

There's more here to LOOK OVER Central Cincinnati

A Fresh Look at
Cincinnati's Spectacular
Hillside Overlooks

A BRIEF HISTORY OF OUR OVERLOOKS AND PARKS

The foundation of Cincinnati's park system is the 1907 plan, "A Park System for the City of Cincinnati," by landscape architect George E. Kessler of Kansas City. Kessler's plan for Cincinnati pointed out the need to relieve congestion of crowded conditions and traffic in the city and the importance of securing land before it was developed. It promoted the use of hillsides to provide distant views and overlooks and to create desirable residential neighborhoods.

The City Planning Commission's 1925 plan recognized that, "Every endeavor should be made to provide adequate roads and to erect the needed shelters and other buildings for general use, so as to make the parks fully effective."

Courtesy of Cincinnati Park Board from *A Guide to Art and Architecture in Cincinnati's Parks*.



Central Cincinnati Featured Overlooks

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Bellevue Park
2191 Ohio Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45219 | 4 Mt. Storm Park
700 Lafayette Avenue
Cincinnati, OH 45223 |
| 2 Jackson Hill Park
2001 Eleanor Place
Cincinnati, OH 45202 | 5 Main Street Steps
(Dorsey Street to Eleanor Place)
Mt. Auburn |
| 3 Fairview Park
2219 Ravine Street
Cincinnati, OH 45219 | 6 Dorchester Avenue
Mt. Auburn |

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Cincinnati History Trivia

What three park names correspond with the names of geological strata? Answer on back.

LOOK OVER Central Cincinnati

DOUBLE PURPOSE PARKS

Bellevue Park, Fairview Park, and Jackson Hill Park overlooks were established as double purpose parks. Aside from usual park amenities, visitors in all three parks have great views of the city's business district sweeping down toward the river and of the river winding among the hills.



Fairview Park Overlook

Fairview Park's south overlook enjoys wonderful views of the Cincinnati skyline, the Ohio River, and the hillsides surrounding downtown. Located on West McMillan St., a drive circumvents the park allowing glimpses of dramatic views. This hillside

once had stone quarries, a lime kiln, a wine cellar, and an incline right-of-way before becoming a park. From 1892 to 1923, The Fairview Incline traversed the hillside from McMicken St. up to Fairview Ave.

Besides the south overlook, there is a west overlook with views of the Mill Creek Valley. Both overlooks possess viewing platforms, perfect for sitting and taking in the incredible views. The park also has basketball courts and picnic tables.

Jackson Hill Park – Mount Auburn Incline

The Mount Auburn Incline's Lookout House, the first of Cincinnati's four hilltop "resorts," drew crowds with its restaurant and extravagant entertainment. One unforgettable attraction involved a salt water tank and a white whale. The Lookout House's owner wanted to make a splash with his whale exhibit.

The unfortunate animal died within a month and unexpectedly began to decay quickly. A local factory rendered it into soap, and the resort had to be fumigated.

Although the Lookout House and its owner's antics emerged relatively unscathed by the

whale exhibit, it would be the 1888 state law prohibiting liquor sales on Sunday – their busiest day – that closed the resort. After the incline's demise, the land was used as a nursery until it became Jackson Hill Park in 1930.

Jackson Hill Park is located at the edge of Eleanor Place and Dorchester Avenue in Mt. Auburn. Park benches are available to take in views of City Hall, Music Hall, and Union Terminal, among other landmarks.

Bellevue Park

19th Century Bellevue House

With a breath-taking hillside view, Bellevue House was a famous resort, beer garden (serving local Christian Moerlein), and dance hall. Located atop a towering hill, Cincinnati-ans were transported to their destination via the Bellevue Incline. It was a multi-purpose gathering place where entertainment and hillside overlook views were the star attractions.

Early on, the upper terminus was plagued by a series of landslides that were corrected by a massive retaining wall through which the incline would pass. As transportation evolved, the Bellevue Incline became outdated. The incline was discontinued in 1926 and the Bellevue House demolished in 1927. The city later bought the site and transformed it into Bellevue Park.

Bellevue Park Overlook

Looking more like a landing pad for George Jetson's flying saucer, this free-form circular dome and its candy cane-like pillars was inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright's architecture. Built in 1955, it was a great outdoor dancing area with a bandstand.



Located near the end of Ohio Avenue, the park overlook possesses a commanding city view, and is a favorite destination spot. Park amenities include a contemporary shelter building, picnic areas, restrooms, a ball field, and play equipment.

More Overlooks in Central Cincinnati

**Main Street
Public Steps –
Mt. Auburn**



**Mt. Storm Park –
Clifton**

Mt. Storm overlooks Mill Creek and is partially bordered by portions of Lafayette Avenue and Central Parkway.



**Dorchester
Avenue –
Mt. Auburn**

DID YOU KNOW ?

"Ode to Catawba," the famous 1854 poem by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, is an ode to the sparkler created by Cincinnati Nicholas Longworth. Known as 'the father of American winemaking,' Longworth discovered Catawba, a native grape which produces an exceptional sparkling wine.



Since 1982, The Hillside Trust and Cincinnati Parks have been partners in helping one another preserve the city's parks and hillside systems. In 2007, The Hillside Trust was instrumental in studying Cincinnati's scenic views to promote and preserve its parks and other overlook property views.

The Hillside Trust was tasked with this brochure by a private family foundation to promote Cincinnati's scenic views and encourage the public to visit and enjoy these incredible overlooks.

Preserving and promoting our hillsides.

Visit The Hillside Trust for more information.

Photos courtesy of Cincinnati Museum Center, Cincinnati Parks, and The Hillside Trust.



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Trivia Answer:

Bellevue, Eden and Fairview Parks relate to the names of geological strata.

TRIVIA TRAIL through Cincinnati Parks compiled by
Frederick L. Payne, Director, Cincinnati Park Board.