

3

View overlooking the former Episcopal Church, Hillside Cemetery, and downtown Unionville.



Looking out over Unionville Center from top of park

4

Food pavilion foundation: From photographs it seems people could bring their own picnic supplies and eat on the grassy lawns or take advantage of this eating shelter.



Food Pavilion*



Food Pavilion foundation remnants

5

Kettles: The Park is an example of glacial action more than twelve million years ago. There are at least five "bowls" or "kettles" (circular indentations in the hillsides) visible from the trails.

6

Underground cold storage cellar used for refrigeration during Park days as well as by later home dwellers.



Remnants of the Cave of the Dancing Bear

7

Electrified fountain remnants: Suburban Park was one of the first examples of electricity in use. Streets and homes were still lighted by gas. The source of the electricity was the trolley line's power station, farther east on Route 4, where Apricot's Restaurant is located.



Electric Fountain*



Remnants of the Electric Fountain

Unionville Historic District and Properties Commission

Self-Guided Walking Tour #4

Suburban Park



Suburban Park Entrance*



Unionville High School Class of 1896 in Suburban Park*

* indicates a photo courtesy of the Unionville Museum

The Hartford Suburban Trolley Line ran along Farmington Avenue from downtown Hartford through West Hartford and Farmington to its terminus in Unionville. (Sovereign Bank was the end of the line.) The trolley company built Suburban Park in 1895, but it closed after only ten years because of competition from bigger, newer amusement parks in Hartford, Avon, and Bloomfield, as well as the inventions of the automobile and the radio. The trolley continued to run until 1933.



Copyright Information: The Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford
Photo CD: 2800 File: lmg0066.pod

When Suburban Park was an amusement park, there were fewer trees and more grassy areas as well as a swimming lake, punting pond, dance pavilion, restaurants and a colorful electrified fountain. After the Park closed in 1905, the land and its buildings changed hands many times. In 1999, a local developer sold the land to the town for \$1.56 million, after a grassroots campaign by town residents prevented him from mining the area for sand and gravel and putting in fifty houses.

The Town of Farmington plans to leave Suburban Park as it is, a natural, untouched open space, for passive recreation use only. No motorized vehicles. Broad-winged hawks, pileated woodpeckers, rabbits, deer and raccoons are seen regularly. Mallard ducks and occasionally a heron are attracted to Roaring Brook. Everyone can use the Park for walking, snowshoeing, picnicking, as long as dogs are leashed and trash is picked up. "Take only pictures. Leave only footprints."

Visitors to Suburban Park can enter from Park Pond Place (off of Farmington Avenue) or more ample parking is available off of Cottage Street at the Lions Memorial Park.

1 Arch: The arch announces the entrance to Suburban Park, which is essentially undisturbed since glacial times except for the development during the Park days (1895-1905). There are no sewers, utilities, or other development.



2 Dance Pavilion: After the Park closed, the pavilion was converted to a summer cottage in 1907 by a Mr. Hillier. In 1925, it was winterized with a partial cellar and occupied year-round by the Michael Hawley family until it was destroyed by a fire in the 1960s.



Dance Pavilion*

