofte, Graduate student, Landscape Architecture

Project Advisors: Elizabeth T. Gilboy, Director, CDAC
Kim Watson, Landscape Architecture Project Coordinator

Report Editor: Maxine Lyons, Program Support Technician

Acknowledgments

The CDAC team would like to extend their appreciation and recognition to the following people for their work on and help with the project:

Dennis Donachy
Stan Beason
Patrick DeCrane
Michael Thomas
Herb Collins

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Project Description

Located about 20 miles south of Fredericksburg, Bowling Green has been the County seat of Caroline County since 1803. The community of about 1,000 is rich in history which is evident from its many historic structures. The town is home to a new housing development called Bowling Green Meadows. The developer has donated two of the lots (roughly 2 acres) to the town's Historic/Economic Leadership Panel (H.E.L.P.). This area includes a cemetery of five graves that was used from about the 1740's to about 1880. H.E.L.P. would like to develop the site into a small community park.

It is envisioned that the park would serve as an historic site and gathering place for neighborhood residents and community members, where users could find a quiet spot to sit and talk, eat lunch, or relax. Possible elements for the park include a gazebo, vegetation, sitting areas, a pathway, a visual separation from the new neighborhood, and a connection to the downtown.

Products for this project include a conceptual master plan for the site which indicates general locations of site elements, including the path; a planting plan which notes what types of vegetation should be planted where; and a short supporting report that describes the design process and final products.



State context map



Town context map



Housing development context map



Donated land with existing grave marker.

Design Process

The project began with an initial site visit to Bowling Green in which the CDAC design team and project administration met with the developers, local historians, H.E.L.P. members, and some town officials. The design team video taped the site and the entry sequence into the new housing development. They also learned about the Town's vision for the park which included interpreting the history of the cemetery, planting period-appropriate cemetery vegetation, and repositioning the monument. Town members also expressed their desire to define the park's borders without having to install a fence.

The design team returned to Bowling Green to conduct a site analysis, that included a photographic documentation of some of the historic structures in Bowling Green. The design team looked to the historic structures' materials and style to glean ideas for the character and feeling of the park to be designed. After completing the site analysis, the design team began to develop several possible concepts for the park which were then presented to the H.E.L.P. members. From this meeting, a single concept was chosen and was developed into a conceptual master plan.

An initial draft of the conceptual plan was presented to the H.E.L.P. members and the Town Council. Comments were received and a few minor changes were made to complete the final conceptual master plan. This master plan, along with a planting plan and supporting sketches, were sent to the client. This final report has been prepared to document the design process and final master plan.



CDAC Director Elizabeth Gilboy meets with developers and H.E.L.P. members



Student designer Michele Dawson documents the site.



Student designer Michele Dawson presents park concepts to Town Council.

A Brief History of Bowling Green

Bowling Green’s history began with colonial settlement of Virginia. “With its incredibly wealthy land planters, Colonial Caroline was considered the third most affluent county in the Virginia Colony. At that time, Bowling Green was a tiny hamlet known as New Hope.” (11, A Walking Tour of Historic Bowling Green).

In 1669 Old Mansion, a surmountable estate, was built by Major Thomas Hoomes. The house and estate were originally called Bolling Green after the Hoomes’ family seat in England. Major Hoomes opened a tavern at the intersection of a rolling road and stage road. “The venture was a success and a large trading settlement grew up around his business. In 1804, Hoomes wisely donated the land for a court green and persuaded the county to move the courthouse to the site opposite the tavern, where it stands today. The courthouse was designed by William Phillips and Malchom Crawford, master builders employed by Thomas Jefferson. The Courthouse was completed in 1835 and took the name of the Hoomes’ estate, spelling it ‘Bowling Green’. The estate, already more than 100 years old, then became known as Old Mansion. Bowling Green was incorporated as a town in 1837 and is the county seat of Caroline.” (6, A Walking Tour of Historic Bowling Green).

Occupied by the Union, Bowling Green was an active town during the Civil War, as Grant’s men pressed in near Richmond. It also housed many confederate spies in the town hotel (Star Hotel). H.E.L.P commissioned artist Sidney King to paint a mural depicting the town during the height of the Civil War activity in Caroline County. The mural was then erected on the courthouse lawn. King designed the painting to “tell the story of events that unfolded in the Town of Bowling Green between May 20 and May 23, 1864.”... “The mural would also tell the story of the people.” (10, A Walking Tour of Historic Bowling Green). Today, the mural serves as a reminder of what structures have been destroyed and lost, to either destruction during the Civil War or one of the Town’s two major Easter morning fires (1900 and 1955). Amazingly, many notable structures have been preserved.

Today “Bowling Green is a town of beautiful trees, spacious lawns, and comfortable homes. Major religious de-



Courthouse Square



Bowling Green after the 1955 Easter Fire.



Mural of Historic Bowling Green

nominations maintain numerous churches. Popular civic and fraternal organizations are well established. "Downtown Bowling Green and the shopping centers in the north end of town offer a variety of stores to accommodate most shopping needs." (See Old Historic Bowling Green Virginia brochure).



