

DATING BACK TO THE EARLY 1900S, BEVERLY GARDENS PARK REMAINS ONE OF BEVERLY HILLS' MOST BELOVED HISTORIC LANDMARKS. THE LINEAR PARK IS INTEGRAL IN THE CITY'S ORIGINAL MASTER PLAN AND REPRESENTS ONE OF THE FIRST APPLICATIONS OF THE CITY BEAUTIFUL MOVEMENT IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA.

IN 1906, A GROUP OF INVESTORS HEADED BY AMERICAN OILMAN AND REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER, BURTON E. GREEN, FORMED RODEO LAND AND WATER COMPANY IN PRESENT-DAY BEVERLY HILLS. IN 1907, MASTER LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT WILBUR D. COOK, A PROTÉGÉ OF FREDRICK LAW OLMSTED, DESIGNED THE DEVELOPMENT'S STREET PLAN. COOK DEPARTED NOTABLY FROM TYPICAL, ORTHOGONALLY GRIDDED SUBDIVISIONS COMMONLY FOUND IN THE REGION BY LAYING OUT CURVING STREETS WITH LARGER LOTS ON THE NORTH SIDE, SMALLER LOTS ON THE SOUTH SIDE, AND A TRIANGULAR COMMERCIAL DISTRICT BETWEEN THEM. IN HIS PLAN, HE SET ASIDE AN "EMERALD NECKLACE," CONSISTING OF A THREE-BLOCK GREENSWARD FOR PUBLIC USE. IT WAS CALLED SANTA MONICA PARK AND CONTAINED A LILY POND AND THE ICONIC FORTY-FOOT BEVERLY HILLS MONUMENT SIGN.

BUILDING ON COOK'S WORK, RALPH CORNELL EXPANDED THE PARK FROM THREE BLOCKS TO THE ENTIRE LENGTH OF THE NORTH SIDE OF SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD FROM WILSHIRE BOULEVARD TO NORTH DOHENY DRIVE IN THE LATE 1920S. IN 1931, THE PARK WAS RENAMED TO BEVERLY GARDENS PARK AND THE ELECTRIC FOUNTAIN WAS INSTALLED. EACH BLOCK-SIZED GREEN SPACE INCLUDED A TEN-FOOT-WIDE PAVED PROMENADE (BORDERED BY A LOW WALL), CONCRETE BENCHES, TRIMMED HEDGES AND FLOWER BEDS. THE OVERALL PARK DESIGN GENERALLY FEATURED LAWN AREAS ADJACENT TO STREET FRONTAGE WITH TREES PLANTED TO SHADE A DECOMPOSED GRANITE PATH. THREE SPECIALTY GARDENS – PALMS, ROSES, AND CACTI AND SUCCULENTS – WERE ALSO CREATED, ALONG WITH FOUR PERGOLAS AND THREE FOUNTAINS SPREAD THROUGHOUT THE PARK.

THE 1.9 MILE LINEAR STRETCH OF GARDENS SPANS THE LENGTH OF THE CITY AND SEPARATES THE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT FROM THE RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD. THE AREA COULD BE SEEN FROM PASSERS BY ON THE TRAIN THAT CAME THROUGH TOWN ON SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD, OR AS IT WAS ONCE KNOWN, RAILWAY AVENUE. IT WAS ORIGINALLY BUILT TO PROVIDE A GRAND FIRST IMPRESSION FOR POTENTIAL REAL ESTATE BUYERS LOOKING TO DEVELOP IN BEVERLY HILLS, AND THE PLAN WORKED. TOURISTS WOULD FLOCK TO THE PARK EACH YEAR TO CAPTURE THEIR QUINTESSENTIAL TRAVEL PHOTO WITH THE FAMOUS BEVERLY HILLS SIGN, AS THEY DO TO THIS DAY.

THE LAYOUT OF THE PARK IS INDICATIVE OF THE CITY BEAUTIFUL MOVEMENT AS EACH SPACE GIVES A SENSE OF MOVING FROM ONE EXPERIENCE TO THE NEXT, IN A GRAND PROCESSION. THE MONUMENTS, IN THIS CASE, FOUNTAINS, ARE SITUATED AT EACH END OF THE PARK, SERVING AS TERMINAL VISTAS. THE WALKWAYS CONVERGE AND IN SO DOING ARE PUNCTUATED BY SCULPTURES OR CENTRAL PLANTERS. FURTHERMORE, EACH PARK SEGMENT REINFORCES REPETITION AND MAINTAINS AN INTERNAL SYMMETRY.



