World Conference on Olmsted Parks

A FESTIVAL OF HISTORIC PUBLIC PARKS AND PRIVATE PLACES

September 21-25, 1983, in New York City

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THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR OLMS TED PARKS

With the Cooperation of

THE DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION, CITY OF NEW YORK

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION OF NYC

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List of co-sponsors continued on back page
NEW YORK

Downing Park, Newburgh — 1
Andrew Jackson Downing, nurseryman and landscaper, whose writings in *Horticulturist* influenced an entire generation, recruited Calvert Vaux to work for him for two years, until his accidental death in 1852. Shortly thereafter Vaux invited Frederick Law Olmsted, the superintendent of Central Park, to share in designing a plan for Downing’s park, the start of their successful partnership. In 1887, in Downing’s hometown of Newburgh, NY, they designed this small city park, without charge, in memory of their inspiring colleague. A movement to restore the park is active and growing.

CONNECTICUT

Beardsley Park, Bridgeport — 2
FLO designed the 225-acre Connecticut park in the north-central part of this industrial town on the banks of the Pequonnock River in 1885. He dammed it to create a 30-acre pond containing an island and stone bridge, still intact. The lower level of the park is in the Romantic style with rolling English meadows, while the upper park is heavily wooded and has many rock outcrops.

Hartford, Connecticut (Off Map)
Frederick Law Olmsted was born on April 26, 1822, in Hartford, his ancestral city, where the 1600s, in the community formed and sustained by seven generations of his family. Frequent outings with his father instilled a love of the open countryside in the young man, and the philosophies and preachings of men such as neighbors Horace Bushnell had an important influence on his social perspective and democratic ideals. Though he travelled extensively and lived most of his adult life in New York and Brookline, he is buried in a family crypt in the Old North Cemetery on Main Street.

NEW JERSEY

Twombley Estate, Madison — 3
It is one of the many estates landscaped by the Olmsted firm. In 1893, H. McKay Twombley invited FLO to landscape the grounds of his McKim, Mead and White neo-Georgian mansion and orangery in New Jersey. Together with John Charles Olmsted, FLO created a 200-acre English country manor park, now the campus of Fairleigh Dickinson University. The upper grounds, with their sweeping lawns, curving drives, rustic boulder underpass and mature specimen trees, remain largely intact.

Essex County Park System, New Jersey — 4
First in the U.S., the Essex County Park Commission started to construct parks in 1895. From 1897 to the 1950s, the Olmsted firm consulted on the system’s design and on more than 30 individual parks, from urban 10-acre River Bank Park in Newark to the 1,200-acre, naturalistic, undeveloped South Mountain Reservation.

Branch Brook Park, Newark — 5
This long, linear park offers 360 acres of nature to northern Newark. Started in 1896 by Bogart and Barrett, the Olmsted Brothers, JCO and Frederick Law Olmsted, Junior, also known as “Rick,” provided revised plans and supervised construction of the park after 1899. A romantic southern section is punctuated by a Victorian shelter and crowned by gothic Sacred Heart Cathedral; a rural-style middle section has boulder bridges over a bamboo-lined stream; and the northern section is justly famed for its 2,000 cherry trees, the centerpiece of the annual Cherry Blossom Festival.

Lawrenceville

6 Trenton

Cadwalader Park, Trenton — 6
FLO walked the grounds of this 146-acre park on the west side of town in 1889; it was executed by JCO, however, and officially opened in 1901. The park lies astride the Delaware River and Raritan Canal in two sections: a lower lower area for active recreation and an upper pastoral park with meadows, ravines, broad curving roads, and a bear den and deer paddock — remnants of a menagerie.

Lawrenceville School, Lawrenceville — 7
The town-green tradition of a central lawn with curving walks and drives was used by FLO in 1883 to unify the Romanesque Revival main buildings, cottage-style masters’ houses and extensive grounds of this preparatory school mid-way between Princeton and Trenton, NJ.

