

romare bearden park
master plan booklet

03.20.08





Romare Bearden's life was full of movement. Born in 1912 in Charlotte, North Carolina, Bearden's family moved shortly thereafter to Harlem. In 1925, Bearden moved to Pittsburgh where he eventually graduated from high school, and later came back to New York, obtaining his bachelor's degree in mathematics from New York University. The painter eventually joined the "306" group and continued his study of European painting which was later to exert a heavy influence on his work. After serving in the army for three years, Bearden studied philosophy in Paris at the Sorbonne, returning to New York afterward to paint.

Bearden's intellectualism seems to have strongly influenced his work; and the painter seems to have been ultra-conscious about the changes in the style of his work. Experimenting with abstract expressionism for a time, Bearden later sought, in the 1960's as part of the "Spiral" group, to contribute through his painting to the civil rights movement. Bearden's later work draws on a myriad of different traditions. Combining inspiration from jazz and the blues, classical mythology, Chinese calligraphy, the African American experience, and certain European painters, Bearden's work is incredibly diverse in medium, iconography, and style.



Bearden's study of the African American rural southern experience which was largely influenced by the large amounts of time the painter spent in the West Indies. Bearden's choices stylistically and in medium seem not to have been confined to producing a single aesthetic. Though largely self-conscious, his work seems to suggest an intense amalgamation of influences which eventually formed a style uniquely their own, and suggesting the whole time strong links to a larger community. (all images and write up taken from www.northbysouth.kenyon.edu, author unknown)

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I am afraid, despite my intentions, that in some instances commentators have tended to overemphasize what they believed to be the social elements in my work. But while my response to certain human elements is as obvious as it is inevitable, I am also pleased to note that upon reflection many persons have found that they were as much concerned with the aesthetic implications of my paintings as with, what may possibly be, my human compassion.

- Romare Bearden, 1969, quoted in Twentieth-Century Artists on Art

the overview

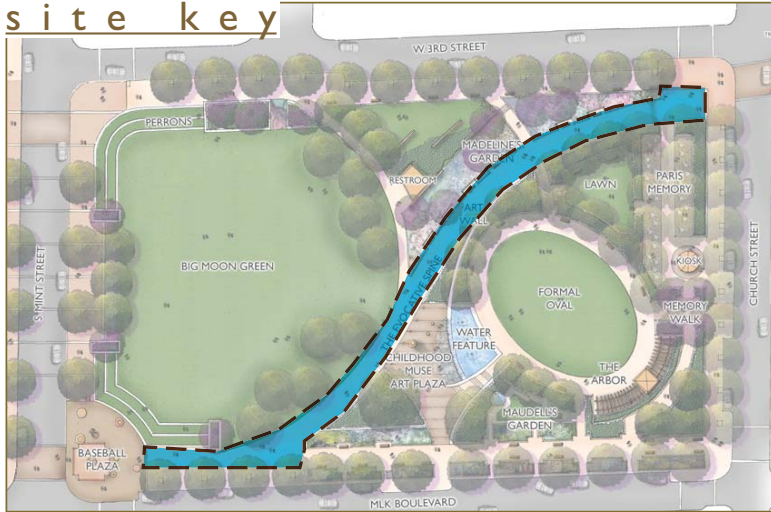
Romare Bearden worked in the context of his memories and their constant evolution in his mind. He used memory and tradition as his subjects for his work. His work was very much about his experiences throughout his life, but rather than illustrating his memories, his work evoked his subjects, he constantly interpreted his memories.

In the park, the intent is to evoke Bearden and his use of memory as triggers for past experience. His work will not be reproduced, but how he worked, put together his images and created his work will help determine how elements in the park are put together to evoke the spirit of Bearden's life and artwork



overall site plan

site key



the evocative spine

Water, art, and grade changes allow this to be a central focus of the park and helps to create punch and life to the other more passive areas. The Evocative Spine is the main thoroughfare in the park leading users from Church Street to Mint Street ending at the main gate for the Charlotte Knights Ballpark. This path will take the user through the site and provide opportunities to engage the users with gardens, public art and interactive water as the user enters the Childhood Muse area. Not only will the Evocative Spine be designed to provide areas for public art, it will also provide a direct pedestrian connection from the Tryon Street directly to the new ballpark.



