LEE PARK
(Emancipation Park)
Bounded by East Market Street, First Street North, East Jefferson Street, and Second Street Northeast
Charlottesville
Independent City
Virginia

HALS VA-78
HALS VA-78

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN LANDSCAPES SURVEY

LEE PARK
(Emancipation Park)

HALS NO. VA-78

Location: Bounded by East Market Street, East Jefferson Street, First Street N, and Second Street NE, Charlottesville, Albemarle County, Virginia.

38.031846, -78.480556 (The position of the statue of Robert E. Lee near the park's center, Google Earth, WGS84).

Significance: Emancipation Park is locally significant as the first public park established within the City of Charlottesville. For 100 years, Emancipation Park has served as an important space for various types of gatherings, ceremonies, and events near the heart of downtown Charlottesville. It has also influenced the City's urban form, by influencing the siting of several civic and institutional buildings.

Land for the park was donated to the City of Charlottesville by philanthropist, Paul Goodloe McIntire, in 1917. The property was originally known as Lee Park for the sculpture of the Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee and his horse, Traveller, commissioned for the space by McIntire. The sculpture was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1997. Charlottesville's City Council voted to change the name of the property to Emancipation Park in 2017 as part of a broader effort to address community concerns regarding Confederate iconography within public spaces.

Description: Emancipation Park measures 1.04 acres and occupies an entire city block in downtown Charlottesville, Virginia. The park is symmetrically arranged around a statue of Robert E. Lee and his horse, Traveller. Concrete walkways lead into the park from each of the four corners, converging on the central plaza that contains the sculpture. The heroic bronze form of Lee, who sits astride Traveller, is set atop a 12-foot wide, 8-foot-long pink granite pedestal. The statue stands nearly 26 feet in height and is visible from many vantage points within the park.

Emancipation Park occupies an elevated knoll that overlooks the surrounding city streets to the east, south, and west. Stairs lead into the park at three of the four corners, and along Second Street NE. Only the northeast corner, where East Jefferson and Second Street NE converge, allows for an on-grade entry. Mortared fieldstone retaining walls, topped by thick concrete coping that allows for use as a seatwall, edge the perimeter of the park along First Street N, East Market Street, and Second Street NE. The walls are edged in turn by city sidewalks.

Within the park, the grade rises to the high point marked by the Lee statue and

surrounding plaza. The walks leading to the plaza traverse a verdant landscape dominated by turf lawn and ornamental and shade trees of varying size and age. Large shade trees, such as white oaks (*Quercus alba*), white ash (*Fraxinus americana*), linden (*Tilia americana*), and Norway (*Acer platanoides*) and red maples (*Acer rubrum*) form an armature within the park that sets off ornamental species that include a weeping European beech (*Fagus sylvatica* 'Pendula'), weeping cherry (*Prunus subhirtella* 'Pendula'), dawn redwood (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*), and numerous flowering dogwoods (*Cornus florida*). The largest and likely oldest tree within the park is a linden that edges First Street N. The park also features evergreen shrubs, including boxwood (*Buxus spp.*) and holly (*Ilex spp.*), that mark the entrances and surround the granite base of the Lee statue. Semi-circular planters filled with hydrangea (*Hydrangea spp.*) and spirea (*Spiraea spp.*) shrubs, as well as seasonal displays of perennials and annuals are located within the plaza. Light posts that illuminate the statue at night also edge the plaza.

Site furnishings within the park are minimal and include benches and trash receptacles located along the edges of perimeter walks. Low backless concrete benches characterize the southern half of the park, while black powder-coated backed benches are found within the northern half of the park. The black benches are typically edged by domed metal trash receptacles. The concrete benches were added circa 1955, while the black metal benches and trash receptacles are a more contemporary addition. Another historic feature of the park is a stacked pair of millstones set within a circular segment of walkway west of the statue. The millstones are part of the original park design. They are said to have been included for their historical value as a former part of Shadwell, the farm operated by Thomas Jefferson's father, Peter Jefferson, along the Rivanna River during the mid-eighteenth century.

Signage includes contemporary regulatory and identity posts at the park entrances, an interpretive wayside exhibit, and a marker indicating the park as part of the Virginia Civil War Trails system. The interpretive wayside, located near the base of the Lee statue, is titled "Heroes of the Confederacy" and relays the history of the statue and Charlottesville's role in the Civil War. The statue itself is signed CONCEIVED BY SHRADY-EXECUTED BY LEO LENTELLI SC. 1924.