Amoco fire



Avenue in Bowling Green



Historic photo of Main Street



Female seminary

Inventory

The CDAC design team conducted a brief inventory of the historic structures in Bowling Green, looking at character, materials, and predominant architectural styles of the Town. They used the walking tour brochure produced by H.E.L.P. as the primary guide. Bowling Green is famous for her Colonial and Victorian homes, but other periods of American history are equally well represented, including Greek Revival, Pre-Georgian, and Gothic Revival. Traditional materials used in Bowling Green are brick and wood. Exploring the historic structures of the Town gave the design team the opportunity to discover a bit more of the flavor of Bowling Green and to identify styles and materials that could or should be used in the park design.



Beautiful detailing



Antioch Christian church - detail



Courthouse colonnade

Analysis

The CDAC design team conducted an analysis of the site, looking at such aspects as topography, natural features, possible connections, views to enhance or restrict, access points, and circulation patterns.

The site itself is almost entirely flat, with the exception of some areas around the perimeter of the site which slope down to meet the road. The only vegetation present is grass so the team had, for the most part, a blank canvas to work with as they developed a design. The grave marker is the only physical element currently present on the site.

The park is strategically located just a few blocks from the Town offices and Main Street. There are opportunities to create pedestrian connections in the form of trails, from the park to both areas. While conducting the site analysis, the design team met with David Storke, owner of Storke Funeral Home, to discuss the possibility of utilizing his easement and access road to connect to Main Street. Mr. Storke was very supportive of the idea and his only concern was that pedestrian travel to and from the park would not interfere with any funeral processes.

Since the site is flat and currently has no vegetation there are clear views to all the surrounding areas. Views to the new homes are quite favorable, affording opportunities for residents to visually survey the park from their homes. This increases the safety of the park. There are also less than favorable views, particularly on the north side of Chase Street. Placement of vegetation and physical design elements (i.e. - gazebo) can help screen these undesirable views.

Consideration will need to be given when siting and designing access points to the site to ensure safe and accessible entry to the park for all users. One of the possible pedestrian access point indicated on the site analysis drawing has slopes that would make it quite difficult to make that access point ADA accessible.

A diagram on the following page examines vehicular circulation patterns around the site and possible pedestrian circulation patterns. An 11x17 drawing of the site analysis can be found on page 8.



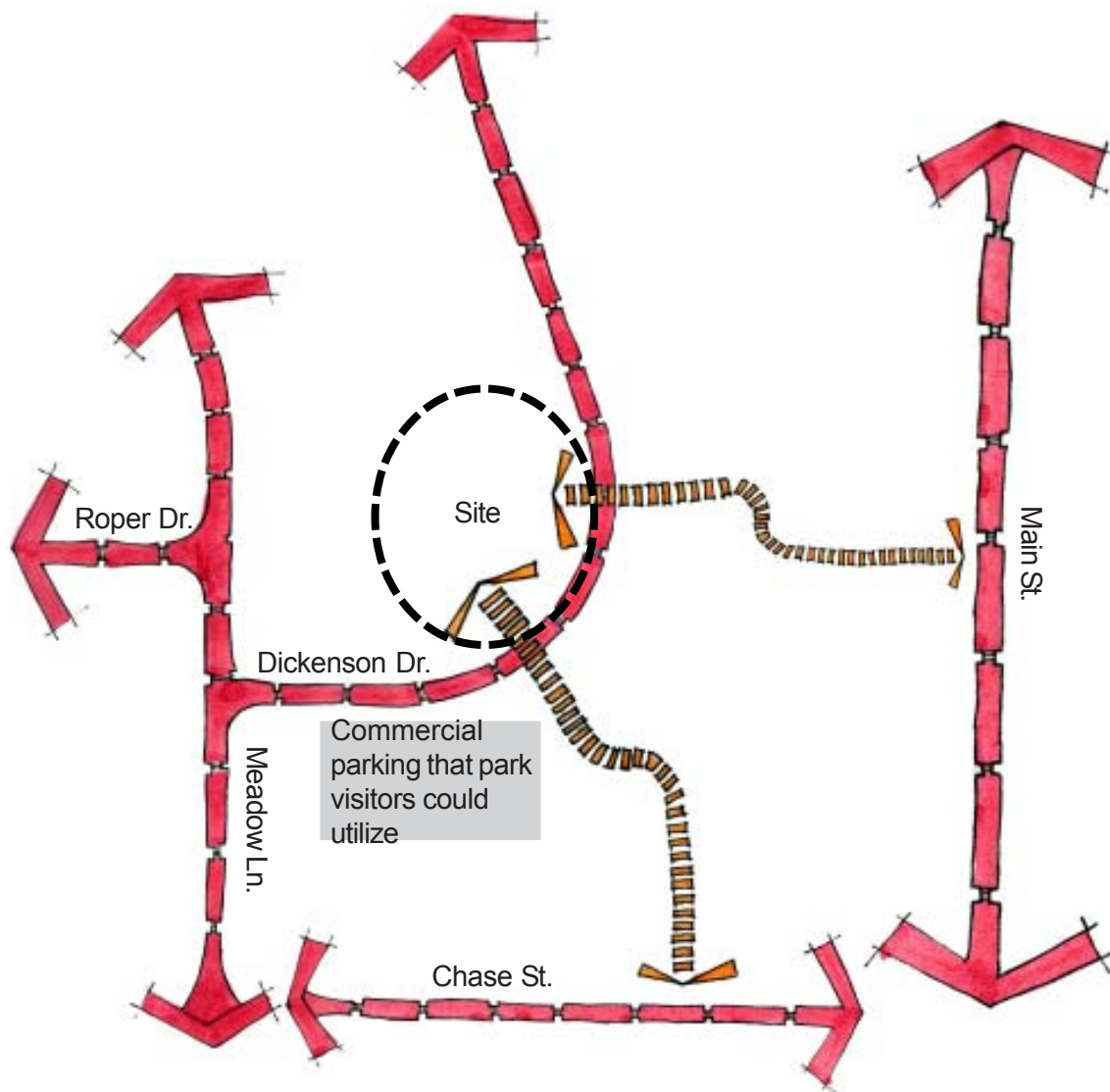
Mr. Williams and Stan Beason discuss the grave marker.



