

Brush Creek: A Design Proposal

Kansas City, Missouri

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This interim study of Brush Creek includes recommendations for site and circulation development, as well as erosion and water quality control systems. The project site is a one-mile section of Brush Creek extending from State Line Road to Main Street in the Country Club District of Kansas City, Missouri. Ward Parkway, a major arterial route, parallels the creek on both banks.

Due to the pressures of urbanization, little of the area's natural character remains. The Oak and Hickory forest that once covered the area has been replaced in some parts by plantings of ornamental and shade trees. The creek's aquatic habitats were most significantly altered in the mid-1930's when the bed was straightened and lined with concrete. For many years this section of Brush Creek has engaged high levels of activity generated by the adjacent Country Club Plaza.

Four objectives for the design were established with assistance from the Parks and Recreation Department of Kansas City, Missouri. The first objective was to define and develop separate pedestrian and bicycle routes along the creek. Secondly, local residents were to be provided with close and easily accessible recreational opportunities. The third objective was to provide a large outdoor gathering place that could be used for concerts, movies, plays, and other civic

events. The final objective was to determine the assets and liabilities of Brush Creek as a water resource.

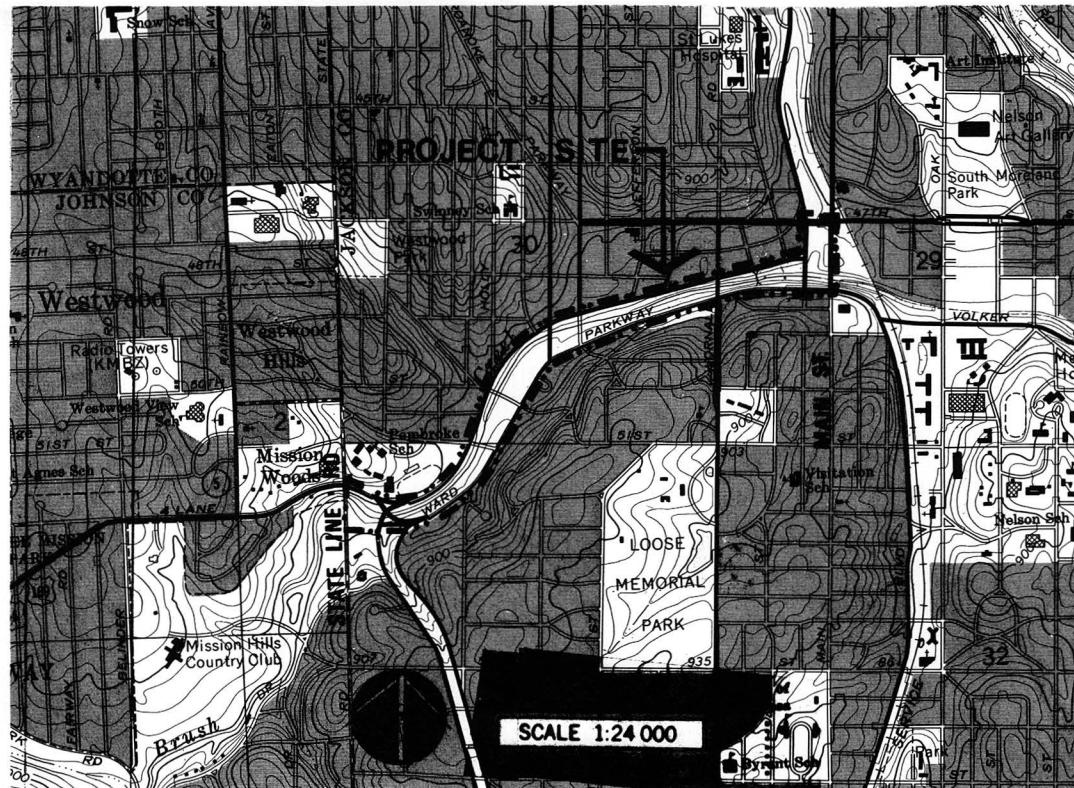
An inventory and analysis of existing ecological and cultural systems and of surrounding land uses was conducted to identify the potential for the project site's development. The resulting information suggests that the area be divided into three landscape zones. The first of these zones is open in its arrangement of plant

materials and emphasizes the natural flow of the creek bed. The second zone uses naturalistic rock outcroppings to help the transition between the open zone and the architectural character of the third zone. This final zone is dominated by architectural elements and hard edges.

