VOLUME 3 IN WORKBOOK SERIES

The long awaited third volume in NAOP's WORKBOOK SERIES, Landscape Composition Preservation Treatment: Defining an Ethic for Designed Landscapes, by Charles Birnbaum, ASLA, historical landscape architect for the National Park Service and NAOP board member, has been published and is available from NAOP's office.

This volume is part of the important dialogue on restoring historic landscapes and parks and, in this case, renewing vegetation. This dialogue began three years ago when NAOP launched its technical workbooks with assistance from the Warhol Foundation.

WORKBOOK Series, Volume 3

TECHNICAL NOTES

In NAOP’s 1991 "Restoring Urban Woodlands" conference in Philadelphia, two different approaches to park restoration emerged. One was an ecological approach geared to a self-sustaining "complex of trees, shrubs and ground covers which could co-exist comfortably with minimum intervention", as Nicholas Quennell stated. This ecological approach to historic park restoration was the subject of the Workbook Volume Two, An Ecological Approach to Woodland Management, prepared by Ed Toth, Director of Landscape Management for Prospect Park in Brooklyn and a speaker at the Philadelphia conference.

The other approach to historic landscape restoration relies on the original park designer's intentions and, thus, in restoration it tries to reestablish those original design intentions, using the plants used in the park's original development wherever possible.

This historical landscape approach is the topic of Workbook Volume Three. With broad experience in historic landscape restoration from his work in Boston, Hartford, Newburgh and New York and now on the National Park Service staff as historical landscape architect, author Birnbaum has been able to discuss the specific as well as the philosophical issues facing historic restoration work today. The use of two case examples makes the process very explicit.

The two approaches to landscape preservation discussed in these NAOP volumes represent different points of view, which are important "as we work to preserve our Olmsted heritage", as NAOP Co-Chairmen, Nicholas Quennell, states. These volumes are not only useful, but they help to enrich the dialogues for landscape preservation in this country. Please write us your reactions, ideas, and thoughts on these volumes so that this dialogue can be continued.
NAOP INCLUDED IN NEW NATIONAL PUBLICATION

A new leaflet, "America's Landscape Legacy", has been produced by the National Park Service Preservation Assistance Division with support from the American Society of Landscape Architects, the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the American Battlefield Protection Program. This new publication addresses the what's, why's and who's of landscape preservation. Included under the discussion of organizations is the NAOP. Additionally, the brochure includes photos of two Olmsted landscapes: the Meadowport Arch in Prospect Park, Brooklyn, NY, and Lake Washington Boulevard, Seattle, WA. For a free copy write: Charles Birnbaum, ASLA NPS, Preservation Assistance Division (424), PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127.

NAOP IN COOPERATION WITH THE NATIONAL TRUST RECEIVES NATIONAL PARK SERVICE GRANT

The National Park Service Cultural Resource Training Initiative is pleased to announce the proposal submitted by NAOP board member, Charles Birnbaum, on behalf of the NAOP and the National Trust to provide financial support for a one day meeting entitled, "Historic Parks and the Preservation Process", has been fully funded! The event will be held in St. Louis, MO in early October, 1993 on the eve of the National Trust's annual meeting. The focus of the workshop will be to provide guidance on techniques and methodologies for identifying, evaluating, preserving and protecting historic parks that is consistent with current NPS Standards and Guidelines. More to follow...

— Charles Birnbaum

CONFERENCES

NAOP ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN ATLANTA IN APRIL 1993

"A Lasting Legacy: A Durable Vision" is the topic of NAOP'S 1993 annual conference to be held in Atlanta, Georgia on April 1-4.

1993 marks the centennial of Olmsted’s Druid Hills, which has influenced the development of the entire city. Thus the conference will feature Olmsted’s suburban planning and his vision for urban living. With lectures, tours, mobile workshops of parks and neighborhoods, conference attendees will learn of Olmsted’s work in Atlanta, recent interest in a master plan for Druid Hills, the Presidential Parkway solution, and the social environment of Olmsted’s landscapes—as well as have a good time.

Information on this conference is available from the NAOP office. More complete information on the conference has been mailed to NAOP members.

•MARK APRIL 1—4 ON YOUR CALENDAR NOW!

OTHER CONFERENCES

ASLA HISTORIC LANDSCAPE PRESERVATION SYMPOSIUM

In conjunction with the annual ASLA conference to be held in Washington, DC this fall, a one day Historic Landscape Preservation Symposium is being held on Monday, November 9 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel. This symposium has been convened to bring together representatives of different parts of the preservation community to discuss today’s issues and tomorrow’s trends.

