RESTORING A CENTURY-OLD TREASURE

From time to time every great beauty needs a facelift, every classic a bit of updating. Even the world’s most glamorous city has to keep up appearances. As Beverly Hills kicks into high gear in anticipation of its 100th birthday, the Friends of Beverly Gardens Park is leading efforts to restore this park to its true beauty and splendor.

A global leader drawing on the allure of style and luxury, Beverly Hills must maintain its image of prestige and grandeur. Decades in the making, major projects near completion from improvements to the Civic Center to creating a vibrant new cultural destination, with the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts. The historic Beverly Gardens Park remains the final major component in need of attention.

ABOUT BEVERLY GARDENS PARK

This 1.9 mile linear stretch of gardens spans the length of the city, separating the commercial district from the residential neighborhood. It also acts as the city’s public facade along Santa Monica Boulevard, one of Southern California’s most highly traveled routes. This stretch includes prominent gateways to the city at two major intersections, at Doheny and at Wilshire. Beverly Gardens Park is Beverly Hills’ most visible expanse of green space – our city’s equivalent of New York’s Central Park or San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park.

Home to a variety of community gatherings and festivals, Beverly Gardens Park serves as a city center drawing residents and visitors alike, and playing host bi-annually to one of the west coast’s most popular art events for almost 40 years. In addition to the decomposed granite pathway, a favorite among walkers and runners, it is also home to several celebrated landmarks and park features. These attractions include the 40-foot Beverly Hills monument sign, which draws thousands of tourists each year for the quintessential travel photo. There are also the Electric Fountain at Wilshire, truly innovative for its time and a gift from the mother of famed silent film actor and producer Harold Lloyd; the fountain at Doheny; one of the region’s largest fig trees, estimated at nearly a century old; a treasured cactus garden; a traditional rose garden and a diverse sculpture collection, demonstrating the city’s pioneering dedication to its public art program.
RALPH C. CORNELL

Prolific landscape architect Ralph Cornell pioneered ideas about preserving native plants and indigenous landscapes, championing the necessity of green space for enlightenment and refreshment of the soul. He was at the center of a small group of landscape architects who anticipated rapid urbanization and designed for both function and growth. Among some of his most prestigious work were the master plan commissions of the college campus at UCLA, the Torrey Pines Preserve, and the Beverly Gardens Park in the 1930’s.

HISTORY OF THE PARK

Nestled in the heart of the country’s largest urban forest, Beverly Hills was once hailed as the “garden city of the world” by Wilbur D. Cook, the landscape architect credited with creating the city’s first streets. Central to this garden city is Beverly Gardens Park, steeped in rich history - from its original design to the philanthropy and community uses through the years that have preserved it as a favorite destination.

As part of the original subdivision of Rancho Rodeo de Los Aguas, the park was first created in 1911 with an eye toward function, dividing the commercial and residential districts. The park was later designed by Ralph Cornell with a master plan aimed at integrating innovative style for multi-purpose recreational needs.

The park’s long-lasting support through philanthropy started with the original gift of the land itself. It continued with the Electric Fountain - a gift from Harold Lloyd’s mother, with installation funding from the Women’s Club of Beverly Hills - which pays homage to the area’s Native American Tongva tribal roots, represented in the Gage sculpture at the top. Another piece of art, donated years later, came from a more personal source: “Hunter and Hounds”, the war-riddled bronze by French sculptor Jacquemart, was originally transported to Beverly Hills to commemorate local resident Longyear’s son, killed in battle during WWI.

More recently, the famed Beverly Hills monument sign, which had gone the way of the lily pond in years past, was recreated in a community-backed project led and funded by resident and author Robert S. Anderson in cooperation with the Rotary Club of Beverly Hills.

It is now time to continue this rich history of philanthropy, for the community to come together and do our share to leave the park better than we found it for the next generation.
The Blocks

Beverly Gardens Park spans 23 blocks from Doheny to Whittier, and includes two major gateways, each graced with a fountain. Every block provides its own distinct tranquil setting and contains the decomposed granite pathway that runs the full length of the park. Several blocks feature prominent highlights including the Beverly Hills monument sign, the specialty rose, palm and cactus gardens, sculpture installations, water features and pergolas.
**RESTORATION MISSION**

This very prominent part of the city’s public interface must represent its global brand with the sophistication and distinction associated the world over with Beverly Hills.

The restoration project will bring the park into the 21st Century, utilizing current trends in park design. It will begin by bringing back a long-lost favorite and main feature of the park - the Lily Pond in front of the Beverly Hills monument sign between Beverly and Canon Drives. Each of the 23 park blocks will undergo a tactical renovation, weighing many factors such as the age and safety of the trees, and the functionality and aesthetics of important park elements. Wrought iron will replace chain link along the residential alleys. The fountains at each gateway will be restored, a nod to the city’s history and an important step toward an illustrious future. The inevitable aging that 100 years does to a park - varying types of planting materials, outlived repairs, outdated fixtures, and an overused public restroom facility - will be addressed to meet current needs through a cohesive design and comprehensive park management approach.

In addition to the current restoration, the Friends of Beverly Gardens Park intends to ensure the park’s pristine future with funds to furnish a 50-year supply of materials for focal elements like the fountains, to replace aging plants and paving, and to create an annuity to cover extra labor needed to maintain the restoration work.

The city’s founders exhibited true foresight, in the midst of The Great Depression, to hire an innovative landscape architect to create this civic space and lead their way to the future. It is our turn now to step up and help preserve it for future generations, to restore the park to its true splendor and substantiate Beverly Hills as one of the world’s leading cities.
**Mia Lehrer**

Integral to carrying the vision of Ralph Cornell forward is the stewardship of a contemporary landscape planner of today, internationally-acclaimed designer Mia Lehrer, and her firm Mia Lehrer + Associates. A multi-disciplinarian, Lehrer draws on a passion for city planning in her advocacy for environmentally sensitive and people-friendly public space. Focused on “conveying design integrity in the process and not just solving a problem, she strives to design landscapes that inspire, using technologies that sustain and creating places that matter.” Some of her extensive and varied civic projects have included the LA River Revitalization, Silver Lake Reservoir, Annenberg Community Beach House and the renovation of Union Station in downtown LA.

**Become A Friend**

This large-scale project requires active community involvement and support at every level to generate the needed funding. Plans for various events, from block parties to a Party in The Park in honor of the city’s Centennial Celebration, are in the works. Opportunities abound for residents to have real impact in shaping their hometown’s future. Naming opportunities for large format donations are also available.

**Please Join The Effort In Any Way You Can...**

- **NAME**
- **COMPANY**
- **ADDRESS**
- **EMAIL**
- **PHONE**

- Enclosed please find my tax-deductible check made payable to The City of Beverly Hills / Beverly Gardens Restoration in the amount of _____________________________.
- 1 / We are pleased to be recognized in all promotional materials and our name should appear as follows _____________________________.
- 1 / We wish this gift to be anonymous.
- I would like to volunteer to help coordinate a block party or event in my area.
- Please contact me for ideas on how to generate support and suggestions for possible donors and supporters.
- Please include me in occasional email updates about the restoration of Beverly Gardens Park.

Please mail above form to: Friends of Beverly Gardens Park 9990 S. Santa Monica Blvd Beverly Hills, CA 90212