Although the name of the park was changed in 2017, the physical composition of the public space has been little altered since installation of the statue in 1924. The feature that has changed the most over time is vegetation. Trees that have been lost have sometimes been replaced by new species, while the park as a whole contains more trees than were present historically. The composition of the shrub and other ornamental plantings around the central plaza have also been updated periodically to improve visibility of the statue and discourage vagrancy. Some of the replacement trees have been planted in honor of individuals and are

accompanied by cast bronze plaques at their base.

The only other changes that have occurred within the park include the addition of two new walks leading toward the plaza from First Street N, and repair and replacement of damaged and deteriorated sections of the perimeter wall. Many of the wall repairs are easily noted due to differences in the materials used and the construction methods. There remain segments of the wall that are in need of repair, particularly along First Street N where the roots of a large linden tree continue to dislodge the stone work. The concrete walks within the park also exhibit signs of age as evidenced by cracking, staining and chipped surfacing, while the concrete benches display discoloration and signs of settling. Along the northwest stair, stone rip rap has been placed to stabilize erosion along the walk; the rip rap is visually incompatible with the historic character of the park.

The setting of the park continues to reflect its importance within the urban parti of Charlottesville. Numerous historic institutional and civic buildings surround the park. The largest and most notable is the Jefferson Madison Regional Library, which occupies the southeast corner across Second Street NE. The Albemarle Historical Society adjoins the library and faces the park at the corner of Second Street NE and East Jefferson. First Methodist Church faces the park at the corner of E Jefferson and First Street N, while a brick building near the corner of First and East Jefferson Streets that originally served as the Magruder Sanitorium in 1899, now serves as the offices for Christ Episcopal Church.

History: Emancipation Park, which occupies a prominent location within the center of downtown Charlottesville, Virginia, was established in 1917 as Lee Park, on property donated to the city by wealthy philanthropist, Paul Goodloe McIntire.[1] McIntire's gift included a planned monument honoring Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee, that was to serve as a centerpiece of the new public space.

The 1.04-acre parcel, acquired by McIntire in 1917 for $25,000, had previously served as a residential property. At the time it was acquired, the parcel featured a circa 1830 two-story Federal-style brick home, outbuilding, office building, extensive gardens, and mature fir, oak, and weeping willow trees.[2] The dwelling, known as the Southall-Venable House, faced East Jefferson Street and occupied the middle of the lot; the office structure stood along East Jefferson Street, while the outbuilding edged First Street N.[3] The house was built by Valentine Wood Southall, a prominent lawyer who settled in Albemarle County circa 1813. During his career, Southall served as Commonwealth's Attorney for Albemarle County, was a member of the General Assembly, where he was also Speaker of the House, and participated in the convention that formed the Constitution of

[1] Charlottesville plat book, 33; BLK 195; Deed Book 32, 7; Deed Book 30, 298.
[2] City of Charlottesville Department of Public Works, "Parks Department Guide to the History and Gardens of Lee Park," (Charlottesville, Virginia: 1998).
[3] Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 1906.

1850 that updated the state constitution. Southall participated in the Virginia Secession Convention of 1861 before his death later that year.[4]

The house was owned in 1917 by Southall's grandson, Charles Venable, Jr., and his wife, Madge. Charles was the son of Mary Southall Brown, who inherited the property from her mother in 1874, and Charles Scott Venable, Sr. a University of Virginia professor. Venable Sr., who had served as an aide-de-camp for Gen. Robert E. Lee during the Civil War, worked to promote education as a way to improve post-Reconstruction conditions in Virginia. The city of Charlottesville named an elementary school after Venable in 1925.[5]

Upon purchasing the property through agent William O. Watson, McIntire indicated his intention to present the property and a sculpture of Robert E. Lee to the City as a memorial to his parents, the late George M. McIntire and Catherine A. McIntire, for use as a park.[6] Thomas Lomax, of the University of Virginia's bursar's office, commented on the donation in a letter to McIntire, "Such a park will furnish a pleasure and rest ground the need of which has been long seriously felt, and the statue, too, will add in no small degree to the dignity and beauty of the city. In fact they will, I trust, arouse in our citizens a civic pride, for which I regret to say, they are not particularly noted."[7]