The symposium consists of five sessions: The treatment of Historic Landscapes, Case Study Models of Historic Landscape Preservation, The Landscape Architect as Historian, Landscape Preservation and the Preservation Community, and Documenting L'Enfant's Urban Landscape. The panelists are well known experts in the field—Patricia O'Donnell, Charles Birnbaum, Noel Dorsey Vernon, Shary Berg, William Tishler and others.

Registration costs $75.00. Checks may be sent to: The American Society of Landscape Architects, 4401 Connecticut Avenue, Fifth Floor, Washington, DC 20008. For further information, call 202-686-ASLA.

HISTORIC TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS

Historic Transportation Corridors is the topic of an international training conference cosponsored by US/ICOMOS, the National Park Service and Northwestern State University of Louisiana from November 30 to December 2, 1992, a week prior to the World Heritage meeting in Santa Fe. The goal of this conference is to train local, state and federal government staff and others in the identification, evaluation, protection and preservation of historic corridors as part of defining features of large cultural or vernacular landscapes. A report with criteria for
ATLANTA CONFERENCE MOBILE WORKSHOP
DRUID HILLS STRUGGLING WITH ENCROACHMENT,
BELOW: AS IT WAS...

GENERAL PLAN
FOR
SUBDIVISION OF PROPERTY TO BE KNOWN AS
DRUID HILLS
BELONGING TO
KIRKWOOD LAND COMPANY
ATLANTA, GA.

considering historic corridors as part of the World Heritage List will be produced at the conference. Further information on this interesting conference may be obtained from Northwestern State University, PO Box 5555, Natchitoches, LA 71497, Attn: Tom Whitehead. Telephone: 318-357-5213. Fax: 318-357-65674. Or, call Marilou Reilly at the National Park Service: 202-343-9573.

MONTREAL IN MAY

An interesting follow-up to NAOP’s Atlanta conference is an ICOMOS sponsored conference in Montreal on urban squares and parks to be held on May 12-15, 1993. This international conference is designed to provide the heritage conservation professional with a better understanding of the research, planning and implementation techniques for urban park conservation. It will be an excellent opportunity to learn state of the art conservation techniques and to share ideas and information with colleagues from around the globe—and to see Olmsted’s Mount Royal. For further information write: The Institute of Heritage Education, 301 Strathearn Ave, N., Montreal West, QC, CANADA H4X 1Y3.

CHRISTMAS GIFT?

When drawing up your gift list, consider giving a membership in NAOP

$35.00 for individuals,

$15.00 for seniors/students.

A personalized letter and membership card will be sent to the recipient announcing your gift. Use the form on the back of this NEWSLETTER to provide the necessary information and mail to NAOP with your check.

ANOTHER VOLUME OF THE OLMS TED PAPERS

The publication of the sixth volume of the Olmsted Papers, The Years of Olmsted, Vaux & Company, 1865-74 by Jane Turner Censor, Carolyn Hoffman, and David Schuyler, has been feted in both Brooklyn and Washington this fall.

Brooklyn’s Prospect Park celebrated Volume Six’s publication on September 20 with tours, talks, and a reception. The plans, reports, and related correspondence on Prospect Park are prominently featured in this volume. Tupper Thomas, administrator of Prospect Park and past NAOP chairman, her staff, Friends of Prospect Park, Olmsted scholars, Charles Beveridge and Charles McLauglin, the authors of Volume Six and the interested public were on hand for this celebration. Charles Beveridge and David Schuyler led tours from the Grand Army Plaza to the Boathouse, where formal activities took place.

The History Department of American University’s College of Arts and Sciences and the Editors of the Olmsted Papers held a reception at American University on October 13, honoring the publication of Volume Six. Charles McLauglin, Olmsted Papers Editor and founder, and American University professor, spoke, as did Charles Beveridge and Dean Betty Bennett. Roger Brown, chairman of the History Department, introduced the program. For visual pleasures, Charles Beveridge’s slides of Prospect Park were shown.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY

CALIFORNIA

Berkeley: The efforts to protect Olmsted’s 1865 Piedmont Way, threatened by construction of the Walter A. Haas School of Business have failed despite efforts of local, state, and national organizations, including NAOP. This 100 foot wide curvilinear parkway has provided a "natural or 'rural' atmosphere in spite of the heavy flow of automobile traffic", as the state landmark designation stated. Olmsted’s 1865 plans for Piedmont Way, “contribute a landmark in American urban planning", as NAOP co-chairman, Nicholas Quennell, said, were not respected by the University of California. Its Regents found the land use and historic resource issues and siting alternative to be outweighed by "beneficial goals and objectives of the project".

