ST. LOUIS

Symposium:
"A Reality Check for our Nation's Parks"

Nearly one hundred participants gathered in St. Louis on September 28, 1993 for the NAOP organized symposium on preservation planning for historic landscapes. Co-sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and presented in association with the National Park Service, the symposium offered presentations by landscape practitioners, historians, site administrators, and public officials who could speak to both the theory and practice of landscape preservation.

The morning sessions focused on critical initial steps in the preservation planning process:

The first three speakers provided case studies in researching and inventorying historic landscapes. Rex Wasserman, landscape architect from Brooklyn's Prospect Park, described the Park's comprehensive survey of specimen trees and the subsequent development of a plan for tree replacement—based on the computerized information from the tree inventory, as well as from historic written and photographic documentation and contemporary horticultural requirements.

National Park Service historians, Sara Amy Leach and Ethan Carr, reported on two NPS efforts in historic landscape documentation. Leach described the multidisciplinary approach being used to document the vegetation, vistas, roads, and structures in Washington, DC's Rock Creek and Potomac Parkway. Historic research, aerial photography, and digital mapping were used in this pilot project, whose ultimate goal is the development of documentation standards. Carr reported on the Park Service's National Historic

Continued on page 2
Landmark Theme Study of the hundreds of landscape architectural designs created between 1916 and 1942 by NPS designers.

Panel two addressed the critical question of documenting and evaluating a site’s historic integrity or authenticity. Panelists Genevieve Keller, a landscape practitioner; Mary Hughes, a NPS regional historic landscape architect; and Linda Dicaire Fardin, former member of the Canadian National Capital Commission, discussed philosophical issues and analytical tools that can be used for documenting and assessing historic properties.

The afternoon’s presenters addressed issues of treatment, preservation, and stewardship:

Mark Laird illustrated procedures for reducing the “conjectural” when developing a treatment plan for sites in which the original landscape fabric no longer exists.

Lauren Meier of the NPS Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation described the effort currently underway to restore the landscape at Fairlawn, the Brookline, Massachusetts home and office of the Olmsted firm, as well as another NPS project to rehabilitate the historic road system in Maine’s Acadia National Park.

Pamela Seager, Executive Director of Rancho Los Alamitos in Long Beach, California, enumerated a range of issues that need to be considered in developing treatment and interpretive plans for an historic site.

The symposium concluded by considering the important question of stewardship of historic landscapes:

Mount Auburn Cemetery President, William C. Clendaniel, described the planning process which has resulted in Mount Auburn’s first comprehensive master plan, providing guidelines for current use and interpretation, as well as long-term recommendations for ensuring the site will be preserved for future generations.

Christine Capella Peters of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation presented three case studies from the State’s Historic Preservation Grant Program which illustrated how the Office exercises its stewardship role through review of project bid documents, ongoing site inspection, and development of covenant enforcement documents at project completion.

Elizabeth Igleheart, architectural historian with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, described ways in which State Historic Preservation Offices can assist in incorporating historic landscape preservation resources into a state’s overall preservation program.

The photograph below was used on the cover of the comprehensive NOTEBOOK given to all Symposium attendees.

A REALITY CHECK FOR OUR NATION’S PARKS
A one-day symposium on preservation planning for historic landscapes

Illustration by Camille N. Dry for the 1876 Report of the Commissioners of Forest Park to the St. Louis County Court.
TOWER GROVE PARK, continued from page 1

The arrangement has not been without its price. The terms of the Park’s 1868 charter obliged the city to make an annual appropriation of not less than $25,000. It was hardly enough, even then. Today the city’s annual contribution of about $500,000 barely covers routine operations. The park eked this out with about $100,000 a year in rental fees from its tennis courts, softball diamonds and the use of a community building. Funds for capital improvements and major repairs come from grants and private contributions.

Now and then, the park commission has stumbled. Among its blunders have been an early post-war tennis pavilion resembling an elementary school of that vintage, and a community center fitted with a witch’s-cap roof in an unsuccessful effort to mimic the picturesque motif of the gazebos.

Tower Grove’s director, John A. Karel, though not insensitive to aesthetic solecisms, is philosophical about them: "Every park landscape is a palimpsest of different visions, designers and fashions. When you have preserved a high level of integrity (such as Tower Grove’s), it is more remarkable."

Today, owing to increased surveillance by the police and the park’s own security force, mugging,charted and vandalism have reportedly receded, if not disappeared altogether. Damaged statuary is being repaired or replaced by copies and the originals placed under cover. Several of the buildings are being artfully restored in a way that makes them appear not as though they’ve been restored, but as though they’ve been lovingly maintained.