Paul Goodloe McIntire (1860–1952) was born in Charlottesville. His father, George Malcolm McIntire, was a successful merchant who served as Charlottesville's Mayor during the Civil War. Paul McIntire studied for a time at the University of Virginia, but left before finishing. McIntire then worked for the C&O Railroad before moving to Chicago to work for a coffee and tea house. McIntire eventually relocated to New York where he became a financial investor for Morgan Davis and Co. McIntire built a fortune in the stock market before returning to Charlottesville in the 1910s. He is often described as the wealthiest individual in Albemarle County during the second quarter of the twentieth century.

McIntire used his fortune to improve the Charlottesville area in several ways. In addition to his donation of land to establish Lee Park, McIntire also acquired land near the Albemarle County courthouse and donated it to the City to establish Jackson Park in 1918.[8] McIntire commissioned sculptor Charles Keck

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[4] Margaret O'Bryant, Blue Ribbon Commission, "Brief History of Lee Park," appendix to the Blue Ribbon Commission Report to Charlottesville City Council, December 2016, from K. Edward Lay, The Architecture of Jefferson's Country; Charlottesville and Albemarle County, Virginia, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 98.
[5] O'Bryant.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Letter from Thomas Lomax, University of Virginia bursar's office to McIntire, February 19, 1918.
[8] McIntire had several buildings removed from the property in order to establish the park. The buildings formed the McKee Block, a half block row of brick and frame structures occupied by African American businessmen and trades people. Recent scholarship suggests that McIntire removed the structures in order to relocate African Americans

to design a statue of Stonewall Jackson as the centerpiece of Jackson Park; the acclaimed statue is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In 1919, McIntire donated a statue honoring the Lewis and Clark expedition, which features Sacagawea, to the City, while also providing funds for construction of a public library adjacent to Lee Park. In 1921, McIntire acquired land that later became the City's Belmont Park. In 1926, following passage of the Public Assemblages Act that required all public meeting spaces to be strictly segregated, McIntire donated a 92-acre tract for another new park that would become McIntire Park and was for white residents, as well as a 9-acre parcel, previously used as a city quarantine facility and dump, that was for use by the city's African American residents and became known as Washington Park.[9] McIntire later helped to fund endowments for the county public school system that resulted in the construction of high schools in Red Hill, Ivy, Scottsville, and Crozet.[10]

McIntire's efforts to embellish the public realm, bring order to the urban landscape, and erect monuments commemorating historic events are consistent with the precepts of the City Beautiful Movement popular during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[11] McIntire's largesse, however, also fell within a period during which the Virginia state legislature sought to increase the segregation of white and black societies. Lee Park, as well as the adjacent public library, were for whites only. The Lee statue may have reflected an interest in fixing "in stone certain preferred narratives of the Civil War."[12] In Lee and Jackson Parks, it appears that McIntire's "City Beautiful aesthetic vision merged seamlessly with a dominant racial ideology, giving the City Beautiful plans their distinct local form."[13]

In 1918, McIntire demolished the Southall-Venable House and oversaw construction of a formal landscaped square and the plaza that would house the Lee statue once completed. The park featured wide concrete walkways that converged on the central plaza from the various entrances located at the corners of the park and from the adjacent streets. The walk system today remains nearly identical to that completed by 1920, including the millstone feature. Several older trees associated with the Venable property were retained, which conveyed a sense of maturity to the new park.

At the same time, McIntire also commissioned sculptor Henry Shrady (1871–1922) to design the statue that he envisioned for the centerpiece of Lee Park.

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away from the Albemarle County courthouse, which abuts Jackson Park. Daniel Bluestone, "A Virginia Courthouse Square," in *Buildings, Landscapes, and Memory* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011).

[9] Bluestone, "A Virginia Courthouse Square," 221.

[10] City of Charlottesville, "History of the Parks and Recreation Department" (Charlottesville, VA: undated).

[11] Bluestone, "A Virginia Courthouse Square," 212.

[12] Ibid., 216, 223.

[13] Ibid.

McIntire is said to have expressed an interest in replicating the statue of Lee erected by the Commonwealth of Virginia at Gettysburg National Military Park in 1917. He is also said to have suggested to Shrady that the bronze for the statue be cast from cannons used by the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, although he later learned that it would not be possible to acquire the guns needed to do so.

