

Historical Timeline of Thomas Lowry Park

1899

The first mention of the parcel of land that is now known as Thomas Lowry Park is recorded in the Minneapolis Park Commission minutes. Thomas Lowry and his neighbors requested improvements to Hofflin's Mound, an "unsightly gravel bank" in Lowry Hill. Lowry's request was turned down by the park commission, as it didn't own the land.

1907

Identified on maps as Douglas Triangle.

1922

Nearby residents of Douglas Triangle petitioned the Minneapolis Park Commission to acquire the land for use as a park. There had been controversy around the parcel. A real estate investor had applied to the city council to build a thirteen-story hotel-apartment building on the lot. The request was denied, and a plan for a park commenced. Theodore Wirth, Superintendent of Minneapolis Park Systems, appointed Phelps Wyman, a park commissioner and landscape architect, to prepare the plans. Wirth envisioned a "park of natural beauty" that would take advantage of the sloping land. He is credited for the concept of a distinctive cascade, pergola, and brick walks. The plan was unusual in that it was executed by non-park staff and produced as a full color for the annual report.

1923

The Minneapolis Park Commission acquired the property by eminent domain from Friedman. The cost of this acquisition was \$100,200, which included the land appraisal of \$77,000, as well as improvement costs. Benefitting properties in the vicinity of the park were assessed over 10 years to pay off the bonds. The park was originally born out of the neighbors' commitment to providing funds for its development.

1924

The park was graded and planted. Wirth designed the artificial rockeries that were built with old sidewalk tiles and other waste concrete materials. Wirth makes several statements about the park in his annual park commission report: "the park is a gem," "the little park will be very attractive and in a class all its own on account of its naturalistic effects," "the location of this small park at the entrance to one of the first residential districts of the city furthermore justifies the expenditure," "the new park should be informal." Formal photographs of the park are taken. The park began to be informally called "Seven Pools."

1925

Douglas Triangle was renamed Mount Curve Triangles due to Bryant Avenue bisecting the lower section of the park into two triangles. The Pergola was constructed without a roof, different from the plan.

1953

The Annual MPRBR Report refers to “repairs being made to artificial cascade and pools” but does not give detail.

1984

Mount Curve Triangles renamed Thomas Lowry Park.

1994

A master plan for renovation was initiated by the neighborhood and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, using \$300,000 of Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) funds. The plan included: an irrigation system, additional lighting, paths and pools repair, and removal of a power transformer from the gateway area of the park.

1997

The renovations were implemented, with additional signage, new benches, and the landscaping of five new beds. Bryant Avenue was filled in rejoining the park into one triangle.

2003

Seasonal water for the pools was cancelled due to park budget cuts, but neighbors intervened and raised \$8500 to keep the pools running throughout the summer. Xcel utility boxes were removed from the gateway area of the park. The name Thomas Lowry Park, was incised on the gateway brick wall.

2004

A recirculating pump was installed for the pools. Prior to this, the estimation of the number of gallons of water used each season was 90 million.

2005

Installation of an improved irrigation system and repairs were made to the pool’s foundation.

2007

Shrubs were planted along cascades of pools by park staff.

2008

In July, the Friends of Thomas Lowry Park was incorporated into a nonprofit organization. Mission: to lessen the burdens of Minneapolis and the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board in caring for, maintaining, enhancing, and sustaining Thomas Lowry Park.

2009

Urn was installed in the triangle bed at Colfax and Douglas.

2010

Gateway bed on Mount Curve and Douglas was developed with \$11,000 in NRP funds, which included the installation of additional irrigation. Twenty-one new trees were planted in the park, donated by People for Parks.

2015

Urn at Colfax and Douglas was dedicated to Barbara Fogel, a Friends of Thomas Lowry Park founding board member and dedicated volunteer.

2017

Fourteen new trees were planted by Park Forestry throughout the park. Irrigation was expanded.

2018

A second urn was installed in the north pergola bed. The *planning for a capital campaign began*. A “Conditions Assessment Report” was made of the pools, pergola, paths, landscaping, and infrastructure.

Funding sources were explored.

2019

A “100 More Years” capital campaign to “Save the Seven Pools” was initiated. Early contributions commenced. Neighborhood informational meetings held.

2020

A capital campaign by Friends of TLP Board was publicly launched to recreate the original Seven Pools and make other authentic improvements. The project was a partnership of Friends of TLP, the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, Aune Fernandez Landscape Architects, and Lowry Hill Neighborhood Association. Final approval for the project from MPRB was passed in December. Global Specialties was awarded the contract for the historic renovation.

No water ran in the Seven Pools all season due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

2021

Construction commenced in April. “Behind the chain link fence” tours held. Active fundraising continued. Seven Pools masonry was replaced and replicated true to original design. New underground plumbing, a new pump vault and a recirculating pump were installed. Pools were completed in September of 2021. Some paver work commenced. New landscape materials were installed throughout the park. A neighborhood celebration of the return of the Seven Pools occurred on September 25 & 26, with food, live music, history displays, and guest speakers contributing to the festivities.

2022

All paths and pergola flooring were replaced with pavers closely matching the hues and patterns laid throughout the park 100 years before. The irrigation system was expanded. Grass seed and/or sod was directed at areas damaged from the construction. The “Seven Pools Century Club” plaque was installed on a boulder near the lower pools. By mid-July, the construction project was completed.

Friends of Thomas Lowry Park received Capital Campaign contributions from over 300 donors and from over thirteen states. Twenty-two lead donors, the Century Club, greatly assisted FTLP in raising the campaign goal. Major funding was secured from Lowry Hill Neighborhood Association dedicating allotted Neighborhood Revitalization Program funds, and from the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board.