The Park’s situation, for better and for worse, is the legacy of a 19th century philanthropist named Henry Shaw who furnished and planted it, and then presented it to the city. Shaw was a native of Sheffield who came to America in 1819 as a youth of 18 to seek his fortune—and found it in cutlery and hardware at the time when St. Louis was a leading entrepot for the westward expansion. At 39 he was able to retire and devoted his time to good works and to his private passion, which was horticulture. He is best recognized here as founder of the Missouri botanical garden—known colloquially as Shaw’s Garden—which abuts Tower Grove.

At the time Shaw acquired it, the Tower Grove tract was a treeless expanse of common pasture lying mostly outside the city limits as they were then drawn. It took an act of the state legislature to codify Shaw’s deed of gift, and to allow the city to accept it.

The Park’s design seems to have been mainly the conception of Shaw’s architect, George Ingraham Barnett; his head gardener, James Gurney, and Shaw himself. Like Shaw, Barnett and Gurney were Englishmen. Gurney, as curator of aquatic plants at Kew, knew how to cultivate exotic lotuses. Barnett was the St. Louis numeero of the Italianate interlude which, in the English speaking world, meant the trecento as seen through the eyes of Englishmen such as Richard Upjohn and Calvert Vaux. With their narrow, round-arched openings, square belvederes and broad, bracketed eaves, Barnett’s conservatories and gatehouses in Tower Grove are exemplars of the style.

Shaw also tried to create an arboretum, which, while not wild, would be gently tamed. (Despite the name, there are no densely wooded groves in Tower Grove, nor any tower either. The name is purely fanciful.) He planted between 10,000 and 20,000 trees and shrubs, representing about 200 species from all over the world. It was an attempt to grow examples of every species that could survive in St. Louis, and of course not all of them did. Sulphur dioxide, especially during the time when high-sulphur coal from the pits of nearby southern Illinois was the principal fuel here, took a terrible toll.

By 1980 the total population of woody plants of all types at Tower Grove was around 7,000 and sinking at the rate of approximately 200 a year. The diversity was down to around 170 species. Only about 100 of Shaw’s specimens had survived. Under Karel’s administration the decline in the woody plant population has been arrested and the diversity of species has climbed to about 300.

That is not quite the accomplishment it might seem, Karel hastens to note. Many of the trees now found in the Park are adventitious individuals that were allowed to remain when no replanting was being done. Many others are the path-of-least-resistance varieties such as pin oaks, sweet gums and silver maples of the sort popular with tract developers. One of Karel’s objectives is to introduce Liberty elms, disease resistant cultivars of the American elms, a species whose sombre dignity Karel sees as suited to Tower Grove.

Tower Grove is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is, as the Michelin guides put it, worth a detour.

Note: Eliot Porter, a journalist with the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, has provided the preceding essay. The Park was the site of a reception for Symposium participants.
New Names, New Faces

Lucy A. Cook is the new Executive Director of the Buffalo Friends of Olmsted Parks. Lucy brings a range of experience in neighborhood preservation, park planning, and public advocacy to her new job.

Historic Massachusetts, Inc. has announced the appointment of Marcia Molay as its new Executive Director. Marcia previously served as Deputy Executive Director of the Massachusetts Water Resources Agency.

The National Park Service is creating a National Center for Preservation Technology and Training at Northwestern State University of Louisiana. The center will provide information, assistance, and training for those involved in the identification, evaluation, protection/conservation, and interpretation of prehistoric and historic resources. The Park Service is soliciting comments and suggestions from organizations about how such a center could be helpful to them. Contact Marilou Reilly or E. Blaine Cliver, Chief, Preservation Assistance Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127. Phone: (202) 343-3803. FAX: (202) 343-3903.

Partners for Livable Places has become Partners for Livable Communities. The name change reflects the organization's expanded mission "to restore and renew our communities by promoting social equity, economic development and quality of life." Their address remains: 1429 21st Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

The Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation

Established in 1992, the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation is the National Park Service’s first center for cultural landscape technical assistance, training and technology development. Located at the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site (NHS), the Olmsted Center is a partnership between the National Park Service’s North Atlantic Regional Cultural Landscape Program, the Olmsted NHS and the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University. Nora Mitchell, Manager of the Regional Cultural Landscape Program, and Lee Farrow, Assistant Superintendent of the Olmsted National Historic Site, serve as co-managers of the Olmsted Center.

