

Bethel Burying Ground Abridged Timeline

1791	Bishop Richard Allen and other trustees purchase property at 6 th and Lombard Streets to become the site of Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church
1810	Mother Bethel A.M.E. purchase the property at 405-25 Queen Street and utilized the land as a private cemetery, Bethel Burying Ground
1868	The unused portion of the property is rented as wagon storage space in a 10-year lease to Barnabas Bartol
1889	Mother Bethel A.M.E. Trustees sell the property to the City
1890s	Weccacoe Square, a pocket park, is constructed on the property
1903	The City purchases adjacent residential properties and expanded the park to be an entire block
1910	Weccacoe Square becomes Weccacoe Playground, part of the Philadelphia Playground Association
1912	Responsibility for Weccacoe Playground is transferred to the Board of Recreation, now Philadelphia Parks and Recreation (PPR)
1924	The current community center building is constructed
1950-1970	Significant upgrades are made to the playground, including an addition to the community center building.
2010	<p>Friends of Weccacoe Playground, with support from PPR, the Philadelphia Water Department and the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society initiate a Master planning effort with the Community Design Collaborative to revitalize the site</p> <p>Terry Buckalew tells the organizations about the existence and history of Bethel Burying Ground</p>
2013	<p>PPR engages URS to undertake re-construction archeological investigations and confirm the presence of the gravesites as well as delineate the burial areas.</p> <p>PPR instructs the Design Consultant to suspend design work for the area above the burial ground pending further civic engagement.</p> <p>The property (405-25 Queen Street) is designated as historic and added to the <i>Philadelphia Register of Historic Places</i></p>

2014	The City retains The ROZ Group to structure a civic dialogue process focused on appropriate ways to commemorate the history and significance of Bethel Burying Ground
2016	The National Park Service places Bethel Burying Ground on the National Register of Historic Places Playground renovations and site improvements are completed. The tennis courts are excluded from the scope of the project as a small portion lies over Bethel Burying Ground.
2017	The City commissions RBA (NV5) to study the potential impacts of the building on the historic burial remains