A view of neighborhood homes from the site



A view to screen from the park



Circulation Patterns

The CDAC design team looked at the primary vehicular circulation patterns around the site (represented by the red arrows). Currently, traffic flow on these streets is very low. Once the development is fully constructed and houses are occupied, traffic flow will most likely remain relatively low and the community should be very walkable. The design team has thus identified Chase Street and Main Street as the two streets where formal pedestrian circulation routes (paths) need to be made to provide both safe pedestrian access to and visual access of the park.



- Park boundaries
- Commercial areas
- Residential areas

↑N Not to Scale



101 south main street, suite 2 bethesda, va 24061
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Site Analysis

Inspiration for the Design

The CDAC design team looked both to the surrounding context of the Town of Bowling Green as well as to other places for ideas for materials and elements for Dickenson Memorial Park.

H.E.L.P. members and town officials desired a design for the park that encouraged passive recreation and responded appropriately and respectfully to the grave marker on the site. The CDAC team looked to find design elements that would cultivate an atmosphere conducive to quiet reflection. The use of water, such as small reflection pools, was one excellent potential element.

Through research and conversations with local Bowling Green and Caroline County historians, the CDAC team learned about some of the traditional cemetery planting materials. The one plant material the client specifically requested the design team use was periwinkle, a common plant found in cemeteries. Images of other elements that might help create a sense of place are included on this page.