In 1992, the Olmsted Center initiated 25 projects in 20 parks. This work ranged from Historic Landscape Assessments and Maintenance Plans to transplanting historic trees and hazardous tree pruning. In 1993, the Center added 22 more projects in 17 national parks. Types of Center work include:

- Maintenance and Preservation Planning
  - Historic Landscape Preservation Maintenance Programs
  - Historic Landscape Assessment

- Training and Professional Development
  - Workshops on Planning and Maintenance of Historic Landscapes
  - Landscape Preservation Curriculum Development

- Technology Development
  - Computer Systems for Landscape Preservation and Maintenance
  - Historic Plant Identification, Propagation, and Nursery Management

Emergency Stabilization Field Work
- Hazard Reduction (tree work)
- Evaluation and Emergency Mitigation of Storm Damage

Cyclic Preservation Maintenance Work
- Rejuvenation and Orchard Pruning
- Arboricultural Services, Vista and Hedge Management

Historic Landscape Architect Lauren Meier coordinates preservation planning work at the Olmsted Center, and Horticulturist Charlie Pepper oversees preservation maintenance work and planning.

In addition to technical assistance projects, the Olmsted Center is involved in several cooperative projects in training and technology development. Several of these projects rely on the expertise of the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University. A Strategic Training Program for Historic Landscape Preservation is presently being developed in collaboration with the Arnold Arboretum. The Arboretum also assists with the development of a Regional Historic Plant Nursery and the Regional Historic Plant Inventory.

For copies of the 1992 Annual Report, or for information regarding the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, please contact Nora Mitchell at (617) 223-5059 or Lee Farrow at (617) 566-1689. This first annual report is available free of charge.
Regional News

ILLINOIS

Chicago. Chicago’s Friends of the Parks has joined nineteen other state environmental/conservation organizations to create the Environmental Fund of Illinois. The purpose of the fund is to raise awareness and money through an automatic payroll deduction program for participating organizations. Employees select the amount they wish deducted from their paychecks, which they may earmark for a specific organization or for the general fund. Similar programs currently exist in seventeen states or regions. For more information call (312) 922-3307.

MAINE

The Maine Olmsted Alliance for Parks and Landscapes is continuing its comprehensive survey of designated historic landscapes throughout the state. A report of Phase I, Public Designed Landscapes, is currently under preparation by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission. The Alliance will send custom packages to planners, libraries and historical societies in each community where surveys were conducted.

Phase II will focus on residential design. The Alliance is preparing a preliminary list of sites and gathering written and graphic source material. To volunteer or contribute documentation or firsthand knowledge of historic residential landscapes in Maine, contact: Eleanor Ames, President, Maine Alliance, P.O. Box 6176, Falmouth, ME 04105, (207) 781-3659, or Theresa Mattor, Project Manager, RR 1, Box 212-B1, Hollis Center, ME 04042, (207) 727-5059.

Charles Birnbaum, Coordinator, Historic Landscape Initiative of the National Park Service and NAOP trustee, was the keynote speaker at the Maine Alliance’s annual meeting. His talk, "The Future of the Past: The Role of Planning in Landscape Preservation," was followed by a panel discussion of four Maine master planning projects currently in progress: Capitol Park, Evergreen Cemetery, Longfellow Gardens, and Deering Oaks.

MASSACHUSETTS

Historic Massachusetts, Inc. (HMI) presented four awards at its October Preservation Awards Dinner. WCVB-TV received the Paul E. Tsongas Preservation Award for promoting the region’s cultural traditions and heritage in its "Main Streets and Back Roads" series. The Harbor Point Community Task Force, which guided the redevelopment of a public housing project on Boston’s waterfront, was honored with the Charles W. Eliot II Award for planning. The Anne and Roger Web Award for preservation leadership went to Ann and Graham Gund for their work in architectural preservation. The Beacon Hill Garden Club received the Frederick Law Olmsted Award for leadership in public education for landscape preservation.

NEW YORK

Buffalo. The Buffalo Friends of Olmsted Parks has received a $30,000 grant from the New York State Urban Development Corporation to fund a Conservancy Economic Feasibility Study. The City of Buffalo contributed $10,000 in matching funds. The goal of the project is to investigate the economic impact of a proposed Olmsted Parks Conservancy modeled on the highly successful Central Park Conservancy, to establish its goals and objectives, and to develop a strategic marketing and management plan. The new mailing address of the Friends is: 2318 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14214.

Montauk. In Montauk, NY an effort is under way to preserve 40 acres of Atlantic Ocean dunes and beach and significant other Olmsted parkland and open space. A motion for summary judgment was filed December 1992 in NY Supreme Court at Riverhead with Justice William L. Underwood presiding. His ruling is awaited. The Olmsted landscapes at issue are included as "Reservations" (Olmsted Associates job# 2636) and were preserved by deeds specifying that these "... Reservations shall be for the common use ..." of a class of grantees of land which includes essentially all of the landholders in Montauk.