When Shrady, a member of the National Sculpture Society, accepted the commission, he was already deeply involved in sculpting a memorial to Ulysses S. Grant in Washington, D. C. The large project took more of his time than anticipated, and led to delays in developing a prototype for the Lee statue. Shrady's poor health also contributed to a slow pace in producing a model of the statue for McIntire's approval. Shrady died in April 1922 before finishing the project, leaving a clay model to indicate his intention for the statue.

In May 1922, McIntire commissioned sculptor Leo Lentelli (1879–1961) of New York to complete Shrady's work. Like Shrady, Lentelli was a member of the National Sculpture Society. Unfortunately, he found Shrady's model was no longer workable, and was forced to begin work on a new model, which he completed in July 1923. Although similar in some regards, Lentelli's design for the Lee statue was not entirely consistent with Shrady's, and has been described as more formal, dignified, and powerful, but less animated. In developing his model, Lentelli was careful to maintain the likeness of both Lee and Traveller. To do so, he took careful measurements of Lee's personal military garments and equipment, as well as Traveller's skeleton.

Following completion of the model, the sculpture was cast by the Roman Bronze Works of Brooklyn, New York, and shipped to Charlottesville by rail. After arriving in April 1924, the sculpture was placed on a granite base designed by Walter Dabney Blair, architect for the adjacent Charlottesville Public Library, on May 3.[14]

The statue was unveiled and dedicated on May 21, 1924, during a three-day reunion of Confederate veterans and such organizations as the Confederate Veterans, Sons of Confederate Veterans, and United Daughters of the Confederacy. As a part of the ceremony, one hundred cadets from the Virginia Military Institute paraded through the center of Charlottesville decorated with Confederate colors.[15] Dignitaries ranging from Virginia's governor to city, county, and University of Virginia officials attended the dedication, along with several ceremonial military units from around the state. McIntire, Lentelli, and Watson were also present. Lee's 3-year-old great-granddaughter, Mary Walker

[14] City of Charlottesville Department of Public Works, "Parks Division Presents a Guide to the History & Gardens of Lee Park."
[15] Ibid.

Lee, unveiled the statue.[16] The sculpture was then presented to the City on behalf of Paul McIntire by Henry Louis Smith, President of Washington and Lee University. President Edwin A. Alderman, of the University of Virginia, made a speech of acceptance for the City of Charlottesville. The afternoon's festivities concluded with a benediction, after which the crowd dispersed to celebrate at a number of parties and balls.[17]

Lee Park quickly became a popular gathering place for city residents. The City hosted Municipal Band concerts in the park, while many picnicked there after church. Children played tag around the two millstones. By 1925, numerous civic and institutional buildings edged the park or were located within a block, including the public library, post office, U.S. District Court, seven religious buildings, an "old folks" home, a hospital, and an elementary school.[18]

The park remained in its original form until the early 1950s, when the City planted boxwoods under the statue and added two new walkway between First Street N and the central plaza. One of the walks was sited to protect a large weeping willow tree, and is thus not symmetrical with the second. In 1955, concrete benches were added to the park, following a proposal that also suggested "It would be helpful to have a drinking fountain and some of the present cottonwood trees be replaced with flowering or decorative type trees, such as dogwood."[19] The concrete benches remain today. Flowering dogwood trees have also since been added, and there are no cottonwood trees present today.

Little else appears to have changed within the park until the 1970s, when a 100-year-old white ash tree fell across one of the walks. To fill the gap left by the fallen tree, the Lee-Jackson Foundation, a local group founded in 1953 in honor to Generals Lee and Jackson, planted a new tree they dubbed the "Lee Oak." In 1976, the City replaced the boxwoods planted around the base of the statue in the 1950s with lower-growing shrubs intended to discourage loitering. A white oak, Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum*), and several dogwoods were added elsewhere within the park; many of these trees survive today. A newspaper article reporting on the planting effort described the park as "a splendid garden today, landscaped with maples, dogwoods, lindens, oaks, willows, and a beautiful weeping cherry tree on the side facing McIntire public library. Azaleas, tulips and pansies bloom every spring, and annuals every summer."[20] In 1982, the existing weeping

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[16] Betsy Gohdes-Baten, National Register nomination "Robert Edward Lee Sculpture," Section 8, page 9.
[17] City of Charlottesville Department of Public Works, "Parks Division Presents a Guide to the History & Gardens of Lee Park."
[18] Today,. the Jefferson Madison Regional Library main branch is now housed in the former post office and court buildings and the Albemarle/Charlottesville Historical Society in the former library; Historic Charlottesville Tour Book, 7.
[19] Daily *Progress*, July 6, 1955.
[20] Daily *Progress*, month and day unknown, 1976.

