

Glenwood Children's Park

50th Anniversary

1949 - 1999

Designed by Jens Jensen

"For children to enjoy nature at its best..."

At the bottom of this page is the 1999 booklet published by DMNA describing the transition of Glenwood from quarry to park.

Note: The following article was written in 1999 for the 50th anniversary celebration of the park

Glenwood Children's Park is nestled in the Dudgeon-Monroe Neighborhood of Madison, WI. The park was dedicated on October 7th, 1949 and will celebrate it's 50th anniversary in 1999. It is currently being restored with the cooperation of the Dudgeon-Monroe Neighborhood Association, the Madison Parks Division and volunteers. The park is a city historic landmark. Here, on the site of a former sandstone quarry, Jensen designed this park around the existing features using his trademark, native species. A stone council ring, another Jensen trademark based on Danish folk school and

Native American traditions, is situated on top of a mound in the park.

A unique feature of Jensen's design are the outdoor rooms, or spaces defined by trees that were on the original plan for the park. Each circle was designed with a different purpose in mind, there is a Mother's Circle, a Dancing Ring and a Sing Ring.



*William Meuer
Glenwood Children's Park, 1949*

The park was in constant use when it first opened fifty years ago. There were organized activities for children in the summer. Neighbors held watermelon parties by telling others to pass the word and bring a quarter.

But in the early sixties another neighborhood was developed next to the park and the resulting runoff contributed to erosion problems. The trees matured into a dense canopy, shading out the ground cover, further contributing to erosion problems. In 1975, neighbors saw that the park needed some help and worked on removing the invasive species and replanting some of the native species used in the design. The park was then designated a Madison historic landmark. There was no real maintenance of the restoration in the years that followed.

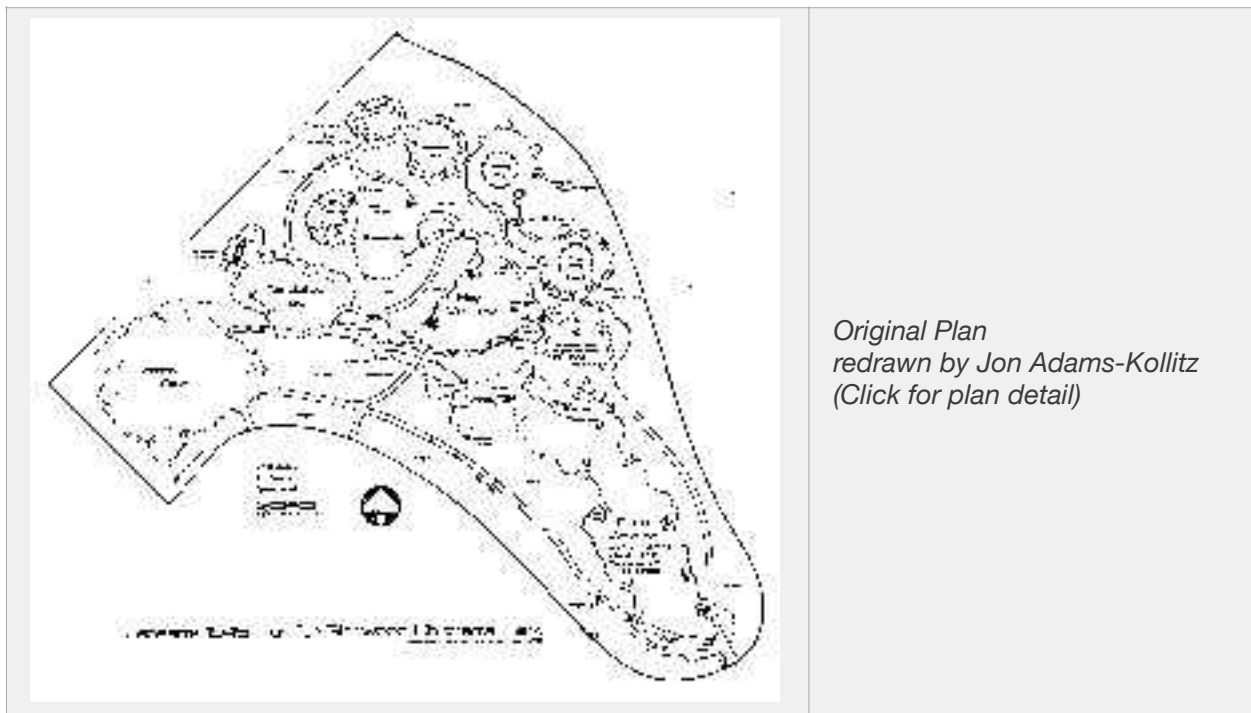
In February of 1999, city forestry crews cut large trees in the park to clear the way for spring replanting. This spring, the Madison Parks Division and the Dudgeon-Monroe Neighborhood Association contributed \$7,000 for new plantings. A restoration plan was donated by landscape architect Jon Adams-Kollitz, who had written a thesis on a restoration plan for the parks years before. Jensen's original plan was adapted by substituting more shade tolerant species, where necessary. Where Jens had planted one of his favorites, hawthorn trees, we planted pagoda dogwood. service berry, redbud and mountain maple were used to recreate the rings. Along the ravine of the old quarry were scattered hop hornbeam and witch hazel, and along a sunny berm at the base of the park were planted native roses. Over three weekends volunteers planted over 130 new trees and shrubs. The elimination of the invasive species like garlic mustard, buckthorn and honeysuckle is the ongoing project now.