A Montauk Friends of Olmsted Parks is now being formed. Please contact: Bob Ficalora at Montauk Friends of Olmsted Parks, c/o Breakers Motel, PO Box 393, Montauk, NY 11954, tel: (516) 668-4775 for more information.

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.
Reading List:
Public Amenities

Two recent books are important additions to the national dialogue on the benefits and importance of public amenities—including community parks, recreational facilities, and open spaces—in our lives.

* The Benefits of Local Recreation and Park Services: A Nationwide Study of the Perceptions of the American Public reports on a 1992 study of public perceptions of the benefits of local park and recreation resources conducted by the Leisure Studies Program at the Pennsylvania State University. The results contradict some commonly held attitudes about park use and about the importance of parks to the public.

While small-scale studies have reported limited use of parks and playgrounds, this national telephone survey found that 75% of all respondents had used these facilities. Equally important, the vast majority viewed these public amenities as beneficial both to them personally and to their communities. While personal benefit was closely linked to extent of personal use, community benefits were perceived by respondents regardless of how much they personally used public parks.

Disputing the myth that local parks are mainly used by the very young or the very old, this study found that those aged 35 to 55 were most likely to report a great deal of personal benefit from parks. Respondents ranked parks and recreational services very high among local government services, and over 75% believed that these civic amenities were worth as much as or more than they are currently paying in taxes (estimated at $45 per household annually).

The book is available from the National Recreation and Park Association, 2775 South Quincy Street, Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22206-2204, $35 for NRPA members, $42 for non-members, plus $3.50 for postage and handling.

* Interwoven Destinies: Cities and the Nation takes a broad look at the problems and prospects of urban America. This volume includes the background papers prepared for a conference held last spring at Arden House which gathered 69 representatives of government, business, labor, academia, nonprofit organizations, the law, and the media to recommend policies "that could stimulate and inform a new national dialogue on urban issues."

The participants underscored the importance of public amenities, including community parks and green spaces, to building livable communities that are respected and enjoyed by all citizens. "Amenities of civic life are not a 'trill'—they are an essential resource for urban development." Such institutions can become an economic development aid for communities, attracting business, promoting tourism, and helping to create a positive image for residents and visitors alike. Public amenities, which bring together diverse elements of the community, are an important tool in building coalitions for broader civic goals.

The book is published by W.W. Norton & Company.

NOTE: We welcome short descriptions of books or articles that you have found useful.
In Memoriam

Two significant figures in the American planning movement died this year. They were important "Olmsted friends" as well.

Charles Eliot II died in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on March 16th at the age of 93. Eliot was hand-picked by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. to be director of planning for the National Capital Park and Planning Commission from 1926 to 1933. During the New Deal, he helped plan for the use of natural resources. From 1955 to 1966 he held Harvard's Charles Eliot Professorship of Landscape Architecture, named for his uncle, a student and colleague of Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.

Frederick A. Gutheim died in Washington, DC, on October 2nd, at the age of 85. Gutheim was an urban planner, preservationist, housing authority, author, filmmaker, and educator. He was a major force in shaping the development of Washington, playing an active role in such important projects as the creation of the Metrorail system and the redevelopment of Pennsylvania Avenue. His 1977 book, Worthy of the Nation, remains the best source on the history of comprehensive planning in the national capital region. In 1972 Gutheim served as national chairman of the Frederick Law Olmsted Sesquicentennial.

Researcher's Query

Paul M. Bray would like to hear from others "interested in the American park tradition and its value and relevance as an integrating and unifying force to today's social and environmental needs." Address: 159 Brevator Street, Albany, NY 12206.

Calendar

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>January 27</td>
<td>Chicago Friends of the Parks Annual Meeting and Awards Luncheon, 12 noon. Contact: (312) 922-7481.</td>
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<td>March 2</td>
<td>&quot;How to Develop a Marketing Plan&quot;</td>
<td>Fitchburg Art Museum, Fitchburg</td>
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<td>March 19</td>
<td>&quot;Cultural Tourism Fundamentals&quot;</td>
<td>Hooper, Lee, Nichols House, Cambridge</td>
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<td>March 24</td>
<td>&quot;Reconstructing Nature: Frontier Perceptions.&quot; A Lecture Series</td>
<td>commencing February 15, 1994 through April 14, 1994. Co-Sponsors: Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, The Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University, Harvard University Graduate School of Design, Department of Landscape Architecture, Historic Massachusetts Inc., The Trustees of Reservation. All lectures held at Harvard University Graduate School of Design Piper Auditorium, 48 Quincy St., Cambridge, MA at 6:30 p.m. Information: (617) 566-1689</td>
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This NEWSLETTER was edited by Susan L. Klaus assisted by Phyllis Knowles.