Today, a small street across from Potomac Park Shopping Center is named Luna Park Drive, but the real Luna Park – a 40-acre amusement park – was actually located just north of Four Mile Run.

The Luna Park concept, like other amusement parks of the time, depended on a location along a trolley or electric railroad line that would make it easy for people in the city to visit the park. Washington Luna Park opened in 1906, following similar parks in New York, Pittsburgh and Cleveland between 1902 and 1906.

The local Luna Park cost $350,000 to build and featured thousands of electric lights, live music, rides and animal acts, as well as Asian, Arabic, Byzantine and other exotic architectural elements.

Boasting the world’s largest carousel, Luna Park also offered attractions like the Temple of Mystery, a fun house called Chateau Alphonse, a roller coaster, shooting gallery, dancing pavilion and Ferris wheel. But the most memorable ride was Shoot the Chutes, a water flume that plummeted down a steep track into a man-made lagoon.

A large bandstand showing daily concerts, and ball fields and park amenities made the site a popular one for family picnics. With civic, church and business groups holding parties there, daily attendance could exceed 10,000.

Although problems like flooding and escaped animals sometimes occurred, the park was a huge success in its first years. A large fire around 1916 reportedly caused extensive damage, and the park, which saw declining attendance in later years, closed down soon after.