KENTUCKY

Louisville: As Louisville undertakes an impressive restoration program of its Olmsted parks, the University of Louisville’s 1992 Allen R. Hite Art Institute sponsored a lecture, "Olmsted in England" by Peter Willis from the University of Newcastle’s Department of Architecture. This lecture was part of the Frederic L. Morgan lecture series.
MARYLAND

Great Falls: Olmsted Island on the Potomac River at Great Falls, just upstream from Washington, was opened to the public in July of this year after being closed for twenty years. Hurricane Agnes in 1972 had destroyed its access bridges. Now it is too popular. Even though this 35 acre island is treated as a biological preserve due to its many endangered plants and even bald eagles, the conflict of 1,200 visitors per day and the integrity of this bedrock river terrace have yet to be resolved. Already $50 fines are issued if one ventures off the walkway!

A five-line skink suns itself on a rock at Olmsted Island. Naturalists are worried that humans will disturb the many rare plants and animals living on the island.

Photo: Dan Gross

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ALAN G. SCHWARTZ (R) JOINS PRESIDENTS (L TO R) RAYNOR WARNER, ROBERT KUEHN AND FORMER NAOP CO-CHAIR BETSY SHURE GROSS AS THEY SIGN THE PROCLAMATION CREATING THE NEW HISTORIC MASSACHUSETTS.

Photo: Brooks Kraft

Massachusetts

On May 8, 1992 Massachusetts consolidated three non-profit statewide preservation organizations—Historic Massachusetts, Inc., the Architectural Trust, and the Massachusetts Association of Olmsted Parks into a new organization called Historic Massachusetts, Inc. By merging the resources and talents of these organizations, which include preservationists, architects, landscape architects, developers, conservationists, landscape architects, lawyers, bankers, and others, Massachusetts now has a single, strong agency to protect and enhance the state’s historic, cultural, designed and natural resources.

(see photo, above right)

Historic Massachusetts's Inc.'s 1992 Frederick Law Olmsted Award to an individual or organization promoting historic landscape preservation was given to the Boston Parks and Recreation Department for its work on the Emerald Necklace.

NAOP board member, Eric O'Brien of Medfield, MA, was presented this summer with the New England Regional Council's highest award for longstanding commitment to his profession and to the New England region.

Boston: Radcliffe's Landscape Design Program is celebrating its 25th anniversary on April 23-24, 1993. A Symposium will be held at Radcliffe's Cronkite Graduate Center. For further information, call 617-495-8600.

New York

Buffalo: Buffalo's Friends of Olmsted Parks continues to function as a remarkably active local and regional landscape preservation group. It has been transformed from an all volunteer organization to a professional force in preservation and planning in Buffalo. Through its chairman, Gretchen Toles (chairman from 1985 to 1992), the organization has had a stimulating program of events for its members from tours and lectures to its highly successful fund raiser of "Just Desserts". At the same time the Buffalo Friends of Olmsted Parks has gained a respected voice for parks and open spaces in local, regional and state planning circles. It has also obtained grants from private foundations and industries to help finance its projects. For example, the Western New York Foundation awarded a $10,000
grant to BFOP to match in part a National Endowment for the Arts grant to assist in the development of a citywide planning project, "Buffalo Greenways: An Open Space Plan for the 21st Century", discussed in earlier NAOP NEWSLETTERS. For organizations interested in learning of BFOP’s effectiveness, a glance at one of their newsletters will give an idea of the breadth of this organization’s activities.

OHIO

Ohio’s State Historic Preservation Office has an interesting conference program each autumn. This year, in October, the Historic Preservation Office is holding five conferences to discuss the future of historic preservation in different cities in the state, each cosponsored by local organizations and public agencies. Thus, citizens from the Columbus, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Perrysburg, and Marietta area have the opportunity of attending a preservation conference in their city. For further information, contact the Ohio Historic Preservation Office, 1982 Velma Ave., Columbus, OH 43211-2497. This office is headed by Dr. W. Ray Luice, who was a strong supporter of the federal Olmsted legislation NAOP introduced in the early 1980s.

WASHINGTON

Seattle: Seattle’s idea for Seattle Commons, a replanning of the south Lake Union district into a mixed-use neighborhood of 16,000 people around a new urban park, was the topic of a five day charrette at the University of Washington, a talk by Anthony Walmsley, ASLA, for the Friends of Seattle’s Olmsted Parks this fall, as well as a piece by Mr. Walmsley in the Friends’ Summer Newsletter.

