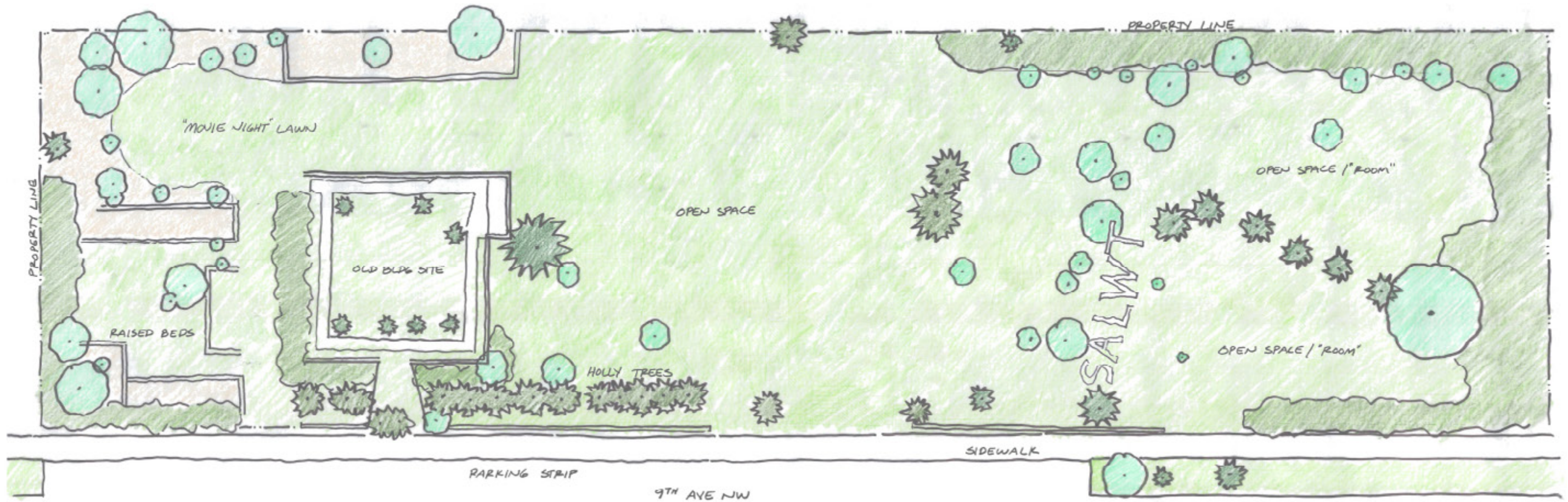




One of the largest pieces of open space amidst a dense expanse of residences, the development of Kirke Park transformed a defunct site into a vibrant neighborhood gathering space.



The long and narrow site provided the opportunity to design a series of unique “rooms” offering a diverse range of experiences to accommodate both active and passive play.



One of the most striking elements of the park is the “secret garden” created by the remnant walls of a former church building on the site.
(Site conditions prior to development)



The selectively eroded and deconstructed relics lend an aura of magic and mystery to the site.



Many elements at the park invite imaginative and adventurous play. Kids are free to challenge perceived risk and play wild and free as earlier generations did— climbing, jumping, running, exploring and watching over their imaginary kingdoms.



Kirke Park achieved a two-star SITES rating in part through material specifications. The stone-slab feature benches in the garden repurposed existing materials, while the pea gravel and wood chip ground surfaces allow stormwater infiltration into the earth.



The community garden creates a space for neighborly, multi-generational engagement around the shared fascination of seeing plants bloom and grow. A display garden, edible plants, and an orchard complement the raised planters.



The adventure trail immerses kids in nature play opportunities, climbing trees, log structures and boulders.



While creating a wild, natural backdrop for nature play and exploration, the vegetation along the “adventure trail” also provides a natural buffer to respect the privacy of adjacent homes.



Boulders provide an enclosure to a sandbox play area that inspires creative play. The team designed bore holes into several boulders around the park as an inviting detail for kids to peer into and build into their own play narratives.



Logs salvaged from the site make an economical, simple source of play, and strengthen balance and spatial judgement skills.



The accessible concrete pathway forms an edge along the playground and allows community interaction whether in passing or lingering. Set into the cheek-wall, a roomy slide lets multiple kids climb up and slide down at the same time.



Two large, open lawns, separated by a picnic area, provide room for lounging and active play in two distinct zones.



The giant dish swings are a nice introduction to swinging for young kids, and also offer opportunities for more social play with space for several kids to climb on.



Often the proposal to use natural materials in play environments meets with concerns around safety and maintenance, making Kirke Park's success in this area a model for future urban play environments.