BEVERLY HILLS MASTER PLAN



AERIAL IMAGE SHOWING EASTERN PORTION OF SANTA MONICA PARK WITH LILY POND IN BOTTOM RIGHT CORNER.



0' 250' 500' 1,000'

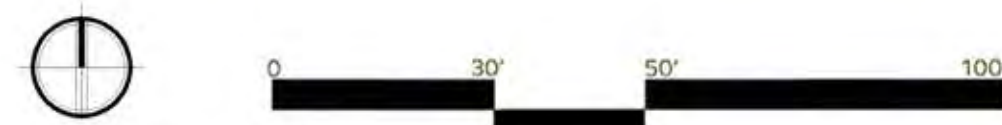




Electric Fountain

ERECTED IN 1931, THE ELECTRIC FOUNTAIN, LOCATED ON THE CORNER OF SANTA MONICA AND WILSHIRE BOULEVARDS IN BEVERLY HILLS, IS THE CENTERPIECE OF BEVERLY GARDENS PARK. ILLUMINATED BY A CHANGING PATTERN OF NEON-COLORED LIGHTS AT NIGHT, THE FOUNTAIN CONSISTS OF TWO BASINS, WITH THE UPPER BASIN CONTAINING A RING OF VARIED HEIGHT NOZZLES. THE SCULPTURE AND TILES THAT MAKE UP THE DESIGN ILLUSTRATE THE FOUNDING OF THE CITY. THE TOP OF THE FOUNTAIN FEATURES A STATUE OF A TONGVA KNEELING IN PRAYER, AS AN HOMAGE TO THE ORIGINAL INHABITANTS OF THE LAND.

THE FOUNTAIN'S LOCATION AT THE INTERSECTION OF TWO MAJOR STREETS IS INDICATIVE OF THE CITY BEAUTIFUL AS IT MARKS THE BEGINNING OF THE CITY LIMITS AND HONORS ITS PAST.



THE CACTUS GARDEN IS ONE OF THE PARK'S FINEST EXAMPLES OF SYMMETRY AS SEEN IN ITS PATHWAYS AND ITS PLANTERS. THE SYMMETRICAL DESIGN, COLORED DECOMPOSED GRANITE AND LOW WALLS SHOW INFLUENCE OF THE PARTERRES COMMONLY SEEN IN ITALIAN RENAISSANCE GARDENS.

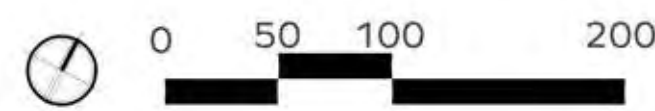


Cactus Garden





Beverly Gardens Park



THE ORIGINAL SITE OF THE PARK CONSISTS OF THREE PARCELS, WITH SYMMETRICAL PATHS WITHIN EACH AND AS A WHOLE. THE PATHWAYS CONNECT TO THE STREET CORNERS AS WELL AS EACH PARK SEGMENT, WITH INTERSECTIONS MARKED BY FOLLIES, SUCH AS SCULPTURES. THE MAIN FEATURE OF THIS AREA IS THE 40 FOOT LONG BEVERLY HILLS SIGN AND LILY POND, SITUATED AT THE CENTER. THE POND SHOWS INFLUENCES OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE GARDEN, SUCH AS VILLA LANTE.



