OVERVIEW

Parkside Edge lies Parkside Avenue from North Ulat Street to Belmont Avenue with a series of neighborhood-scale rooms at the terminus of each cross-street, furnished with seating and porch swings designed specially for the project based on historic Fairmount Park benches. A continuous corridor of lush rain gardens captures stormwater flowing eastward towards the Schuylkill River and the lawn extending beyond the rooms continues to afford space for sports and informal gathering.

Parkside Edge is the first phase of the Centennial Commons, which aims to bring new life to a historically-significant portion of land at the heart of Philadelphia’s Fairmount Park. The reenvisioned site of the 1876 World’s Fair and Centennial Exhibition, the parklands in more recent decades have seen heavy recreational use but have lacked sufficient investment, especially in amenities for the nearby communities.

The revitalization of the site through the Centennial Commons project will introduce active and passive recreational spaces directed at the neighboring multi-generational communities while celebrating the spirit of discovery exemplified at the Exhibition.

PLANTING FOR THE SEASONS

A FRONT PORCH FOR THE NEIGHBORHOOD

The location of the neighborhood rooms and the bridges that cross into the park directly responds to the street grid and facades of the historic homes across Parkside Avenue. Taking the scale of the adjacent neighborhood as its cue, Parkside Edge turns what was a vast expanse of lawn into a varied landscape with gardens pocket-sized plazas, and open areas that can still host recreation and community events.

SOCIAL IMPACT

Parkside Edge addresses a felt need by residents for a neighborhood-scale amenity. Rather than starting as a stormwater project, Parkside Edge is fundamentally a neighborhood park project. Parks can and should do multiple things well: capturing stormwater is one of the things this park does but the provision of social space is at its heart.

HISTORICAL INFLUENCE

During the project a bench from c. 1890s was discovered in Fairmount Park of the same style as the benches seen ringing Welsh Memorial Fountain below. Shane Bryan, a local bench designer, has been engaged to create a bench that will draw inspiration from the original seating profile. The new Fairmount Park/Lambert's Bench is now offered for production to parks and public spaces across the country with proceeds of sale supporting ongoing maintenance and programming.