European beech tree was planted by the North Downtown Residents Association in memory of former member Joyce Fishbane. In 1993, additional dogwoods were planted.

In 1997, local resident, Barbara Wright, concerned with the appearance of the Lee statue, initiated a fund-raising effort to restore the bronze Lee, Jackson, and Lewis and Clark monuments. Wright received numerous donations, including funds from the Lee-Jackson Foundation, United Daughters of the Confederacy, National Daughters of the Confederacy, and the Sons and Daughters of the Confederacy. The City hired Nicolas Veloz, an outdoor sculpture conservator from Alexandria, to repair, restore, and clean the bronze sculptures. In 1999, on the 75th anniversary of its original dedication, the Friends of the Charlottesville Statues rededicated and unveiled the newly-restored Lee monument during a public ceremony that included the Army of Northern Virginia, a Civil War reenactment group.

In 1997, four monumental figurative outdoor sculptures donated by Paul Goodloe McIntire to the City of Charlottesville, including the Lee statue, were listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In 1998, Lee and Jackson Parks were added to the Virginia Civil War Trails program, an auto tour route providing historical interpretation of Civil War events around the state. Throughout this period, the park continued to be used for patriotic events, including the annual Governor Jefferson's Thanksgiving Festival that features Revolutionary War era re-enactments and displays.

In 2016, Charlottesville became part of a broader national debate regarding the removal of symbols of racial prejudice and white supremacy from public spaces and buildings. Among the catalysts of the national debate included a racially-motivated mass shooting at Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina, that led a citizen to climb the flagpole outside the South Carolina statehouse and remove the Confederate flag. The South Carolina legislature later voted to remove the flag from the statehouse, which was permanently lowered in July 2015. In 2016, the City of New Orleans decided to remove three Confederate monuments. The monuments, removed over several weeks in 2017, included a statue of General Robert E. Lee.

In Charlottesville, several high school students circulated a petition to remove the Robert E. Lee statue from Lee Park in March 2016. Indicating that they were not trying to erase history, but rather to make it more welcoming to all citizens, the students and their petition sparked a wide-reaching debate that led Charlottesville's City Council to form a Blue Ribbon Commission to consider the future of the Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson statues. The commission was charged with providing City Council with options for telling the full story of Charlottesville's history of race relations and for updating the City's narrative within its public spaces. Based on the commission's December 2016 report, City

Council voted 3-2 to remove the Lee statue from Lee Park. The City Councilors also voted unanimously to rename Lee and Jackson Parks and to redesign them. City Council also voted to further the concept of building a new memorial in Jackson Park to those who had been enslaved within the city.

In May 2017, a group of local residents and Confederate ancestors—the Virginia Sons of Confederate Veterans—filed a law suit against the city for its decision to remove the Lee statue. In an initial ruling, Judge Richard E. Moore filed an injunction denying City Council the right to remove or sell the statue within a six-month period based on his belief that the statue may be protected by a state law that prohibits localities from disturbing memorials to war veterans. The injunction did not interfere with the city's plan to rename the parks or initiate a master planning process to redesign them.

The process has continued to spark controversy and debate throughout the city and the state. Among those protesting the City Council's decision has been Richard Spence, president of the white nationalist National Policy Institute, who led a group to hold a torch-lit rally at the foot of the statue to protest its removal on May 14, 2017. Several counter-protests followed.

Despite the protests, City Council voted to rename Lee Park Emancipation Park and Jackson Park Justice Park in June 2017. The vote followed an early June march from the University of Virginia's Rotunda to Lee Park to protest fascism and racial injustice. In July 2017, a Ku Klux Klan rally was held at the Albemarle County courthouse to protest the city's plan to remove the Lee statue. Several counter-protest events were held concurrently within the city over the course of the day. Another rally protesting the removal of the statue is planned for August 2017 by local right-wing blogger Jason Kessler.

