

November 5, 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Walnut Creek Existing Park Buildings Assessment

Representatives from Noll & Tam Architects, RRM Design Group, Walnut Creek Arts and Recreation Department and Walnut Creek Public Works Department toured six existing park buildings located in three Walnut Creek city parks: Civic Park, Heather Farm, and Shadelands Art Center. City staff described the programs that are conducted, the general attendance numbers, the maintenance issues, and the critical infrastructure issues for all six buildings. Noll & Tam Architects documented their impression of the condition of the buildings with photographs and written notes. What follows is a highlight of the most important points from both observation and staff description. A full description is provided in the Site Assessment.

Civic Park Community Center

- Built in 1973, comprised of 8,325 gross square feet. This building has not had significant update to any of its systems, and only minor updates to solve some (not all) ADA issues. Finishes throughout are weathered and dated.
- The programs offered are well-attended, and there is more demand for activities than can be accommodated with its current, restrictively configured spaces.
- There has been evidence of moisture infiltration into the in-slab duct system, in the form of perceptible mold odor during colder, wetter months. Repairs to this kind of duct system are often expensive because of restricted access.
- Renovation or addition to this structure is challenging because it has a slab-on-grade foundation over a high water table. An expansion of more than 50% of its footprint would require that the floor level be raised to avoid large flood events.
- The public restrooms were remodeled in the 2000s to accommodate ADA requirements, and a recent upgrade at the exterior makes the approach ramp accessible. Some building features still require modification to comply with ADA (entry door, e.g.).



Civic Park Community Center

Civic Park Assembly Hall

- Also built in 1973, comprised of 5,400 gsf. This building has also not had significant updates to its building systems.

- Exhibits the same issues as in the Civic Park Community Center as far as slab-on-grade foundation and high water table, with restrictions to renovation and addition.
- The space is sometimes used for rentals, but has limited audio-visual capacity, and the weathered, dated finishes limit interest. The acoustical properties of the room make adding equipment challenging.
- The size of the main room is problematic for Arts & Recreation use: most events do not require such a large space, and staff have a hard time dividing the large room adequately to make useable spaces, nor have enough storage for the equipment needed for classes.



Civic Park Assembly Hall

Clay Arts Building and Park Place

- These buildings were not directly observed, except at their exterior. They have been increasingly considered to be part of this Master Plan. Both were built in the 1950s, of CMU construction, and are located in Civic Park. Park Place is comprised of 1,700 gsf and Clay Arts has 3,300 gsf.
- Neither building has had significant updates to their system; both are weathered and, considering the age of each building, are functional, though not ideal, for the programs they house.



Clay Arts and Park Place

Heather Farm Park Community Center

- Built in 1972, comprised of 8,900 gsf. There has been partial replacement of the HVAC system. The unreplaced portion is also an in-slab duct system with reported mold issues. Some, not all, ADA issues have been addressed.
- There are reported to be structural beams in the roof system that show evidence of decay. There is visible sagging at the roof eave lines. Because of the building's proximity to water, it seems likely that there may be long-term vapor and/or biological damage to the structure which should be investigated.

- The larger of the two rooms available for public use, the Lakeside Room, is a popular rental because of its views of the adjacent pond. Both rooms are difficult to use for Arts & Recreation programs, due to the large size, difficulty dividing them adequately to make useable spaces, and do not have enough storage for the equipment for classes.
- There are no other rooms, no useable lobby space, no gathering spaces for the community, such that there tend to be very few community members present aside for specific events. The people who are most often present are the staff who work in the administrative offices housed here.



