THE JEWEL OF BLOOMFIELD

FILLEY PARK RENOVATIONS  Bloomfield, Connecticut
Filley Park has been referred to by numerous town residents as “Bloomfield’s Jewel”. Located just north of the Town center, the park features a pond, a brook, and an island set against a wooded hillside. In its century of history, the park has hosted egg hunts, skating, fishing, concerts, ceremonies, and winter carnivals. In recent years, however, the shine has come off of the jewel and the park has begun to show its age. The pond has silted in; the hut and bridges are closed; and the pond edge is failing. About the only thing enjoying the park now are the Canada geese! But, geese and an urban park with an island and much lawn don’t mix. Geese are wild animals, and wild animals poop. And, when you get a lot of geese congregating in one small area, well… The poop makes the lawn quite unusable for us humans, and rainwater dissolving it and running into the pond isn’t healthy for the water. The Town is looking at many ways to deter the geese in the redone park; but the most important step is: Don’t Feed the Geese!

In 2008, Bloomfield decided that it was time to re-polish the jewel and to give it a new setting. The Town Council appointed a committee of hard working, enthusiastic residents to guide the process. The Filley Park Committee engaged CR3 consultants to help them engage the public and determine what the community wanted for its jewel, and to create a preliminary concept plan based on that input, with a successful outcome. The Committee and the Town then selected the consulting firm Fuss & O’Neill to dig deeper into the various factors affecting the park, especially the environmental and flood related issues, and thereby rework & refine the concept into a final design development plan. Above is the designer’s rendering of the overall plan; and on the accompanying pages are pictures and descriptions of the vision that the talented professionals at Fuss & O’Neill working with the Committee and Town staff have come up with to let our jewel sparkle like never before!
1910 ▶ Albert Filley donates 6½ acres on east side of “Whirlwind Hill” to Village Improvement District; named “Filley Park”.

1911 ▶ Easement acquired to build a road & bridge to connect the park across the brook to Tunxis Avenue.

1930 ▶ Wilbur Filley & Grace [Filley] Bidwell (nephew & niece of Albert Filley) donate 5 acres of meadow extending the park across the brook to Tunxis Avenue.

Early 1930s ▶ Original earthen dam constructed & Scott Trail created on west side of the brook; named for James W. Scott.

1940 ▶ Additional 1 acre of frontage along street acquired for park.

1942 ▶ Channel dug on west side of pond creating the island.

1959 ▶ Winter Carnival at Filley Park draws over 2000 attendees to skating performance. Also, Town assumes maintenance of park and expands the park to present size.

1960 ▶ Current concrete dam installed.

1979 ▶ Town acquires ownership of Filley Park from Village Improvement District.
DESIGN DEVELOPMENT PLAN
FILLEY PARK RENOVATIONS Bloomfield, Connecticut

- Pavilion
- Streetscape
- Natural Playground
- Great Lawn
- Filley Pond
- Arboretum Island
- Trails & Picnic Area
- Reconnect Wetlands
- Rock Ramp Fish Passage
- Dam Removal
- Wash Brook
- Low Impact Development
FILLEY POND:
- Existing pond silted in and choking on organics
- Pond to be excavated to restore depth for fishing & skating
- Pond taken off-line from stream to reduce siltation

WASH BROOK STREAM RESTORATION:
- Dam removal to provide a number of environmental benefits
- Rock ramp fishway proposed – also adds ‘rapids-like feature’
- Enhanced, stabilized stream shoreline to be provided

WETLANDS MEASURES AND LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT:
- Wetlands connections reestablished and enhanced
- Invasive species removal and control
- Rain garden and use of pervious pavement where possible

Existing pond & island in Autumn
Example of rock ramp fishway
Example of a rain garden
ARBoretum Island - Concept

FILLEY PARK RENOVATIONS  Bloomfield, Connecticut

Conifers
- Native Conifer Trees & Shrubs

Primary Walk
- Connection to trails & Warming Shed
- Concrete Walk

Shrubs
- Collection of Unique Native Deciduous Shrubs

Groundcovers
- Shade and Sun Native Groundcovers

Wedding Lawn
- 40'x80' Tent Arbor with Lawn Seating

Outlook Point
- Concert Terrace with Pergola & Flag Poles

Trees
- Collection of Native Deciduous Trees with Unique Bark

Perennials
- Collection of Native Perennials and Grasses

Bench (Typ.)

Possible Secondary Connection

Secondary Paths
- Outer Loop
- Stone Dust Paths
- Offset Seating Areas
ARBORETUM ISLAND - Existing Photos

FILLEY PARK RENOVATIONS  Bloomfield, Connecticut
WHAT IS A NATURAL PLAYGROUND?

“OPEN ENDED PLAY ENVIRONMENT OCCURRING IN NATURE”

**BENEFITS:**

- CONNECTS CHILDREN BACK TO NATURE
- COMBATS NATURE DEFICIT DISORDER
- IMPROVES CONCENTRATION
- PROMOTES CREATIVITY & ABSTRACT THINKING
- ENHANCES MOTOR SKILLS
LOCATION:

ZONES/ COMPONENTS:

- CLIMBING
- GATHERING
- DIGGING/ SAND
- HIDE AND SEEK
- BUILDING AREA
- DISCOVERY AREAS
- MUSIC & MOVEMENT
- WATER PLAY

NATURAL PLAYGROUNDS
FILLEY PARK RENOVATIONS  Bloomfield, Connecticut
FILLEY PARK RENOVATIONS Bloomfield, Connecticut

BEFORE:

AFTER:
An enhanced & expanded trail system is proposed to highlight the natural beauty and features of the wooded hillside of ‘Whirlwind Hill’. The trail system will feature cleared sitting areas, picnic areas, educational opportunities, exercise areas, and a peaceful walk in the woods near Bloomfield center!
The Filley Park streetscape is intended to be the first part of an integral streetscape system to link, both aesthetically and physically, Filley Park and the historic cemetery across Tunxis Avenue to the Library, Town Hall, Roberts Park, the Town Center Green, churches, the Wintonbury Mall and other businesses, and the rest of the Bloomfield town center. The streetscape will look to incorporate historic elements such as the stonework of the cemetery entrance, the brick of the Town Hall and the Library, the ornate benches of the Park, and the monuments of the Green, and new elements such as decorative lighting and plantings to look to give Bloomfield town center a distinctive character of regional significance.
PAVILION BUILDING:

- Expand the existing warming hut to a new multi-purpose building
- Recreate the signature chimney, with fireplaces inside and outside
- Include a sitting room that will serve as a warming room in the winter
- Include a great room that can host meetings, reunions, receptions, etc.

PERMITTING, FUNDING, AND CONSTRUCTION:

- The project needs many environmental permits from all levels of government
- Permit applications will be made in spring 2012, and take many months to acquire
- Funding is expected from diverse sources: the Town, grants, & private donations
- The project includes “plaque-able items”, to accommodate larger donations
- The design is ‘modular’ to allow for construction as funding becomes available

And, someday in the not-too-distant future:

You will be able to sit on the great lawn and take in the beauty of Bloomfield’s restored jewel: FILLEY PARK!
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
FILLEY PARK RENOVATIONS  Bloomfield, Connecticut

FILLEY PARK COMMITTEE:

- Albert Reichin, Chair
- Keith Bell, Vice Chair
- Doug Barnard
- Bonnie Bercowetz
- Ernestine Griffin
- David Cooney
- Jane Nadel-Klein
- June O’Connor
- Carol McCrann Proom
- Jim Lehman
- Leslie Warren
- Carol Weaver
- Shirley Williams

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