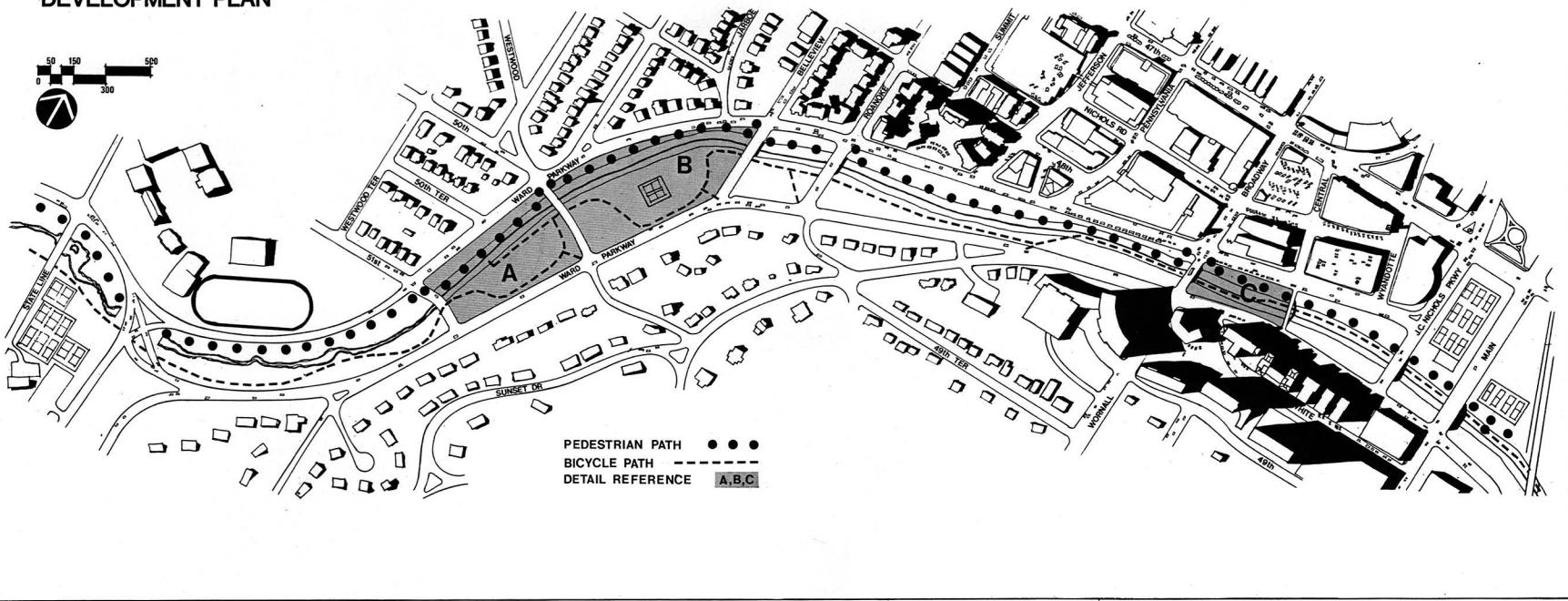
The inventory/analysis also led to the inclusion of a pedestrian path on the creek's north bank and a bicycle route on the south bank. The bicycle path ties into existing

paths and, at the western end of the project site, it is located on the existing concrete creek bed. In keeping with the second objective, access to the pedestrian path and to the recreation areas is provided at each bridge crossing. Provision for seating areas along the path and guidelines to ensure continuity of detail are also included in the plans.

