



May 25, 2017

**TO:** Park Board Chair and Commissioners  
**FROM:** General Manager - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation  
**SUBJECT:** Ireland Canada Monument in George Wainborn Park - Final Design

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## RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Vancouver Park Board accept the donation of an Ireland Canada Monument from the Ireland Canada Monument Society, and approve design option “A”, as outlined in this report, for installation of the monument in George Wainborn Park.

## POLICY / PREVIOUS DECISIONS

The Park Board has exclusive jurisdiction and control over the use of Vancouver parks, which includes all structures, activities, and improvements within those parks.

In March 1997, the [Board approved](#) the [Review Guidelines for the Donation of Public Art or Memorials](#). These guidelines are designed to ensure that high quality artwork and memorials of significance to a broad cross section of Vancouver residents can be added to Vancouver’s public spaces; and that community response is included in the considerations for the siting of the works. The core principle of these policies is shared decision-making. The Park Board approves the use of park land and reviews the technical analysis and public consultation. The Public Art Committee is consulted regarding the aesthetic and artistic merit of proposed artworks and site contextualization.

In December 2003, the Board reconfirmed its commitment to the arts by adopting the renewed [Park Board Arts Policy](#). This policy supports the provision of a vibrant public realm and the experience of public art and cultural events in parks.

In July 2012, the Board [approved the donation](#) of a [landscape feature commemorating Irish Canadians](#), originally intended for installation in Thornton Park.

## BACKGROUND

In May 2005, Irish President Mary McAleese visited Vancouver’s Irish-Canadian community, her visit inspired a desire in the local Irish heritage community to have a local gathering spot recognizing Irish heritage peoples’ contributions to the city, the province, and the country. Subsequently, a group of residents formed the Ireland Canada Monument Society (ICMS).

In November 2005, the Park Board received an Irish Canada Monument proposal from the ICMS. This proposal was processed according to the Park Board’s review guidelines, but it required significant additional work to meet the necessary Park Board requirements. A series of iterations of the proposal for a number of different locations and designs followed. In 2012

a landscape enhancement featuring the Irish Canada Monument was designed for Thornton Park and successfully completed all of the standard consultation processes. [This proposal](#) was [approved by the Park Board](#) on July 23, 2012.

Following the Board's decision, the Women's Monument Committee (WMC) expressed concern that Thornton Park, already the site for *Marker of Change*, was not an appropriate site for an additional monument. The Park Board's standard review process for such situations was implemented, resulting in a recommendation that the project proceed but with minor design changes. However, as the WMC remained opposed and as the Ireland Canada Monument is a celebratory piece and would conflict with the more sombre, reflective intent of the *Marker of Change* site, the ICMS decided that they would work with the Park Board to find a new location for the Irish Monument. After a thorough review of park sites, two possible locations in George Wainborn Park were identified (see Figure 1).



Figure 1 - George Wainborn Park indicating two options for proposed monument locations

The ICMS engaged PWL Partnership Landscape Architects Inc. design firm to begin to work on new site-specific designs for the monument. PWL was the original landscape architecture firm that designed George Wainborn Park for the Park Board in 2004. Preliminary technical and planning reviews were successfully completed for two design options in separate locations in the park (Figures 2 and 3 below).



Figure 2 - Design Option "A"