Residential lighting in Newport, KY



Seating example in Cincinnati, OH



Water feature example



Gravel path with planted edges



Example of a seating area under an arbor



Water bowl



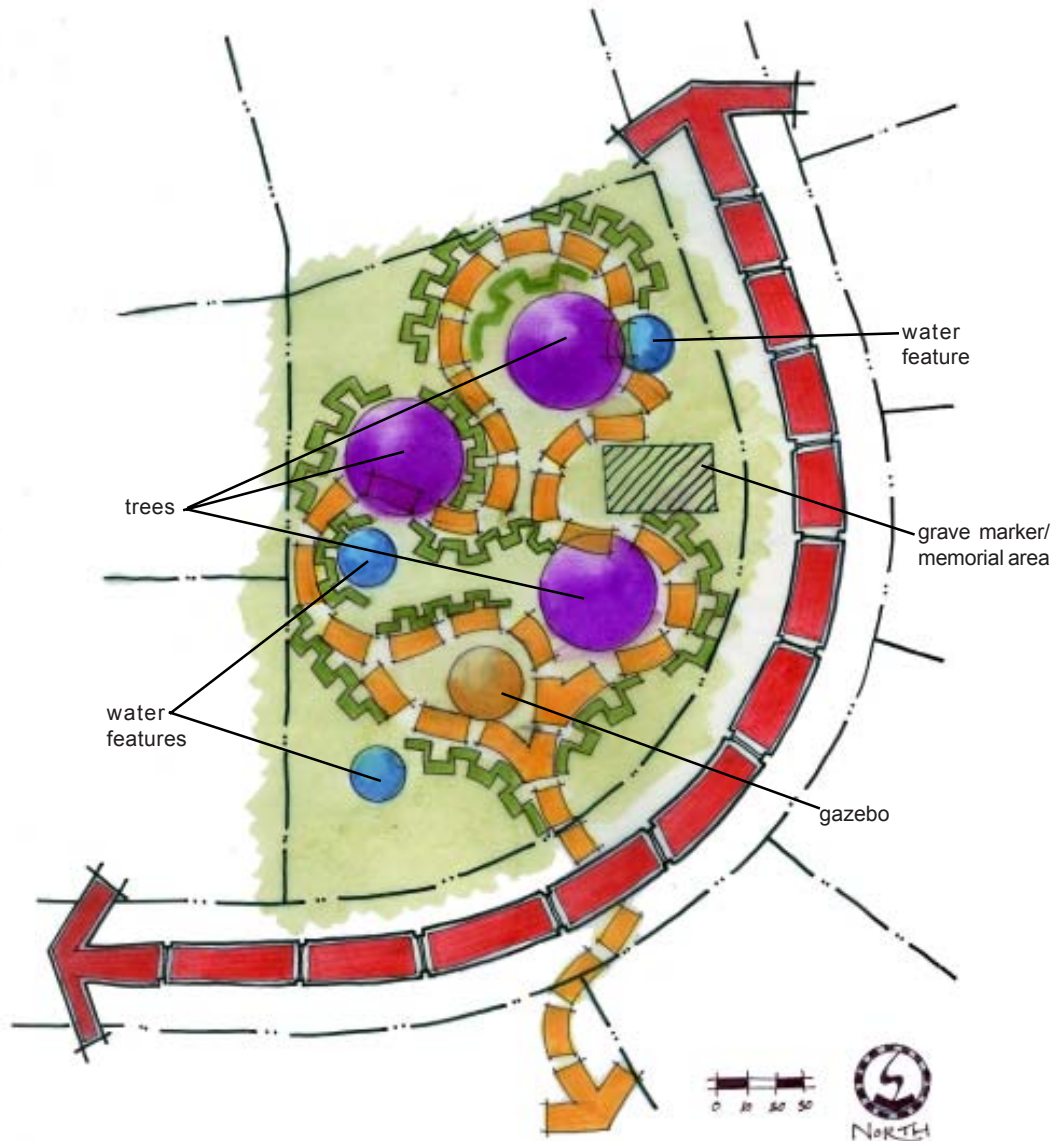
Garden space at UVA

Design Concepts

The CDAC design team developed three concepts for the Dickenson Memorial Park. These concepts all incorporated three programmatic givens: that the park would be a passive recreational park, that the park would have a gazebo, and that the grave marker would remain and be given prominence and respect. The three concepts explored different ways the aesthetic, experiential, and programmatic desires for the park could be fulfilled. The concepts were presented in early May 2003 to H.E.L.P members. From this presentation, Concept A was chosen as the concept to be further refined into a preliminary conceptual master plan. The following pages describe the primary ideas and some of the design features behind each concept.



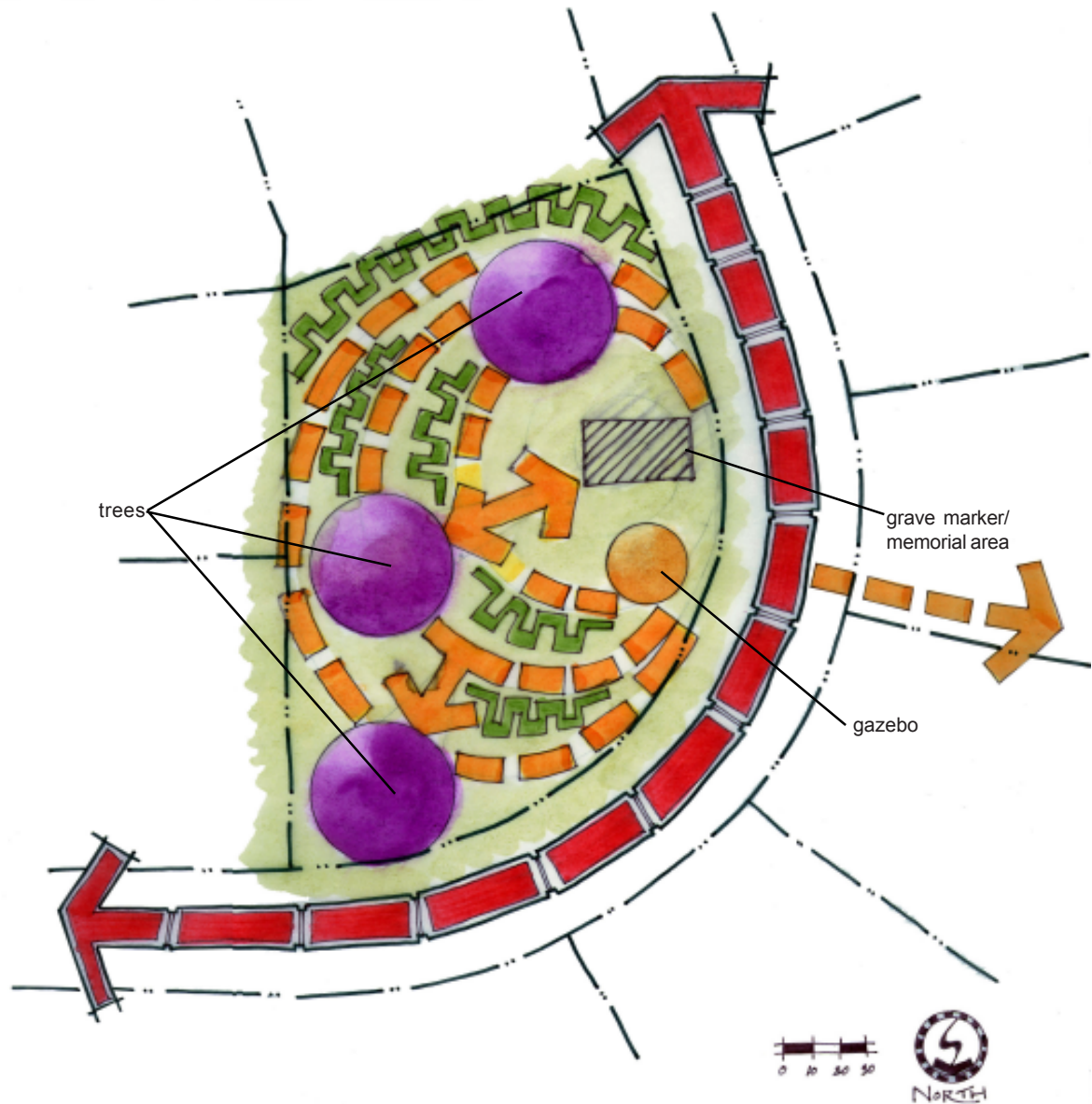
H.E.L.P. members review the concepts.