the evocative spine

site key



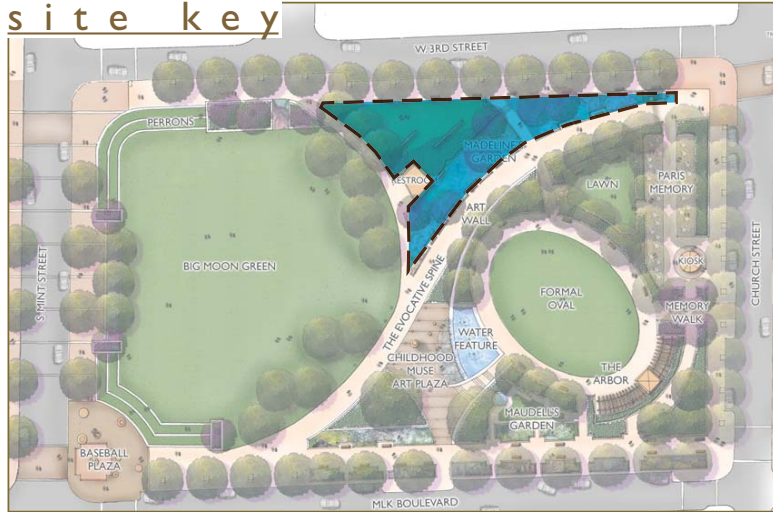
paris memory

For Bearden, his time in Paris was extremely influential and important to his work and life. This space evokes some of the Parisian space that Bearden experienced during his time in the City of Lights. This area gives the user an opportunity to experience the park for short intervals during the day without engaging with the entire site. The moveable tables and chairs on a bed of crushed granite are heavily shaded by a strong tree canopy give the user the opportunity to use the area for lunch and daytime gatherings as well as complimenting and enhancing the streetscape uses along Church Street. This area is flanked by a small lawn that also provides users the opportunity to pull a chair out into the sun to enjoy a lush lawn setting adjacent to the cool shaded canopy of the table area. A kiosk is also designated in this area to provide opportunities for light refreshments and to add a visual anchor to the shaded table area.



paris memory

site key



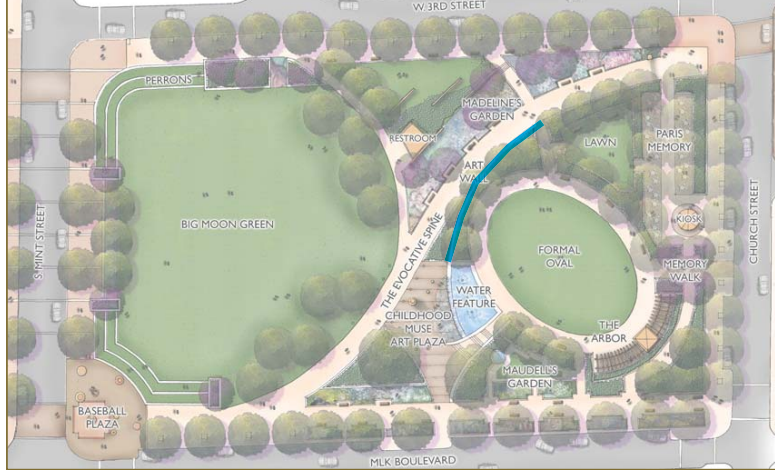
the gardens - madeline's

Madeline's Garden will be primarily a cool season garden but also will allow for year-round annual beds designed with bold swaths of popping color throughout the seasons. This garden will attempt to play on the collage inspiration incorporating annual plantings, shrubs and landform to provide a contrast from garden space to garden space. It will also provide a flank for the Evocative Spine, inviting users to rest and enjoy the garden along their journey through the park.