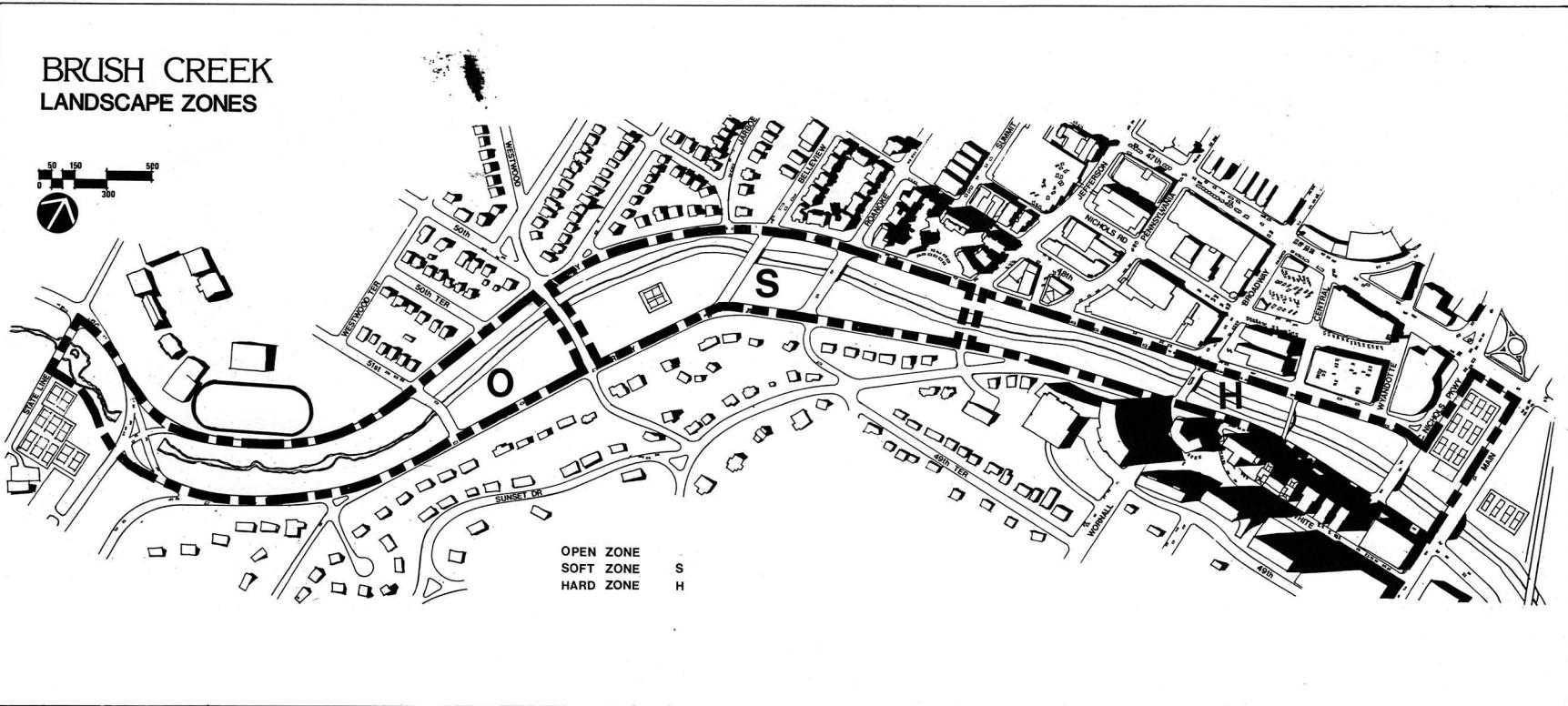
Suggested plantings include a variety of ornamental grasses (which would also be used as a