Signage within the parks has already been replaced to reflect the new names, and the City has issued a Request for Proposal for a master plan that considers redesign and contextualization of Emancipation Park both with and without the Lee statue.

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Historians: Liz Sargent, Liz Sargent HLA, and Jennifer Trompetter, NBW.

July 31, 2017.

First Place Winner – 2017 HALS Challenge: Documenting City or Town Parks

The bronze statue of General Robert E. Lee serves as the centerpiece of Emancipation Park in downtown Charlottesville, Virginia. (Liz Sargent, 5/30/2017)

Stairs lead into the park from the surrounding sidewalks on three sides. (Liz Sargent, 5/30/2017)

Only the walk at the East Jefferson Street and Second Street NE intersection occurs at grade. (Liz Sargent, 5/30/2017)

Sidewalks and stone retaining walls edge Emancipation Park. An older linden tree at the southwest corner of the park has dislodged part of the wall. (Liz Sargent, 5/30/2017)

Several historic buildings edge Emancipation Park. The park features several mature trees as well as ornamental tree, shrub, and perennial plantings that complement the central open space and frame views of the statue. (Liz Sargent, 5/30/2017)

Historic features that survive from the original park design include the concrete walk system and a pair of millstones said to have been part of the Peter Jefferson farm Shadwell. (Liz Sargent, 5/30/2017)

Concrete benches installed in 1955 provide a place for people to sit and rest. (Jen Trompetter, 5/30/2017).

Interpretive signs provide historical information about the Lee statue and include a photograph of its 1924 dedication. (Jen Trompetter, 5/30/2017)

Newer steel benches and trash receptacles are also available for use within the park. (Jen Trompetter, 5/30/2017)

Henry Shrady's original model for the Lee sculpture is on display at the public library, located adjacent to Emancipation Park. (Jen Trompetter, 5/30/2017)

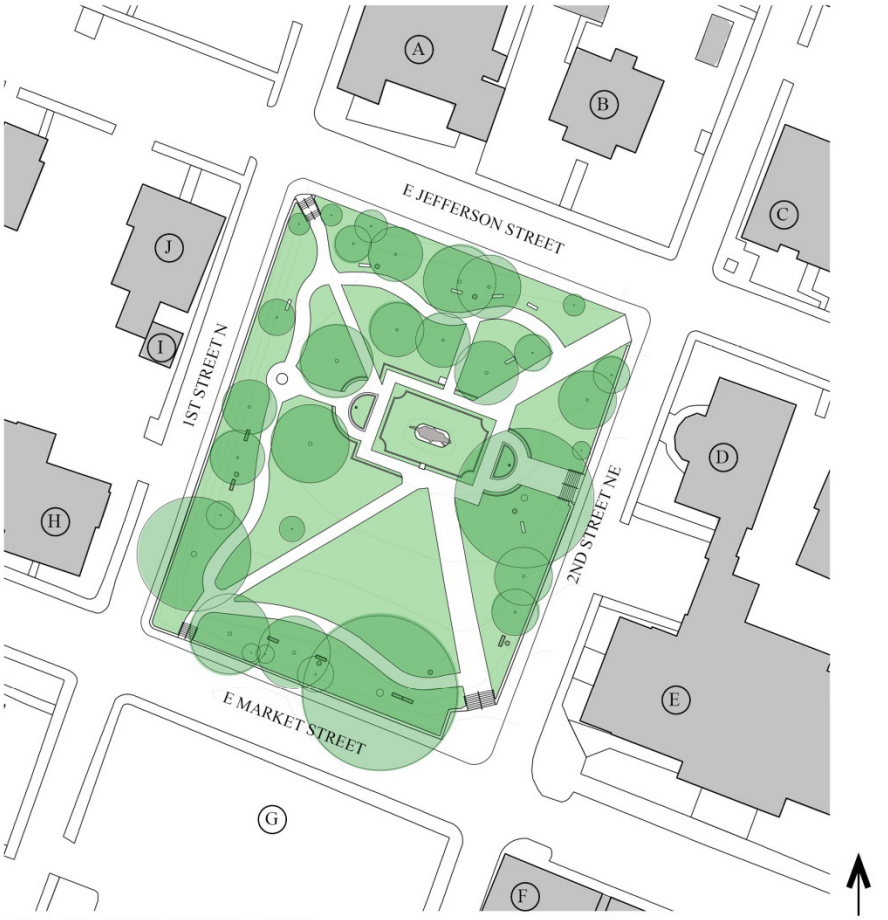
EMANCIPATION PARK

SITE PLAN

KEY

- Concrete Stairs
- Concrete Bench
- Metal Bench
- Metal Trash Receptacle
- Existing Trees
- + XXX Spot Elevations

