The Park
Hubbard Park’s past
This space served as a residential neighborhood from 1839–1926. Afterward, the University leveled the block and the area became the Women’s Athletic Field. Designated a park in 1991, its namesake is Philip G. Hubbard, the University of Iowa’s first African-American professor and later university vice president.

The Neighborhood
Before it was a park people lived here.
Hubbard Park started out as Block 98 when Iowa City was platted in 1839, becoming one of the city’s earliest residential areas. After the Great Flood of 1851, the neighborhood re-emerged in the 1860s with a mix of workers’ cottages, larger houses, and a corner grocery store.

The People
The neighborhood was diverse.
This was a racially, ethnically, and economically mixed working-class neighborhood. Many of the houses were rental units; others were single-family homes. Some families, like the Henyons were prosperous; Bradford Henyon was a shingle maker from New York. Others were not so fortunate and lived in poor conditions. Many residents were immigrants, like the Rinellas, a Sicilian family who ran a corner grocery store that was the social center of the neighborhood in the early 1900s.

The Archaeology
Houses were 3 feet below where you are standing!
To protect their neighborhood from flooding, residents used soil to raise the block’s elevation, burying and preserving older occupations. Excavations in 2014 by the Office of the State Archaeologist, University of Iowa, found remains of the old neighborhood, including foundations, a root cellar, and privy outhouses. American Indian artifacts demonstrate that people lived here for thousands of years.

Artifacts from the 19th and early 20th centuries reveal the neighborhood’s changing demographics, allowing us to enrich the historical narrative of Iowa City. Due to its historic and archaeological importance, this neighborhood is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Park
What Lies Below
Hubbard Park

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