

Pullen Park Reopens on Saturday with a Grand Opening Celebration



Carousel photo by [Abby Nardo Photography](#)

If you've driven down Ashe Avenue or Western Boulevard lately, you are sure to have noticed all of the improvements that have been going on at Pullen Park. From the great new building that houses the carousel house to a new welcome center, concessions building, restrooms and train station, the park has done a lot of work on existing structures and added a lot of new elements.

Pullen Park, the first public park in North Carolina, was established in the late 1800s. For decades, it has been a great place to go for a picnic on a beautiful day and take the kids for a train ride or carousel whirl. But, as time went on, the lack of maintenance became very noticeable. After lots of design development and masterplan proposals, the park closed in 2010 to get its new look. The renovations make the park a great new destination for everyone; families, couples and others just looking for a nice afternoon alone by the lake. We could do without that massive flag pole on the far side of the lake sporting the American flag, but otherwise, the park has a much fresher and open look and feel.



Carousel house photos by [Abby Nardo Photography](#)

The new park's design was developed by HagerSmith Architects along with Little and Little Landscape Architects. One of Pullen's main attractions, has always been a 1911 Dentzel Carousel, which is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The new carousel house looks gorgeous and is topped by an equally fun and elegant weathervane by local metal sculptor Matt McConnell.

The weathervane's design has three aspects, the directionals, the pointer and the ornament. McConnell goal with the design was to recognize the "history of the carousel, its unique features and the craftsmanship of the animals, with the setting and the experience of visiting the park, as well as provide a marker that will attract those who are unaware of its significance to take a closer look, and also enjoy the experience of the ride."





Weather vane photos courtesy of [McConnell Studios](#)

The directionals of McConnell's design incorporate "aspects of Master Carver Salvatore Cernigliaro's unique animals, including the Pig, Goat, Rabbit, and a rather fierce Cat with a fish in its mouth" which are "animals that he developed while working for Gustav Dentzel, that were not previously included in Dentzel's carousels." The Pointer was designed to "acknowledge the surrounding park, following the path of a leaf floating on the wind and provide a graceful element created in the spirit of the subtle, gentle details that are evident in Salvatore's and Dentzel's animals." The final element, the Ornament was incorporated to "recognize the classic form of the carousel housed within, with a little of the modern repeated geometry of the pointer. This element will be balanced and set on a bearing, allowing the Ornament to spin in the wind, bringing the experience of riding the carousel to those viewing it from the outside."



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Also, another great addition to the park will be [Pullen Place](#), a new restaurant serving local sausages, deli and grilled sandwiches and a bunch of other locally inspired treats. For Saturday's opening, Pullen Place will have four satellite locations around the park open serving food. Check out the Pullen Place opening menu [here](#).

One final feature that is sure to attract lots of children to the park is the C.P. Huntington miniature train, a one-third size, near replica of the famous locomotive of the same name. The train has been making rounds on the track over the past week and looks like a lot of fun for kids. The new train looks like a good rival to the one at the Natural Museum of Life and Science in Durham which is a huge hit for lots of kids and parents in the area.

We look forward to spending many upcoming Fall days in Pullen's newly renovated grounds. Come Spring and Summer, the park will surely be a huge hit for downtowners as well as others traveling from outside of the downtown to the area. With all of the construction happening near the Hillsborough and Morgan roundabout, this area of downtown could gain a lot of new businesses and energy over the next few years, extended the reach of downtown and connecting it more with the NC State campus.

Pullen Park Grand Opening Celebration

Join us on November 19th for the Grand Opening Celebration for your new Pullen Park!

November 19, 2011 10:00 am until 6:00 pm

Located at: 520 Ashe Avenue, Raleigh, NC 27606

Event Schedule

10:00 am Park & Amusement Rides Open

2:00 pm Pullen Park Dedication - Main Stage

3:00pm-6:00pm Entertainment and Musical Performances

Hours of Operation

After the Grand Opening Celebration, Pullen Park will be open daily from 10:00am - 6:00pm. Hours of operation are subject to change based upon the season.