The Dudgeon-Monroe Neighborhood Association raised funds two years ago to restore the stone council ring. Several large stones needed to be repositioned, some replaced and dirt between the stones replaced with the sand as it was originally. That work has begun and

should be finished by the fall of 1999. The ring was surrounded with pagoda dogwood this spring.

Volunteers worked through the summer on removing buckthorn and honeysuckle, ragweed and clearing out around the stonework in the park. Ongoing volunteer maintenance will be the key to the success of this restoration. Controlling the invasive species will be our goal in the years to come. There is still a lot of work to do in the park. Some of the priorities include the development of the trails, restoration of the stonework throughout the park, more plantings, and a sign for the park. These projects will require additional funding, and we are seeking donations for this. Contributions can be made to the Dudgeon-Monroe Neighborhood Association.

The park will be celebrating its 50th anniversary this year on October 7th, 1999. Our goal is to have the park looking it's best for the anniversary celebration on October 2nd. Everyone is invited to come and enjoy the festivities!



The stone council ring in the park is a Jensen trademark, based on Danish folk school and native American traditions. By having people sit in a circle, no one person is at the "head of the table". Other Jensen council rings in Madison include the Wheeler council ring in the UW-Arboretum, and one on by Elizabeth Waters dorm on the UW campus. The rings, built from native stone, were designed as places for gatherings, songs, dance, readings and contemplation.

The council ring in Glenwood Children's Park had fallen to disrepair by the 1990's. Several large stones had fallen out of place. The Dudgeon-Monroe neighborhood chose as it's fundraising project in 1997 the restoration of the council ring. The neighborhood residents contributed \$2,000 and the Madison Parks Division matched that for the total cost of the repairs. That restoration is nearing completion now.



Council Ring, 1949

In February 1999, when funding became available and weather conditions were right, city crews cut large mature trees, mostly Black Locust, out of the park to open up the canopy and allow room for replanting. When spring arrived, the park was more open.



The restoration plan was designed by landscape architect Jon Adams-Kollitz, based on his thesis for a Glenwood Children's Park restoration written while a graduate student at UW-Madison. In adapting the original plan, Adams-Kollitz replaced some species for more shade tolerant ones, but kept the original intent.



*Jon Adams-Kollitz/Formecology
(Click for plan detail)*

The last three weekends in May brought new plants and new life to the park. The trees and bushes were delivered to the park Saturday morning and planted by hard working volunteers that day.



Although on the original plan, the Mothers ring, Dance ring and Sing ring were probably never planted in 1949. In 1999, they were finally realized.



Volunteers working during the May plantings:



Ongoing volunteer maintenance will be the key to the success of this restoration. Controlling the invasive species will be our goal in the years to come. There is still a lot of work to do in the park. Some of the priorities include the development of the trails, restoration of the stonework throughout the park, more plantings, and a sign for the park. These projects will require additional funding, and we are seeking donations for this. Contributions can be made to the Dudgeon-Monroe Neighborhood Association.

The park will be celebrating its 50th anniversary this year on October 7th, 1999. Our goal is to have the park looking its best for the anniversary celebration on October 2nd. Everyone is invited to come and enjoy the festivities!