the gardens - madeline's

site key



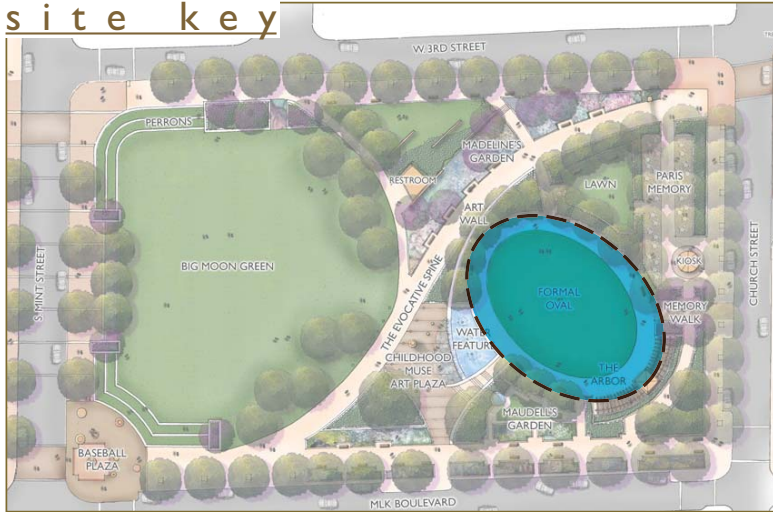
the art wall

The Art Wall will be designed to provide a platform for public art interpretation along the evocative spine as well as earth retainment structure to hold the formal oval to street grades along Church Street. The Art Wall provides the opportunity to lead the user on a journey to the Childhood Muse Plaza while using its retaining wall characteristics to create drama at the interactive water feature terminus cascading down from the formal oval.



the art wall

site key



the formal oval

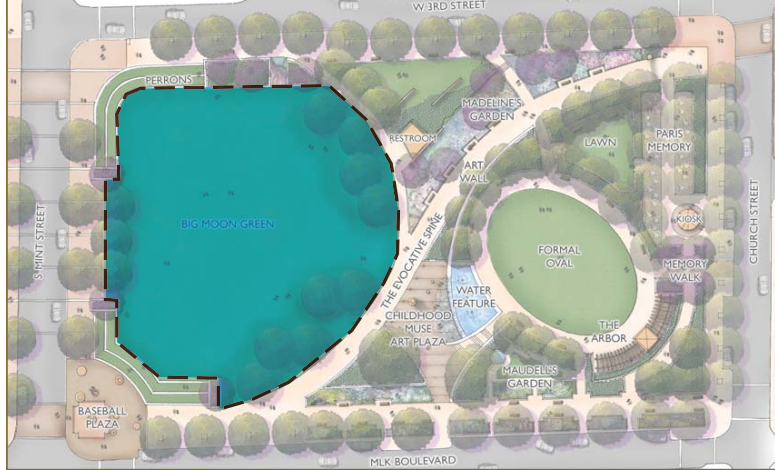
The Formal Oval is programmed to provide an area for smaller formal events. This area sits near the same elevation of Church Street and is held up above the park by the art wall below. It is the central focus of the upper part of the park providing a formal space that connects the Paris Memory, Walk and Maudell's Garden spaces to each other.

This area also will be home to the top portion of the interactive water feature which will spill from the Formal Oval down the wall in the Childhood Muse Plaza.