Design Concept A

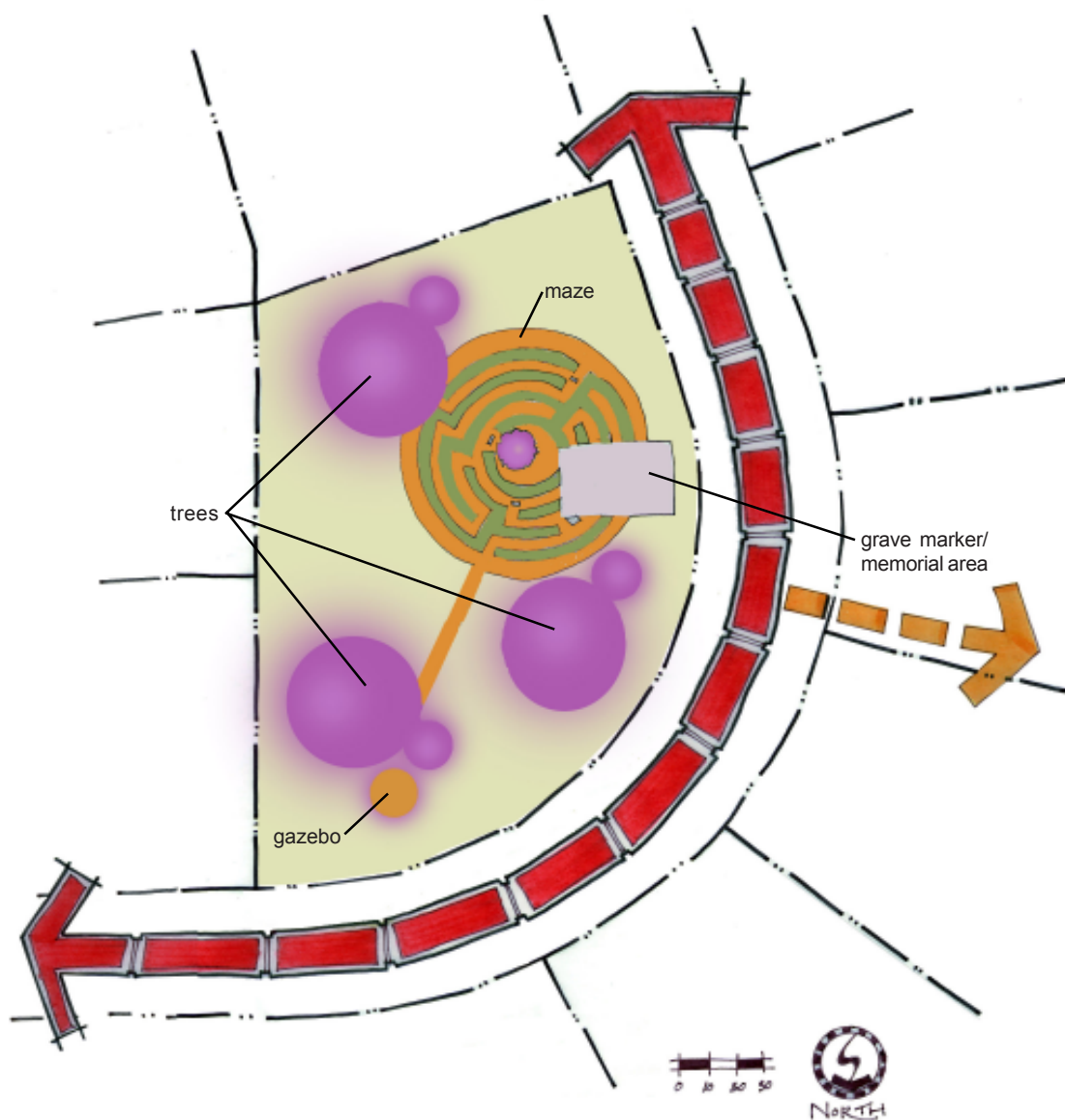
The defining element in Concept A is a gravel path that meanders through the site. The path route, represented by the orange dashed line, creates interior and exterior spaces, both unifying the site with a common element and also creating smaller “rooms” within the space. The gazebo is placed on the northern half of the site (represented by the orange circle). A few large trees, shown as purple circles, also serve as primary spatial delineators. The small blue circles represent water features, such as small reflection pools. These water features could be accompanied by seating and would allow for several “private” reflective spaces within the park. The dark green symbols represent veg-

etation (i.e. - shrubs/perennials) that would border the path. A rectangular space is defined around the grave marker, creating it as a place of distinction within the park. The red dashed line on the diagram represents vehicular circulation.



Design Concept B

The pedestrian path in Concept B, again represented by the orange dashed line, radiates out from the grave marker and memorial space. Like Concept A, the path is bordered by shrubs and perennials (represented by the dark green symbol). A few prominent trees, represented by the purple circles, also help to define the space. The gazebo (orange circle) in Concept B is placed closer to the grave marker, creating more of a connection between the two elements and also influencing how the open space surrounding it may be used. Again, the red dashed line on the diagram represents vehicular circulation.