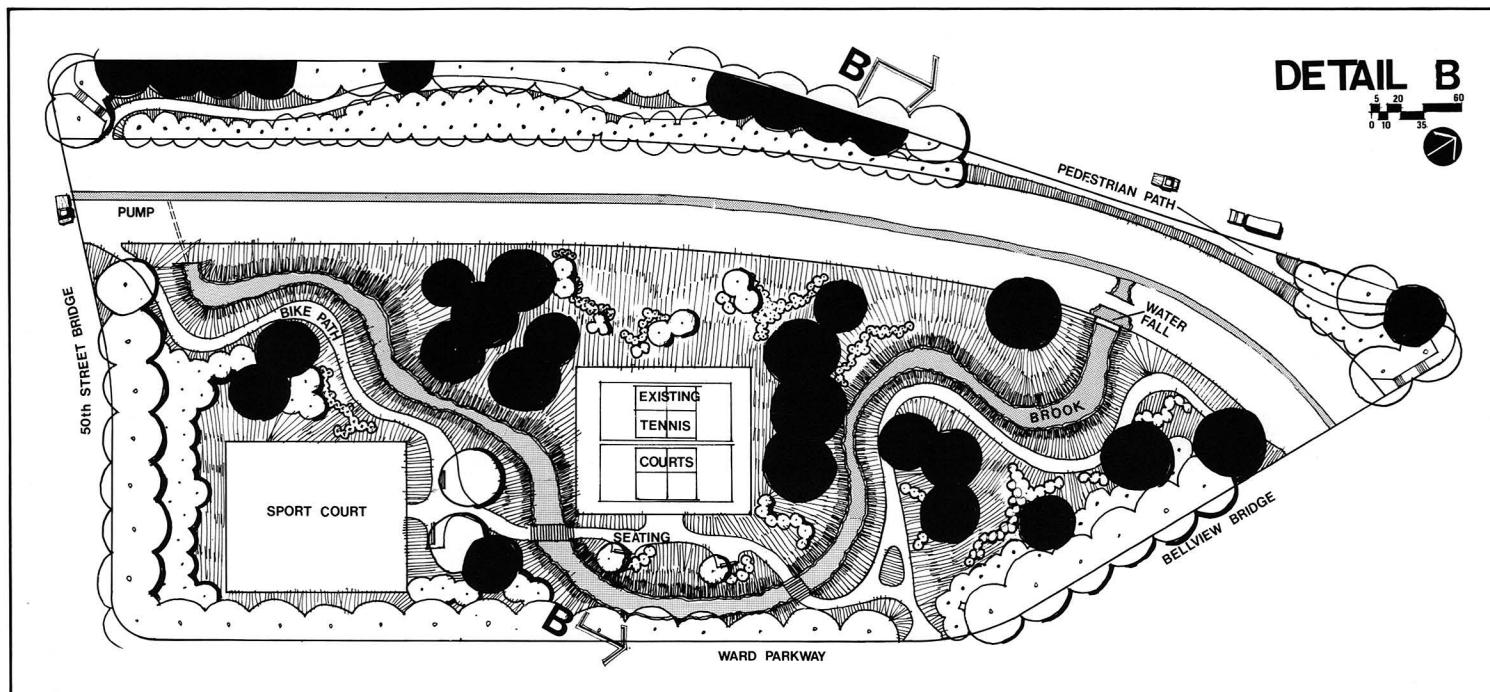
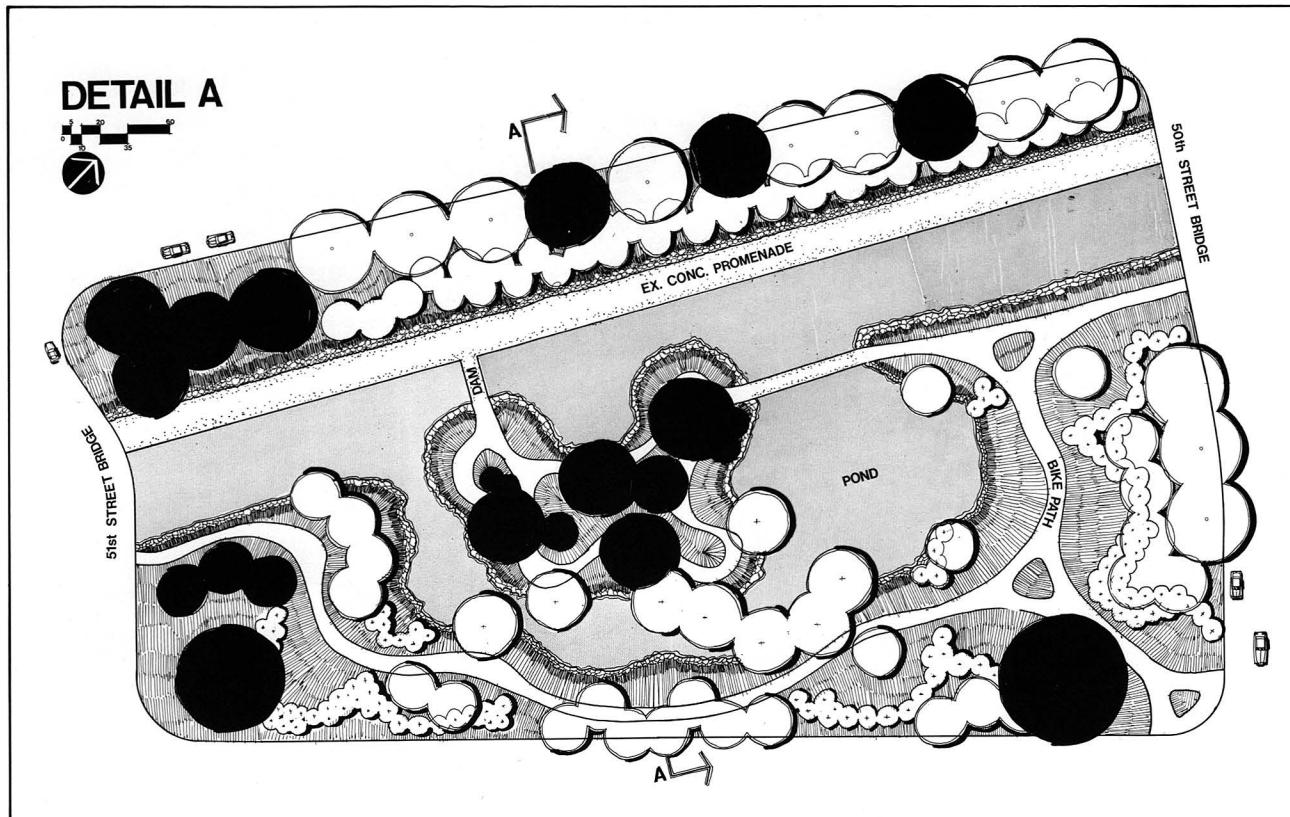


DEVELOPMENT PLAN



BRUSH CREEK LANDSCAPE ZONES





means of erosion control), coniferous trees, evergreen and flowering shrubs, and three kinds of deciduous trees. The water quantity in Brush Creek can vary dramatically because of the

amount of storm water discharge into the creek and the increase in impervious ground cover in the surrounding area. The run-off flows usually peak rapidly and subside quickly, but by construc-

ing a small pool, the amount of flow can be controlled. This element adds to the attractiveness of the creek and can be self-cleaning. The water quality can be regulated by monitoring the

different storm sewer flows and eliminating any pollutants at their source.