Heather Farm Park Community Center

Clarke Memorial Swim Center

- Built in 1967, comprised of 7,010 gsf of total building space, and three pools. This building complex is also located in Heather Farm Park. There have been no significant upgrades to the building systems or pool infrastructure, only minor modifications to adapt to changing uses. Repairs to the pool system now require custom-made parts and specialized knowledge.
- A separate, formal analysis of both the Clarke and Larkey pool facilities was conducted in 2010 by a consultant specializing in aquatics facilities. Their conclusion at the time was that both pool facilities should be replaced; repairs and renovation would be too financially prohibitive. The Larkey pool and equipment was replaced, and the adjacent building renovated as a result of this analysis, and has seen a resulting, large increase in attendance.
- There is currently far more demand for pool use than can be accommodated by the Clarke facility. Lanes are constantly full, and different programs overlap in non-ideally shared use. Many of the smaller offices and classroom spaces are too small to accommodate the trainings and meetings that are held there.
- Renovation of a pool system as old as Clarke is not advised because of how difficult it is to access the systems for pool maintenance, especially the underground portions. Similarly, the pool house has been subject to nearly fifty years of water and chemical exposure, and is likely too damaged to be worth salvage. Finishes show significant wear.



Clarke Memorial Swim Center

Studio H

- Similar to Clay Arts and Park Place, this temporary building in Heather Farm Park is increasingly being considered as part of this Master Planning effort, although it was not directly observed. It is comprised of 3,020 gsf. It pre-dates the 1980s, and was meant to be a temporary facility.
- Because this building was intended to be a temporary facility, it is degrading more rapidly than the other buildings, and is therefore limited for meaningful future use.



Studio H

Shadelands Art Center – Main

- Built in 1975 comprised of 16,180 gsf. Renovations occurred in the late 1990s, when the city came into possession of the property, and again in the 2000s to amend for program functions and ADA accessibility. The HVAC system has been recently replaced.
- The auditorium in this building is the most technologically advanced amongst the park buildings assembly spaces, and is heavily rented. The adjacent warming kitchen has not been updated, which is limiting for patrons.
- The renovations made in the 1990s and 2000s did not solve all of the functional issues in program spaces. There is bad acoustical separation, poor finish durability, very little storage, and a need for specialty spaces for the unique equipment required by the different arts classes that are housed here. If arts programs from other parks are moved to this location, additional space will be required, as it is currently at capacity.
- While the building systems are in the best repair of the six buildings under consideration here, this building suffers the most from lack of clear circulation. It is quite difficult to discern where the entrance is, or how to navigate to any of its classrooms.



Shadelands Art Center Main Building

Shadelands Art Center – Annex

- Built in the early 2000s, comprised of 4,020 gsf. This building consists of two attached, semi-portable, prefabricated structures, meant to last for 20 years. The building is therefore nearing the end of its warranted use, which in the case of temporary structures, is more critical, and significant damage is likely to appear.
- There is inadequate storage for the materials for the diverse art classes held here, and underutilized spaces dedicated to old uses (e.g. photo lab).
- There is more demand for art classes than can be accommodated here.



Shadelands Art Center Annex

Recommendations & Summary

- The areas included in this inventory are as follows:

Park	Building	Gross Square Feet	Year Built	Project Assumptions to Remain in Place
Civic Park	Community Center	8325	1973	Library & Associated Parking
	Assembly Hall	5400	1973	Pedestrian Bridge
	Clay Arts	3300	1950s	Private House & Its Access
	Park Place	1700	1950s	Hand of Peach Sculpture
	Park Total	18725		Open Creek & Creek Walk
Heather Farm Park	Community Center	8900	1972	Ballfields, Tennis Center, Skate Park, Garden Center, Nature Lake,

	Clarke Swim Center	7010	1967	Maintenance Yard, Irrigation Reservoir, All-Abilities Playground, Centennial Grove, Heather Drive, San Carlos Drive
	Studio H	3020	1970s	
	Park Total	18930		
Shadelands Art Center	Main Building	16180	1975	
	Annex	4020	2000s	
	Park Total	20200		
	Total Under Plan	57855		

- The next step in evaluating these structures would be to have a team of architects and engineers (structural, mechanical and electrical, at least) do a formal evaluation of the building systems. This level of analysis would yield an accurate account of the useful life that remains in these buildings.
- Noll & Tam Architects will analyze the adjacencies, opportunities and restrictions that arise from either renovating, re-building in place, or moving the placement of these buildings as part of the current master planning effort. Based on program recommendations from Ballard King, an inventory of existing and projected program need will be translated into gross square foot targets. These target building footprints will be test-fit in the park sites, and ultimately, provide recommendations for the master plan.