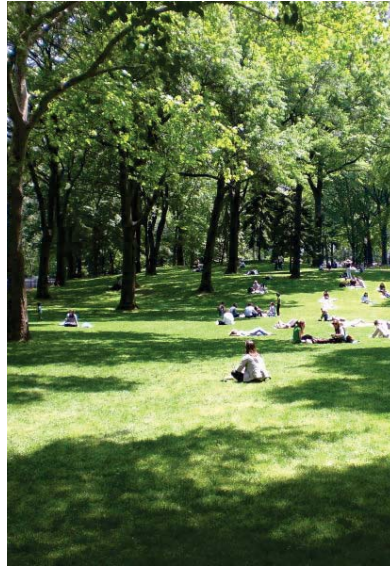
the formal oval

site key



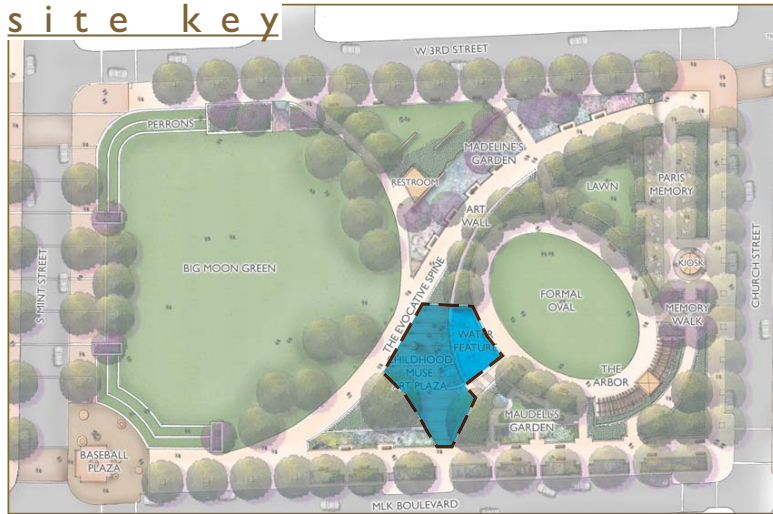
big moon green

The Big Moon Green is a large open lawn area designed for informal play as well as an area for event gatherings. The Big Moon Green theme is a play on the moon's ability to be an indicator of the passage of time and memory while maintaining a certain universality and regularity to its phases. It is anticipated that lighting will be a primary component to evoke memories of a particular phases of the moon that will be visible when viewed from above.



big moon green

site key



childhood muse plaza

This area has been designated to provide the prime showcase area for interactive water and public art. With cascading water, art, play and landform as the major attributes to drive the design of this plaza, the space will become a signature area for the park. The space has the potential to include a large vertical form of artwork to rise above the Formal Oval which currently rests seven feet above the Childhood Muse Plaza to provide a beacon inviting users to come find and experience the plaza as you enter the park from the Tryon Street Promenade.



childhood muse plaza

site key



the perrons

Perrons are large linear steps cascading up from Mint Street into the Big Moon Green. These steps act a “stoop” for the city inviting the user to pass through a variety of locations to and from the street to the green. These large monolithic steps are approximately eight to 10 inches high and two feet wide with a 10-foot wide run of lush lawn in between each perron step.



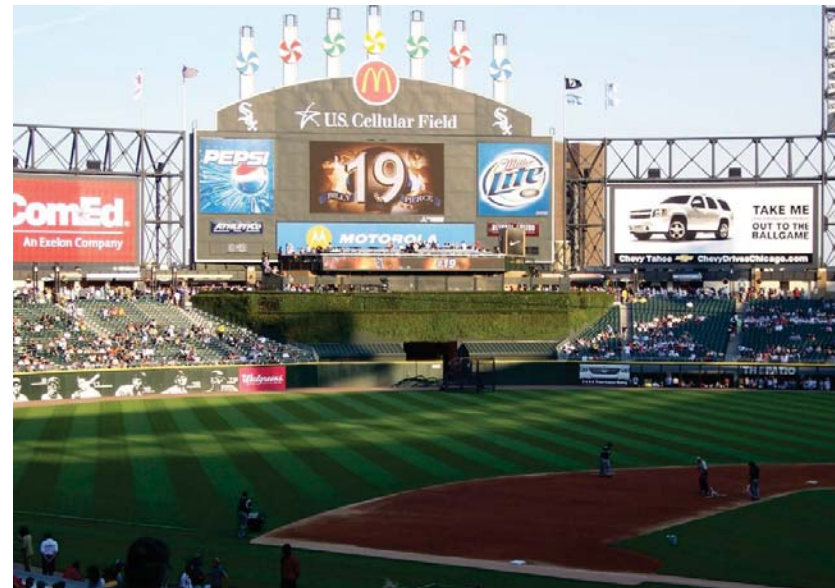
the perrons

site key



the baseball plaza

The Baseball Plaza is located along the corner of Mint Street and Martin Luther King Boulevard directly across from the main gate to Charlotte Knights Ballpark. With an estimated 10,000 people in attendance for over 70 home games, this area provides queuing space for large volumes of baseball fans waiting to cross Mint Street to get to the main gates. This space will be designed to evoke the excitement of heading into the event. A play on baseball on this corner could include the possibility of collage disks in the formation of player location on the field provides a space for a hardscape art feature that builds on the excitement of heading into the game as well as providing for a large enough corner space to hold hundreds of people waiting to cross the street at one time..