This exciting proposal, supported by the city administration and city agencies such as the Department of Parks and recreation, demonstrates how Olmstedian ideas and plans can be incorporated in contemporary plans and projects. This proposal, as described in the summer Newsletter of the Friends of Seattle’s Olmsted Parks in Mr. Walmsley’s article, is reprinted in part:

On the following page (6) is the concept of the team co-led by David Wright, FAIA (a Seattle architect), Doug Kelbaugh, FAIA (Professor and Chair, Department of Architecture), and myself.

— The site is a shallow valley between Seattle downtown (top) and Lake Union (bottom), Interstate 5 (left) and Seattle Center (right). Like many inner-city districts throughout the U.S. the south Lake Union area has suffered from previous highway construction, urban development, commercial/industrial intrusion, and depopulation—leaving only about 1,000 residents, predominantly urban poor.

— Any plan for reconstruction must deal with highly sensitive social issues of acquisition and relocation, affordable housing, preservation, and neighborhood renewal. At the densities proposed, a "central" park becomes the essential armature around which three potential communities might develop:

The Southern section, an extension of downtown, might be high-rise towers for singles, empty-nesters, and the elderly who like security and city-lights;

The western section could be mid-rise and market place units for upscale couples and older children, who like the proximity of downtown and accept a certain mix of professional/business and hotel/motel with residential use;

The eastern section, with its surviving small businesses, churches, brick apartment houses, and 19th-century loft buildings is the most vulnerable to change. It requires the lowest density with inexpensive walk-up apartments, row housing, and garage flats for young urban "pioneers", starter families, and old timers.

— With the centerpiece of the open space system a 45 acre "country park," opening south to Lake Union (bottom) and extending north into downtown as a boulevard/parkway with a chain of miniparks (top), our park is inspired by the Olmsted firm, in particular John C. Olmsted, who prepared the Seattle Parks and Boulevards Plan in 1903 and continued to consult until his death in 1920.

— Boulevards/parkways and green "promenade" streets spread throughout the district. Small neighborhood parks/playgrounds mark the heart of each community. There are small parklets and roof gardens over ground level parking in almost every block, besides some private gardens for row houses, garage flats, and single family homes.

— The two long edges of the park are treated differently: on the west, Ninth Avenue becomes the "Fifth Avenue" of the district’s new "Central Park," a ten-block civic promenade with massed tree plantings on the park side to make "gateways" at each street end; on the east, the park blends into the community as sports fields, picnic areas, an open-air theater, and elementary school playground.

— Water is the linking theme from the downtown to the lake, recalling the historic stream and Indian trail from
Old Seattle to Lake Union. At the southern end, the boulevard/parkway is animated by a series of repetitive water features in the leftover triangles on either side of Westlake Avenue. Ahead is the "white noise" of fountains playing in twin water basins at the south end of the main park.

— Through the park's 1/2 mile length, water is an open, recirculating system of stream, weirs, falls, pond and small river, discharging into the lake—no more ambitious than Olmsted and Vaux' water system in Brooklyn's Prospect Park, which falls 65 feet in one mile through the Ravine District.

— At its lowest end, the park continues over 2 and 1/2 blocks of a crosstown expressway; excavated material makes a small hill surmounted by a lookout tower. Here, water quality problems of combined sewer overflows are addressed by incorporating large holding tanks under the multiple courts of a new Tennis Center, and demonstrating the biological treatment of urban waste through settling ponds and marsh plants under a series of glasshouses next to the Lake Union marinas and U.S. Naval Armory, which becomes a terminus for regional ferries.

— This bold plan continues the historic initiatives of the Olmsted Brothers in Seattle and elsewhere of structuring urban development around connected open space systems. Like the Olmsted plans, it gives expression to the belief that parks can still be the social center around which new neighborhoods may grow and flourish. It also puts to rest the contentions that the picturesque is passé and that new "styles" are needed for the 21st century. On the contrary, post-modern elements (such as interlocking grids) can be assimilated in the Olmsted tradition, and many other elements can be reinterpreted for today's needs.

— Anthony Walmsley, ASLA AICP
— Courtesy of Friends of Seattle's OLMSTED PARKS

This NEWSLETTER was edited by Ann Satterthwaite, assisted by Susan Klaus, Phyllis Knowles, and Eunice Meek.