Design Concept C

Design Concept C takes a very different approach toward the development of the site. Here a maze, created by a gravel walking path (orange line) and shrubs (dark green lines), leads the visitor through a reflective journey that ends in the memorial area. A medium sized tree and bench are placed in the center of the maze, affording visitors an opportunity to sit and rest or pause and reflect before beginning their journey out of the maze. The gazebo in Concept C, represented by the orange circle, is sited in the northeast corner of the site. It is bordered by trees (purple circles) and is more removed from the memorial area than in the other plans. Concept C provides a large open lawn area

on the eastern edge of the site. The red dashed line on the diagram represents vehicular circulation.

Preliminary Conceptual Master Plan

After presenting three design concepts and obtaining feedback, the CDAC design team returned to Blacksburg to develop a preliminary conceptual master plan based on the comments received at the presentation. This plan was presented to H.E.L.P. members and Town Council during a regularly scheduled Council meeting in July 2003. An 11x17 pullout of the conceptual plan can be found on the following page.

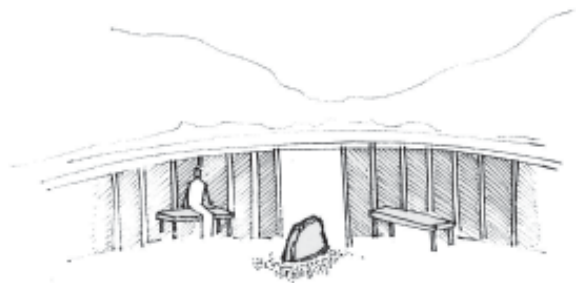
The proposed gazebo in this plan is one of the primary design elements. It is sited to create a sense of enclosure for the park and provide an open lawn for small concerts or performances, where the gazebo would serve as the stage. The gazebo borrows the architecture of a Main Street storefront and not only creates a backdrop for events to occur but also screens the unsightly view across Chase Street.

The plan also proposes a meandering path bordered with vegetation. Several benches and small water features are interspersed throughout the site, creating opportunities for quiet reflection or more intimate conversations. A larger, central grassy lawn allows for passive recreation or picnicking.

Overall, H.E.L.P. and Town Council members were extremely pleased with the plan. Their only requested change was in regards to the gazebo. Although they felt the proposed design for the gazebo was quite innovative, members thought a traditional style gazebo would be more appropriate for a park in Bowling Green.