STATEN ISLAND

Staten Island, New York — 8
Having lived and worked here for years, FLO knew the county well when he returned to conduct a comprehensive survey in 1871. His report, a set of recommendations for the planned development of a major open space, was unique in its attention to ecological and environmental concerns. It was largely ignored in favor of the unbridled growth now evident.

Staten Island Greenbelt, New York
In 1871 FLO recommended that a central area of the Island retain its natural features, protected from major urban development. Today, while an important stretch of green remains, it is only partially protected. Adversaries refer to it as Richmond Parkway, stressing vehicular traffic; proponents call it the “Olmsted Pathway.”

To Philadelphia
To Baltimore
Washington

THE OLMSTED LEGACY in the New York Metropolitan Area

Special Note: The Olmsted legacy of design within 50 miles of Central Park is enormous, including far more than can be shown on this map. These sites are representative of the variety of work performed and central to an understanding of the impact of Olmsted, his sons and associates on the area. This folder was made possible, in part, by grants from The National Endowment for the Arts, the Arthur Ross Foundation, the Henry & Lucy Moses, J.M. Kaplan and Lila Acheson Wallace Funds.
QUEENS

Forest Hills, Queens — 9
In 1890, the Russell Sage Foundation sponsored the development of this model residential community, of which JR. was the landscape architect. Now an exclusive enclave in the heart of Queens, Forest Hills is known for its winding, tree-lined streets, open spaces and picturesque architecture. It is one of more than 150 subdivisions on the Olmsted firm worked.

BROOKLYN

Rockaway Point, Brooklyn — 10
FLO saw in this multi-million dollar syndicated venture the potential for “the most complete and popular sea-side resort, adapted to very large numbers, in the world.” His 1879 report dealt with all aspects of the design, from drainage to the building on the Punch and Judy puppet booth. FLO withdrew from the project when his plans were ignored. Within ten years it went bankrupt and was abandoned.

Fort Greene Park, Brooklyn — 11
This 33-acre square was designed with a dual focus: to serve as a neighborhood park and to commemorate the 11,500 soldiers of the American Revolution interred there. Integrating these functions, FLO and Vaux combined grassy open spaces and shady groves with a formal terraced hillside surrounding an unbuilt war memorial, later designed by Stanford White, and a large public gathering place, with a permanent speakers platform.

Prospect Park, Brooklyn — 12
In 1865, the then City of Brooklyn commissioned its own large park, centrally located on the undulating glacial terminal moraine. Vaux asked FLO to work with him on the design. Many consider it their best. After construction, they remained intermittently as the official Landscape Architects of the Park, which encompasses 526 acres of expansive meadows, wooded hills and a gently curving lake. Learning from Central Park, they urged the Brooklyn Institute and the Botanic Garden, on which JR. worked in the 1910s, be outside the park boundaries.

MANHATTAN

Fort Tryon Park, Manhattan — 13
These 56 acres of wooded parkland near the tip of Manhattan were given to New York City by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., in 1931. Mr. Rockefeller retained JR. to transform them into a pleasing, naturalistic park. Inaugurated in 1933 and completed in 1935, the park’s celebration of its 50th Anniversary will start in 1983, resulting in some privately sponsored restoration work. The park also holds The Cloisters, home of the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s medieval collection.

Morningside Park, Manhattan — 14
As New York marched northward in the 1880s, only inhospitable terrain was left undeveloped. Such a strip, a sheer cliff overlooking the vast Harlem Plain, was transformed into a park by FLO and Vaux. Their design, still evident today, revealed a series of magnificent vistas, curving pathways and steep steps amidst dramatic outcroppings. Strong community support protects the park against unwarranted intrusions and changes.

Riverside Park and Drive, Manhattan — 15
In 1875, when the grid of upper Manhattan streets was being laid, FLO and Vaux submitted a design for landscaping the narrow stretch of land along the Hudson River. Their plan for an integrated park and parkway was accepted, and today the curving, tree-lined drive and adjacent park create a pleasant and attractive river front, marred somewhat by an intervening highway.

