

NEIGHBORHOODS

Designers team up on Mandell Park plan

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HOUSTON CHRONICLE

TAKE a can-do attitude toward beautifying the neighborhood. Add a spirited design competition for a corner park. The result? A winning conceptual master plan that welcomes residents and all of Houston.

That's the novel and economic step the Friends of Mandell Park recently took toward development of 1.22 acres at Mandell and Richmond in the Museum District. Six University of Houston teams paired with professional architects in one-day design charette.

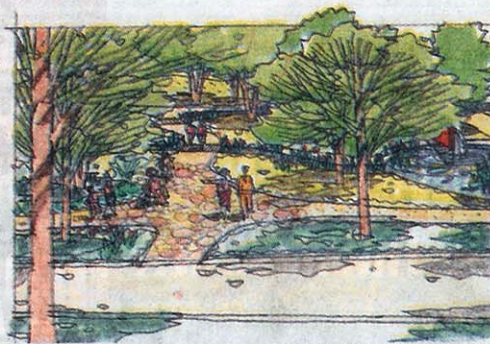
Students
Marianne Do and Keith Chan and landscape architecture firm Asakura Robinson were named winners for their design of a quiet space with buffering zoysia berms, winding walkways and water features.

Their flexible design meets the Friends' request to preserve an organic community garden. And it anticipates future changes. The design also considered a possible Metro rail line down Richmond.

"We wanted to invite people

to the park from that street with a large pergola and benches," Do says.

Beauty, function and low maintenance were priorities in the winning plan. Partner Margaret Robinson of Asakura Robinson says a "dry" stream that circles Meredith Gardens will carry excess water away from the vegetables and herbs



ASAKURA ROBINSON CO.

A PEACEFUL PLACE: The winning design features zoysia berms, winding walkways and water features.

after downpours. There are also rainwater collection pools in low areas and underground cisterns for storage. And compost and tool storage areas have not been forgotten.

Friends president Stanley Almoney says the group hopes fundraising efforts to improve the park will start later this year. The conceptual design may be tweaked by the local group of the parks department as needed.

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