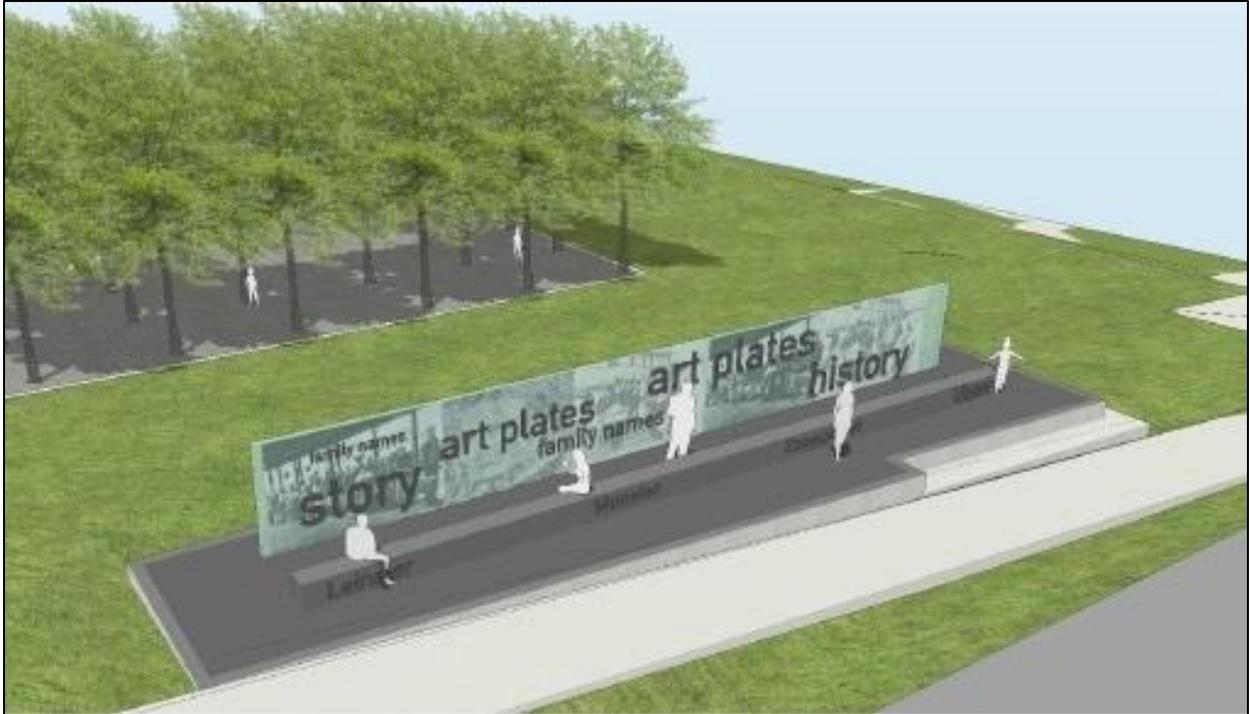


Figure 3 - Design Option "B"

### **Design Option A**

Located mainly within the existing bosque of trees in the northwest portion of the park, the design also includes a winding pathway which takes the shape of Ireland's borders. This is an integrated design which introduces references to the Irish landscape through the addition of a traditional curvilinear stone wall; engravings in the path and plates attached to the wall provide further Irish references including imagery and names of prominent Irish Canadians. The design provides seating walls and the potential for additional tables and chairs.

### **Design Option B**

Siting for this option would be just inside the park along the pathway on the northwest perimeter. This design presents a free-standing semi-translucent panel mounted atop a set of steps which provide an informal seating area. A metal band around the base is engraved with the names of the 32 counties of Ireland and the large panel will present imagery and the names of prominent Irish Canadians.

### **Public Engagement**

Community consultation is a key element of the monument review process and in this case the opportunity to comment on the proposals via an online questionnaire and an open house was provided as follows:

- information on the Park Board webpages;
- distribution through Talk Vancouver;
- mail notification within a two block radius of the park;
- an ad in the Vancouver Courier;
- notices mounted in nearby Park Board facilities; and
- signage at two locations in the park.

Public response, via the online and paper survey, was collected over a three week period. A total of 1,485 responses were received, 89% of which were from Vancouver residents. In total 89% responded positively, with 11% not in favour of either design.

The public open house was held at the Roundhouse Community Centre on April 4, 2017, from 3:00 pm to 7:00 pm with approximately 52 people in attendance. Background to the proposal and the two options were presented with Park Board staff, staff from PWL and representatives from ICMS in attendance.

Park Board has developed a new relationship with the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh, which includes awareness of the cultural and archeological concerns of these Nations. A review of the locations was conducted with the Intercultural Departments of each Nation. All of the Nations expressed that they had no concerns with the monument being located at either site in this park.

### **DISCUSSION**

The vast majority of the responses to the community consultation were favourable and a clear preference was indicated. Of those in favour, 74% preferred design Option "A" with 4%

liking both equally. Comments regarding the design focussed on the enhancement of the environmental aspect of the park and on the perception that elements of the monument will increase park use. Objections to both of the proposals focussed mainly on a dislike of monuments of any kind in parks and on concerns that many other heritage groups will want monuments to their contributions. Specific concerns regarding design Option “A” included the working title of “Discovering New Land” and the potential for chairs and tables to be vandalized or stolen. Both of these concerns will be addressed by staff.

The integration of design Option “A” was remarked on in the aesthetic review of the two options. As with all park design elements prepared by professional landscape architects, this review was completed by parks staff including those trained as landscape architects, park planners, and cultural administrators.

The decision by the ICMS to work with PWL on the design and siting proposals in George Wainborn Park provided confidence to Park Board staff that integration into the existing park design and understanding of Park Board’s development standards would be well understood and executed.

The proposed design will require minimum maintenance with all materials being those commonly found in park settings. A maintenance manual will be required and a maintenance fund of 10% (of the total cost of the monument construction) is the standard required amount provided by the donor. Park Board staff provide regular operational maintenance, with the maintenance fund covering unexpected or unusual damage.

## **SUMMARY**

It has been a long journey for the Irish heritage community and their supporters. Community led projects rely on the energy, enthusiasm, and available time of the proponents which can fluctuate over time. The Park Board has stringent consultation processes for monuments and memorials, including: aesthetic review; technical, risk management and park planning and operations reviews; community consultation; and First Nations cultural and archeological sensitivity engagement. The Ireland Canada Monument Society has worked with staff through to the successful completion of all of these standard review processes.

The monument proposal in design Option “A” successfully meets all of the review requirements and is proposed to be built at no cost to the Park Board. Staff recommend the Board accept the donation of the Ireland Canada Monument for installation in George Wainborn Park, with all arrangements to the satisfaction of the General Manager.

General Manager’s Office  
Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation  
Vancouver, BC

Prepared by:  
jil p. weaving, Arts Culture and Engagement Coordinator and  
Dave Hutch, Manager of Research and Planning

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