Central Park, Manhattan — 16
New York’s “flagship” park, urged by Andrew Jackson Downing and William Cullen Bryant, and mandated by the city in 1853, marked Frederick Law Olmsted’s and Calvert Vaux’s first collaboration and launched their major careers as landscape planners. The 840 acres of undulating, naturalistic terrain, varied water bodies, extensive plantings, and diverse public facilities serve 15 million visitors annually, and provide a model for historic park preservation and rehabilitation.
PROGRAM—WORLD CONFERENCE ON OLMS T ED PARKS

New York, NY, September 21-25, 1983

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20
Pre-conference Registration at The Arsenal, 830 Fifth Avenue at 64th Street and Central Park—10:00 AM-4:00 PM
Exhibition. Original Greensward Plan for Central Park and historic maps of other New York City parks.
Affinity group meetings as scheduled. New York City sight-seeing tour and boat trip around Manhattan. Extra charge
NAOP Board of Trustees, 6:00 PM, Dinner Meeting

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21
Registration, The Arsenal, Fifth Avenue at 64th Street, third floor, 9:00 AM-4:00 PM
Three Invitational Peer-Group Seminars
10:00 AM-5:00 PM
A) PARK PROFESSIONALS DAY
Hosted by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, for park commissioners, administrators and managers. Tavern-on-the-Green, Central Park.
B) LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS AND DESIGNERS IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION
Hosted by the Central Park Conservancy and the Central Park Administrator’s Office, for landscape architects and planners. The New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park West at 77th Street.
C) ACADEMIC ROUNDTABLE
Hosted by Columbia University, for scholars, historians and writers. Theme, “Olmsted’s Place on the American Scene.”

Evening available for private hospitality

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22
Registration, The Arsenal, Fifth Avenue at 64th Street, third floor, 9:00 AM-4:00 PM
PLENARY SESSION, 10:00 AM-1:00 PM, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Grace Rainey Rogers Auditorium, entrance 82nd Street off Fifth Avenue
 Speakers:
- Welcome, Mayor Edward I. Koch
- Parks Commissioner Henry J. Stern
- Mr. Arthur Ross, Conference Co-Chair
- Mr. Donald Bruckman, Conference Co-Chair

Keynote Address:
Grady Clay, Editor, Landscape Architecture
Elizabeth Barlow, Central Park Administrator
Other Distinguished Guests
Alexander W. Allport, Conference Coordinator
Presentation of Distinguished Service Awards

Box Lunch, al fresco,
The Belvedere in Central Park, the newly restored castle overlooking much of the park, a short walk from the Museum.

CENTRAL PARK TOURS, 2:30-5:00 PM, organized by the Urban Park Rangers
a) Walking Tour of the Southern section
b) Walking Tour of the Northern section
c) Bus tour of the entire park. $2.00 additional charge.

MEET THE AUTHORS RECEPTION, 5:30-8:30 PM.
A stimulating social and intellectual evening with those who have published on Olmsted, historic parks and related subjects. More than twenty authors are being invited and copies of their publications will be available to be autographed. Municipal Art Society, Urban Center, 457 Madison Avenue at 51st Street. Publication(s) of the Year Award presentations.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23
Continuing Registration in Brooklyn, 9:00 AM-4:00 PM. Litchfield Mansion, 95 Prospect Park West at 5th Street