the baseball plaza

site key



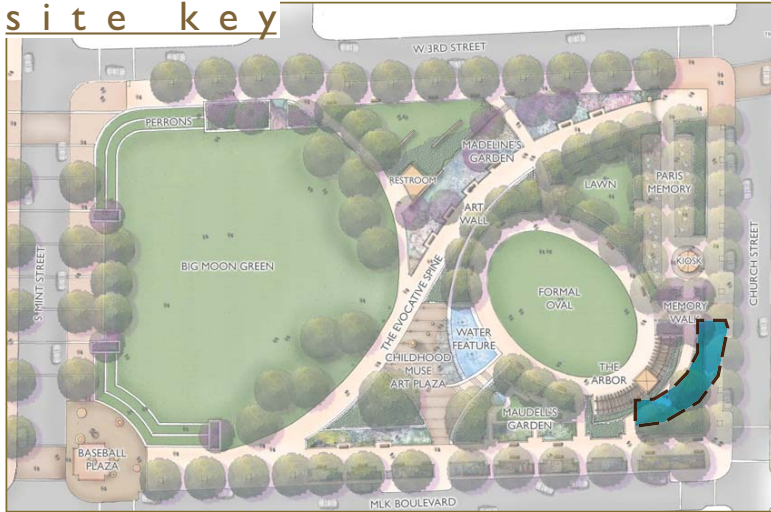
the memory walk

This specific connection between the formal oval and Brevard Court / Latta Arcade is a direct "ode" to the idea of memory. This walk will be designed with a very colorful paving pattern based on one of Bearden's actual works, using patterns bumping up against pattern as Bearden would have done with his collages. It also provides the users of Brevard Court a direct view into the Formal Oval's lush green and creates more energy along Church Street.



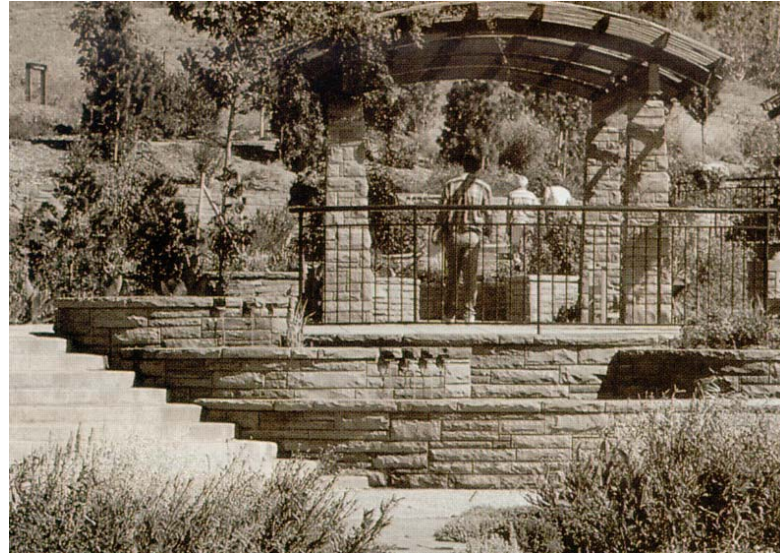
the memory walk

site key



the arbor and trellis

The Arbor and Trellis provide a shaded terminus for the Formal Oval. This is a place that invites the user to sit and relax under its shaded canopy while enjoying the formal layout of the oval lawn perched at one of the highest points on the park site. This structure will also provide opportunities for various events by providing space for small band stages and catering areas.



the arbor and trellis

site key



the gardens - maudell's

Maudell's Garden is southern garden designed to be in full bloom during the height of summer. Using plants of the south and accents of bold color, this garden will attempt to evoke the inspiration of Maudell.



g a r d e n s - m a u d e l l ' s