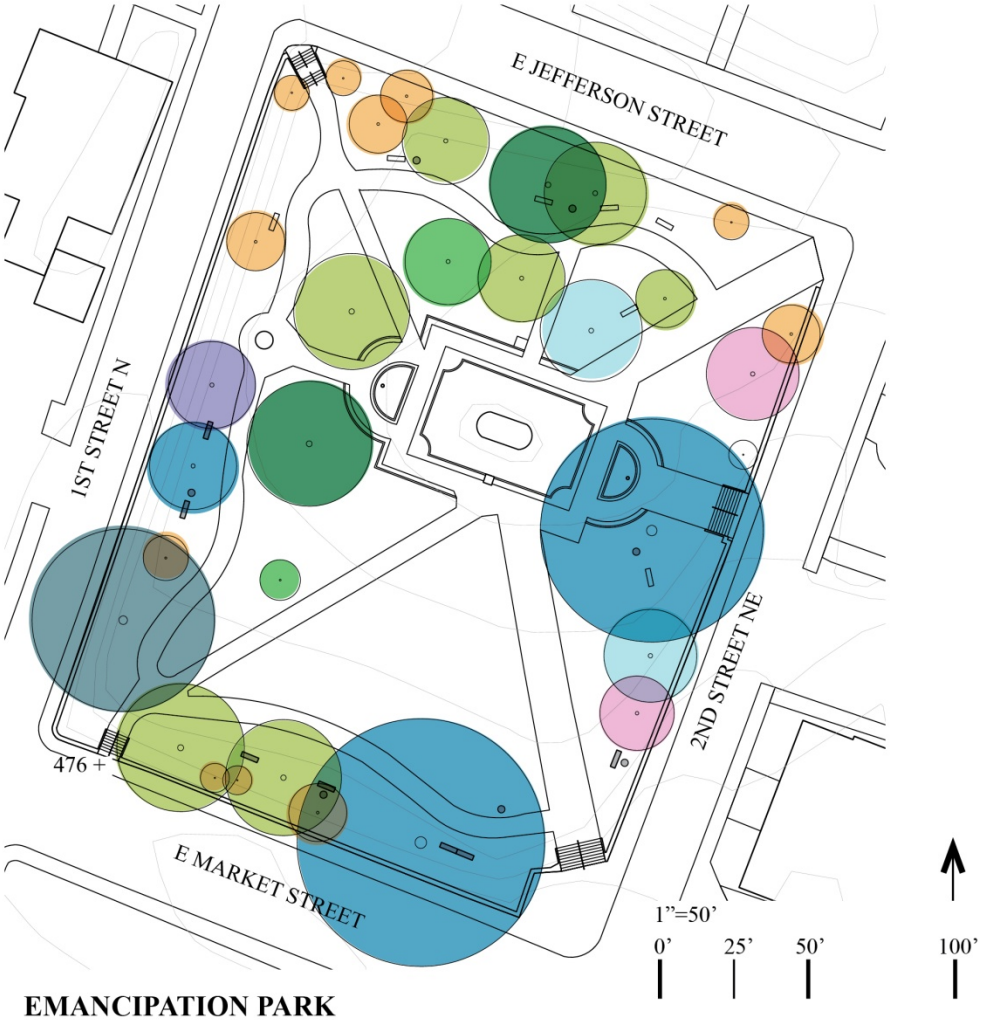
Emancipation Park site plan, 2017. (Jen Trompetter)



KEY

A - First Methodist Church
B - Single Family Residence
C - Queen Charlotte Condominiums
D - Albemarle Co. Historical Society
E - Jefferson Madison Regional Library
F - VMDO Architecture Firm
G - Parking Lot
H - Hill & Wood Funeral Home
I - The Garage (music venue)
J - Chris Episcopal Church Magruder House (formerly Magruder Sanitorium)

Site plan of Emancipation Park and its urban context, 2017. (Jen Trompetter)



EMANCIPATION PARK
TREE PLAN

TREE KEY (by species)

Canopy Trees
- Acer sp.
- Fagus sp.
- Fraxinus sp.
- Metasequoia sp.
- Quercus sp.
- Tilia sp.