A DAY IN BROOKLYN
Hosted by the Brooklyn Borough President, Prospect Park Administrator’s Office and local park organizations.
8:00 AM
Buses leave from Manhattan for tour of Ocean and Eastern Parkways and Fort Greene Park.
10:00 AM
Gathering and welcome at the newly renovated Picnic House. Theme, “Calvert Vaux is Alive and Well in Brooklyn.”
11:00 AM
Three Tours of Prospect Park geared to special interests
a) Using a Park for Educational Purposes
b) Managing an Historic Park
c) Vaux and Olmsted’s Design for Prospect Park
1:00 PM
Box Lunch in the Park—BALLOON ASCENSION, Longmeadow
2:00 PM
Competing Perspectives for an Historic Park: Conflict and Resolution
3:30 PM
Workshops in the Park, various sites
a) Organizing a Park Constituency
b) Wildlife in an Urban Park
c) Recreational Uses of an Historic Park
d) Plants of an Olmsted Park
5:30 PM
 TOUR AND RECEPTION, Brooklyn Botanic Garden, 1000 Washington Avenue. Reception in the Rose Garden.
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 24
DAY OF WORKSHOPS AND SEMINARS
(Single Session Registration at Manhattan meeting site, to be announced)

9:00 AM-10:00 AM Plenary Session, “Olmsted’s Place in the World.”

10:15 AM-12:00 First Workshop Session
12:00 noon, Lunch, Organizational exhibits and slide shows
1:00-2:30 PM Second Workshop Session
3:00-5:00 PM Third Workshop Session
5:00-6:00 PM Workshop Chairpersons only, Workshop Summary taping session for Cable TV. Tape available for purchase or rental.

Evening free for theater and private gatherings

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25
SPECIAL EVENTS DAY
* Indicates Advance Registration Required

A) Tour to Staten Island, tentatively including Vanderbilt Mausoleum, the Greenbelt, Olmsted’s Staten Island farm-house, an exhibition, “Art of the Olmsted Landscape,” and reception at the Staten Island Institute of Arts and Sciences.*

B) Tour to Long Island estates and botanical sites in cooperation with Old Westbury Gardens and the Long Island State Park and Recreation Commission, Bayard Cutting Arboretum, Planting Fields.*

C) Tour to Riverside, Morningside, Fort Tryon, the Cloisters and Downing Parks and other Hudson River sites.*

D) Tour to Essex County, including Branch Brook Park and others in the first county park system in America.*

E) Tour to Forest Hills and the Borough of Queens, including Flushing Meadow Park, Forest Park and Kew Gardens.*

F) Brooklyn As You never Saw it Before, with John Muir and Albert Fein, a tour.*

G) Several exhibits and events organized by co-sponsoring organizations throughout the city.

H) Special Subject Meeting for New York State community representatives. “Preserving and Restoring New York’s Historic Parks. How can we work together toward this end? What resources are available to help us?”

All tours are subject to twenty-five or more registrants.

WRAP-UP RECEPTION
5:00 PM New York Botanical Garden. This reception to include the members of the various co-sponsoring organizations, in addition to those registered for the conference. Welcome and remarks, “NAOP Plans for 1984, Britain and Seattle.”

The Governor of New York State, The Honorable Mario M. Cuomo, has been invited to address the conference at a time convenient to him. As soon as the Governor’s appearance is confirmed it will be added to the program.

The 1983 World Conference is Co-Sponsored by These

Citizen Organizations:

Cultural Institutions:

Professional Organizations:
American Society of Landscape Architects, American Society of Landscape Architects, New York Chapter, American Institute of Architects, New York Chapter, Public Works Historical Society, Society of Architectural Historians;

Public Offices:
President’s Office, Borough of Brooklyn, President’s Office, Borough of Manhattan, President’s Office, Borough of Queens, President’s Office Borough of Staten Island, City Council of the City of New York, New York City Planning Commission, Department of Cultural Affairs, NYC, Central Park Administrator’s Office, Prospect Park Administrator’s Office, City Planning Commission, Staten Island Office, Urban Park Rangers, Massachusetts Historical Commission;

Educational Institutions:
American University, The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, Columbia University, Division of Historic Preservation, Graduate School of Architecture and Planning, The Lawrenceville School;

Additional Municipalities:
City of Trenton, NJ, County of Essex, NJ, Department of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs, Town of Oyster Bay, NY, Long Island State Park & Recreation Commission, Bayard Cutting Arboretum, City of Newark, NJ;

List current through March 1, 1983, only