Meandering path through the park



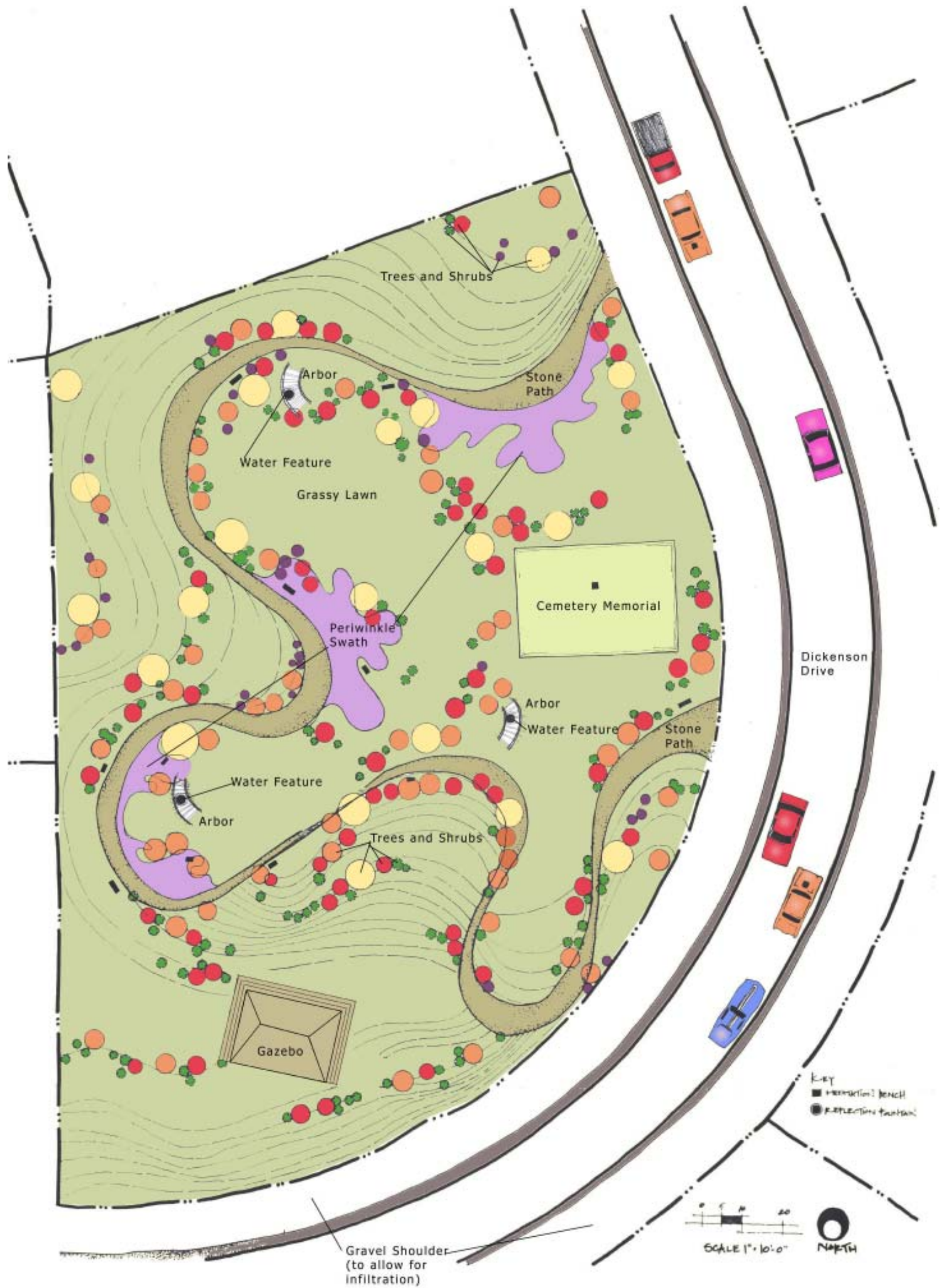
Memorial stone and reflection area



Benches placed along the path for reflecting or resting



"Storefront" gazebo, with ceiling fans and front porch-like steps for sitting



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Preliminary Conceptual Master Plan

Final Conceptual Master Plan

The final Conceptual Master Plan is quite similar to the Preliminary Conceptual Master Plan with only a few minor changes. The dimensions and style of the gazebo were changed and its placement was adjusted accordingly. The “memorial area” around the grave marker was further refined and a few additional design elements such as entry signage and plantings were added.

The design for the park creates a space where children from the neighborhood can run and play on the grassy lawn, where residents can come and take a walk along the trail, where visitors can learn about the history of Bowling Green and the Dickenson family’s influence on the Town’s history, and where Town and Main Street employees can come to eat lunch on a warm, sunny day. The gazebo could serve as a stage for small outdoor concerts or events that could be held in the park. Families could use the park for parties or reunions. The possibilities are vast.



Sketch of park entry and trail



Sketch of open space (grassy lawn) and trail



Sketch of cemetery memorial and grave marker



Sketch of gazebo



Sketch of arbor



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Town context map

Final Conceptual Master Plan

Planting Plan

The planting plan uses a palette of plants that will showcase the four seasons. An array of small flowering trees and shrubs offer color and grandeur to the park during the spring and summer months.

Larger trees provide spatial structure for the park and create desirable places to sit during the warm summer months. Some trees have notable fall color while others have showy bark that give them noteworthy characteristics even during the winter months.

A variety of plant materials have been recommended. Most of the plants are native to Virginia. Periwinkle, a perennial traditionally used as a cemetery planting in Virginia, has been included as one of the primary perennial plant materials in the plan.



Flowers on the White Flowering Dogwood



Flowers on the PJM Rhododendron



Flowers on the Arrowwood Viburnum



River Birch trunk with peely bark

Images taken from:
PJM Rhododendron - www.natorp.com/Rhododendron'PJM'.htm
Arrowwood Viburnum - www.ct-botanical-society.org/galleries/virbunumdent.html
River birch - Landscaping with Native Trees by Guy Sternburg and Jim Wilson

Plant List for Dickenson Memorial Park

SYM	Scientific Name	Common Name	Landscape Characteristics
TREES:			
AG	<i>Amelanchier x grandiflora</i> 'Autumn Brilliance'	"Autumn Brilliance" Serviceberry	Showy white flowers; blue fruits; spectacular fall color
BN	<i>Betula nigra</i>	River Birch	Cinnamon-colored exfoliating bark
CC	<i>Cercis Canadensis</i>	Eastern Redbud	Rose-pink flowers during early spring
CP	<i>Cercis canadensis</i> 'Forest Pansy'	Eastern Redbud	Purple foliage
CF	<i>Cornus florida</i>	White Flowering Dogwood	White flowers during spring and red berries throughout the winter
CR	<i>Cornus florida var. rubra</i>	Pink Flowering Dogwood	Deep pink flowers during the spring with red berries during winter
FS	<i>Fagus americana</i>	American Beech	Native, large tree; beautiful golden bronze fall color
MW	<i>Malus</i> 'Donald Wyman'	"Donald Wyman" Crabapple	Disease resistant; white flowers; bright red fruits
MM	<i>Malus</i> 'Indian Magic'	"Indian Magic" Crabapple	Deep pink flowers; orange-red fruits
MS	<i>Malus</i> 'Indian Summer'	"Indian Summer" Crabapple	Disease-resistant; rose-red flowers; bright red fruits
OA	<i>Oxydendrum arboreum</i>	Sourwood	Vibrant fall color
PS	<i>Pinus strobus</i>	White Pine	Native evergreen
PK	<i>Prunus serrulata</i> 'Kwanzan'	"Kwanzan" Flowering Cherry	Double pink flowers during spring
QP	<i>Quercus palustris</i>	Pin Oak	Pyramidal-shaped; large glossy leaves
QW	<i>Quercus phellos</i>	Willow Oak	Willow-like leaves
SHRUBS:			
AL	<i>Azalea</i> 'Elsie Lee'	<i>Azalea</i> "Elsie Lee"	Lavender semi-double flowers
AF	<i>Azalea</i> 'Fushia'	<i>Azalea</i> "Fushia"	Reddish-purple flowers
AC	<i>Azalea</i> 'Girard Crimson'	<i>Azalea</i> "Girard Crimson"	Large, orange red flowers
BS	<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>	American Boxwood	Relatively fast grower- evergreen leaves
CV	<i>Cornus alba</i> 'Elegantissima'	Variiegated Red Twig Dogwood	Showy red stems during winter; variegated leaves
EA	<i>Euonymus alatus</i> 'Compactus'	Compact Burning Bush	Vibrant red fall color
N	<i>Itea virginica</i>	Virginia Sweetspire	Excellent fall color; white fragrant flowers
RP	<i>Rhododendron</i>	P.J.M.	Lavender pink flowers
RR	<i>Rhododendron</i> Roseum Pink	Roseum Pink	Vigorous, clear pink flowers
VD	<i>Viburnum dentatum</i>	Arrowwood Viburnum	White spring flowers; blue/ black fruits in fall
GRASSES:			
PA	<i>Pennisetum alopecuroides</i>	Fountain Grass	Ornamental Grass
PERENNIALS:			
PW	<i>Periwinkle</i>	Periwinkle	Semi-evergreen groundcover
HS	<i>Hemerocallis sp.</i>	Daylily	Flowers all summer long