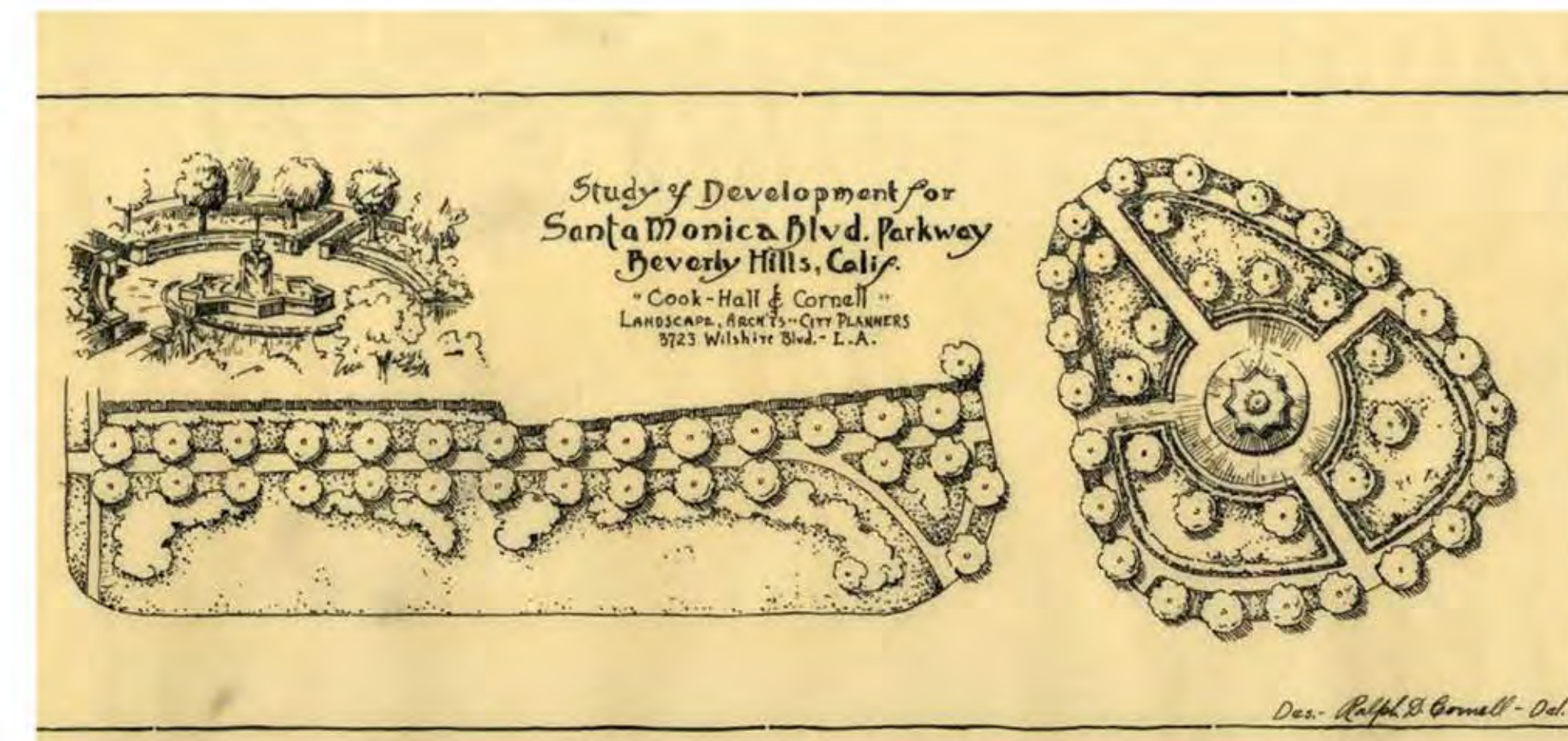
Rose Garden



THE ROSE GARDEN ALSO SHOWS BILATERAL SYMMETRY IN ITS OVERALL DESIGN AND PROVIDES THE VISITORY CLEAR SIGHTLINES TO THE REMAINDER OF THE PARK. THIS SEGMENT IS BORDERED BY LAWN ON THE STREET ELEVATION AND SEVERAL TREES TO THE REAR. THE SYMMETRY OF THE GARDEN IS REMINISCENT OF THOSE OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE, ESPECIALLY AS IT INCLUDES PARTERRES FROM CLIPPED HEDGES AND THE GRAVEL PATHS.



DOHENY FOUNTAIN MARKS THE END OF THE PARK AND FEATURES A MOORISH DESIGN TO THE FOUNTAIN BOTH IN ITS TILED BASE AND THE LOWER BASIN DESIGN. THE FOUNTAIN'S PEDESTAL INCLUDES MERMAIDS, WHICH DISPLAY AN ITALIAN RENAISSANCE INFLUENCE IN HOW FANTASTICAL CREATURES WERE INCLUDED.



Doheny Fountain



SOURCES

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THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE FOUNDATION
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