



GLENSHEEN WAYSIDE ABSTRACT

Introduction

For the past 39 years, the University of Minnesota Duluth has operated Glensheen, the historic Congdon family estate built in the early 1900s, as an immersive historical experience open to the public. Tours give guests an authentic glimpse into early 20th century living and the personal lives of the influential Congdon family. Chester Congdon's influence and legacy along Minnesota's North Shore is hard to understate. He played a major role in the development of the mining industry that has defined this region for the last century and is known for setting aside large tracts of land for public use, including the North Shore Scenic Drive (NSSD) and Congdon Park.

Charles Leavitt, a prominent landscape architect of the time, worked extensively with the Congdon Family. He designed the extended more naturalistic gardens of the Glensheen estate, bridge and boat house building. Leavitt provided the blue print for the extension of the grounds as a naturalist based trail experience of Congdon Park (an approximately 1-mile linear park that follows Tischer Creek from the top of the hill down to the Lake Superior Shore and the Glensheen estate). As noted in the house journal of Glensheen, most visitors reveled in the trail experience alongside Tischer creek and it's many waterfalls.

Project Description

The Glensheen Wayside is a multifaceted project that aims to expand the boundaries and program of the historic estate to give visitors a more complete picture of Congdon's legacy and vision while partnering with several other organizations to:

- establish the vacant parcel of land across from the Glensheen mansion as a trailhead for the North Shore Scenic Drive that speaks to Chester Congdon's role in the development of this All-American Road Scenic Drive
- increase the parking capacity of the Glensheen estate and address safety/access concerns at the London Road intersection
- incorporate food production into the site in a way that recognizes the historic farmstead as a productive landscape that supported the Congdon family
- create/restore a more direct and accessible connection between the Glensheen estate, Congdon Park, and the Lakewalk trail that enhances the community's connection to the public estate and waterfront
- create a facility, trail systems, and gathering spaces that will support Glensheen tours of the expanded grounds for small groups.
- Create a depot for the North Shore Scenic Railroad that could incorporate a stop at Glensheen into their program. (in partnership with the NSSR)

The Glensheen Wayside facility operates as a rest area for the North Shore Scenic Drive, a trailhead for the Lakewalk, and an interpretive tour hub for Glensheen. The building form is a deconstruction of the Glensheen boathouse designed by Charles Leavitt. The stone walls of the boathouse are pulled apart to frame the space but allow pedestrian passage through from almost all directions (from the Glensheen estate, the wayside parking lot, the train depot, the Lakewalk, and Congdon Park). Openings in the walls become opportunities for inset interpretive steel panels that materially speak to the industrial heritage of the region. These 5 openings represent the 5 intrinsic qualities of the North Shore Scenic Drive that led to its designation as an all-American road. The open-air shelter uses a pattern of timber columns to hang interpretive panels and create distinct "rooms" that can be arranged thematically around aspects of the Congdon legacy, and yet are still flexible for multiple uses and an evolving program.