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PK	<i>Prunus serrulata</i> 'Kwanzan'	"Kwanzan" Flowering Cherry	Double pink flowers during spring
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EA	<i>Euonymus alatus</i> 'Compactus'	Compact Burning Bush	Vibrant red fall color
IV	<i>Itea virginica</i>	Virginia Sweetspire	Excellent fall color; white fragrant flowers
RP	<i>Rhododendron</i>	P.J.M.	Lavender pink flowers
RR	<i>Rhododendron</i> Roseum Pink	Roseum Pink	Vigorous, clear pink flowers
VD	<i>Viburnum dentatum</i>	Arrowwood Viburnum	White spring flowers; blue/black fruits in fall
GRASSES:			
PA	<i>Pennisetum alopecuroides</i>	Fountain Grass	Ornamental Grass
PERENNIALS:			
PW	<i>Periwinkle</i>	Periwinkle	Semi-evergreen groundcover
HS	<i>Hemerocallis</i> sp.	Daylily	Flowers all summer long

Planting Plan

Quantified Plant List for Dickenson Memorial Park

SYM	Scientific Name	Common Name	Quantity Specified on Plan
TREES:			
AG	<i>Amelanchier x grandiflora</i> 'Autumn Brilliance'	"Autumn Brilliance" Serviceberry	13
BN	<i>Betula nigra</i>	River Birch	3
CC	<i>Cercis Canadensis</i>	Eastern Redbud	9
CP	<i>Cercis canadensis</i> 'Forest Pansy'	Eastern Redbud	4
CF	<i>Cornus florida</i>	White Flowering Dogwood	2
CR	<i>Cornus florida</i> var. <i>rubra</i>	Pink Flowering Dogwood	14
FS	<i>Fagus americana</i>	American Beech	2
MW	<i>Malus</i> 'Donald Wyman'	"Donald Wyman" Crabapple	7
MM	<i>Malus</i> 'Indian Magic'	"Indian Magic" Crabapple	11
MS	<i>Malus</i> 'Indian Summer'	"Indian Summer" Crabapple	10
OA	<i>Oxydendrum arboreum</i>	Sourwood	1
PS	<i>Pinus strobus</i>	White Pine	8
PK	<i>Prunus serrulata</i> 'Kwanzan'	"Kwanzan" Flowering Cherry	4
QP	<i>Quercus palustris</i>	Pin Oak	7
QW	<i>Quercus phellos</i>	Willow Oak	5
SHRUBS:			
AL	<i>Azalea</i> 'Elsie Lee'	<i>Azalea</i> "Elsie Lee"	17
AF	<i>Azalea</i> 'Fushia'	<i>Azalea</i> "Fushia"	8
AC	<i>Azalea</i> 'Girard Crimson'	<i>Azalea</i> "Girard Crimson"	10
BS	<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>	American Boxwood	31
CV	<i>Cornus alba</i> 'Elegantissima'	Variiegated Red Twig Dogwood	8
EA	<i>Euonymus alatus</i> 'Compactus'	Compact Burning Bush	6
N	<i>Itea virginica</i>	Virginia Sweetspire	10
RP	<i>Rhododendron</i>	P.J.M.	12
RR	<i>Rhododendron</i> Roseum Pink	Roseum Pink	7
VD	<i>Viburnum dentatum</i>	Arrowwood Viburnum	9
GRASSES:			
PA	<i>Pennisetum alopecuroides</i>	Fountain Grass	23
PERENNIALS:			
PW	<i>Periwinkle</i>	Periwinkle	client's discretion
HS	<i>Hemerocallis</i> sp.	Daylily	client's discretion

Conclusion

The Dickenson Memorial Park is quite an asset to the Town of Bowling Green. Located in close proximity to the downtown, town offices, and the Courthouse, it is easily accessible for many community members and visitors alike. The Conceptual Master Plan for the park provides a design that offers both flexibility and continuity. It offers flexibility so that several activities can occur simultaneously at the park. It provides small, intimate spaces for private reflection, a meandering path for walking, a memorial area for interpretative history, education, and remembrance, an open grassy lawn for passive recreation, and a gazebo and surrounding open space for small gatherings or public events. The park design creates visual continuity so that the spaces within the park seem interconnected as opposed to being fragmented or disjointed. Plant materials provide color accents, pleasurable fragrances, and shady spots to sit. Dickenson Memorial Park offers the Town of Bowling Green a passive recreational opportunity to be enjoyed by young and old alike.