Understory Trees
- Prunus sp.
- Cornus sp.
- Magnolia sp.

Trees within Emancipation Park, 2017. (Jen Trompetter)

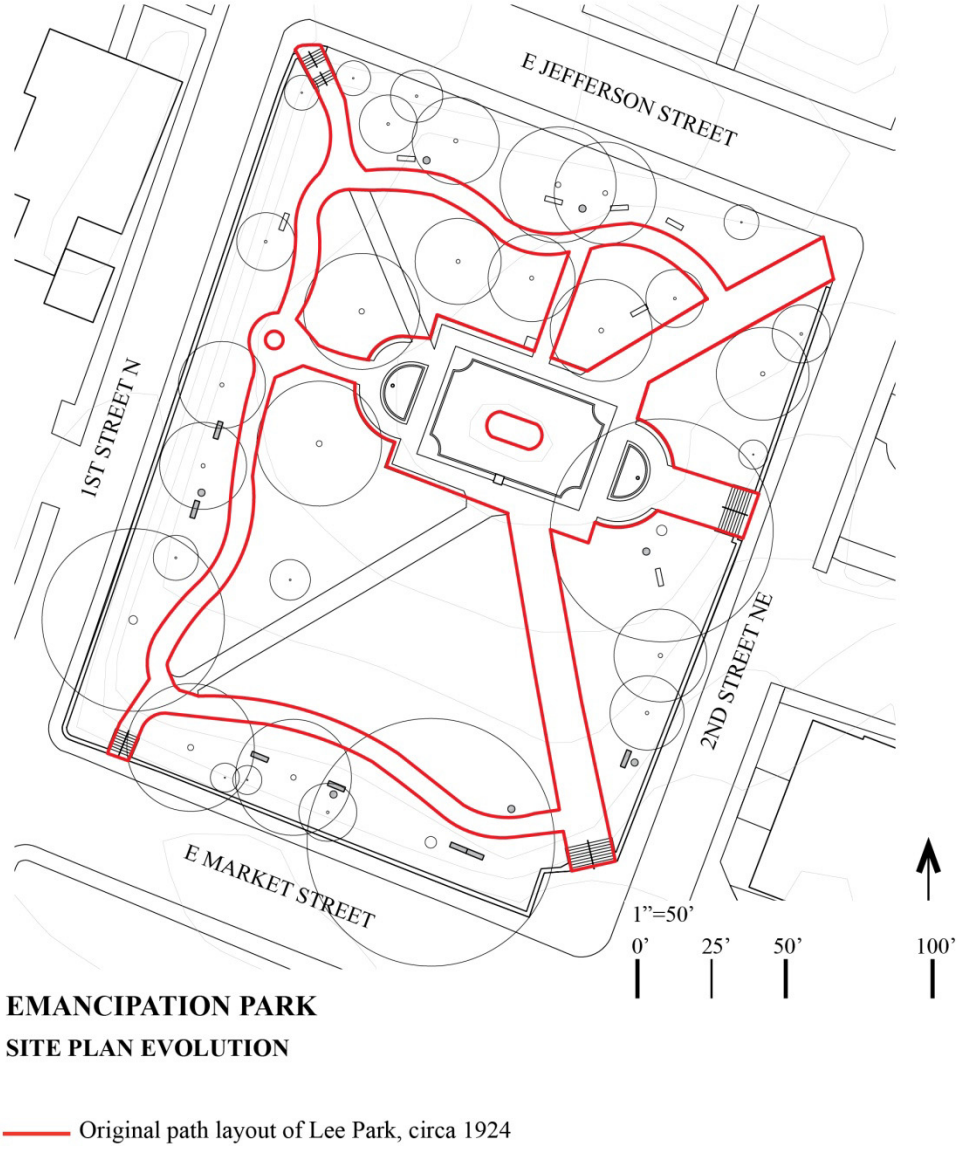


Diagram illustrating the historic walks and two contemporary additions associated with Emancipation Park, 2017. (Jen Trompetter)