Plans Announced for National Garden

The last open lot on the southern border of the Mall in Washington, DC is the site designated for a new National Garden. Adjacent to the US Botanic Gardens at the foot of Capitol Hill, the National Garden was authorized by Congress in 1989. The privately funded $6 million project is scheduled for completion in 1996.

An article by Benjamin Forgey in the April 30th Washington Post headlined "A Garden Covering too Much Ground," criticized the design for reflecting "little of the relaxed, open, parklike character of this splendid" site. Forgey pointedly noted that "despite its location on the Mall, the convenient site is by law under the jurisdiction of the Architect of the Capitol, and hence not subject to the customary federal design reviews." The current plan is a combination of the original concept design by the Alexandria office of EDAW, plus three added elements that were open later to a design competition: a learning center, a rose garden, and a water garden. All of this has been packed into the three acre site resulting in a hodgepodge which Forgey dubbed "a walled botanical theme park."

NAOP administrator Phyllis Knowles has been following this project since the new design contest was announced. In discussions with Architect of the Capitol, George White, and with Mr. Forgey, she has emphasized that an enclosed garden on the Mall, housing a building and a variety of landscape features behind ten or twelve foot stone walls, is totally counter to L'Enfant's vision of an open greensward, a conception embraced and reinforced by the McMillan Plan of 1902, amended twice and still in effect. The purpose of a 1986 Congressional Act was to commit the nation to the McMillan Plan. However, with the support of Mr. White, accountable only to Congress, and the presence of America's First Ladies as honorary committee members, it seems that the project may go forward.
NAOP Joins Biltmore’s Centennial Celebration

On April 21 and 22, 1995, NAOP will host a Symposium in Asheville, NC, home of Biltmore House, the centerpiece of George Vanderbilt’s magnificent country estate that originally encompassed 125,000 acres. Biltmore will be celebrating its Centennial throughout 1995, and NAOP is planning a program that will explore Olmsted’s horticultural legacy at Biltmore, as well as some of the larger issues which his plans addressed. In addition to formal gardens, Olmsted designed naturalistic landscape scenes, established a working farm, planned woodlands, and began to create an arboretum. Biltmore introduced the concept of scientific forestry management to this country and was the site of our first forestry school. Today, Biltmore’s 5000 acres of forest and woodlands, house-grounds, and gardens are being maintained in keeping with Olmsted’s century-old plans.

Beginning with a gala dinner and a special candlelight tour on Friday evening, we shall spend much of the next two days touring Biltmore, Biltmore Village, and several nearby Olmsted-designed landscapes. NAOP member William Alexander, head of grounds at Biltmore, will lead us on an after-hours tour of the grounds, highlighting recent landscape restoration projects. Symposium sessions will focus on natural and cultural issues related to historic landscapes.

Mark your calendars now. You won’t want to miss this special opportunity to enjoy Biltmore at the height of spring and to learn from this historic landscape. Encourage any groups that you are connected with to join us. We shall be pleased to provide flers.
Publications

- Pioneers of American Landscape Design: An Annotated Bibliography, edited by NAOP board member, Charles A. Bimbaum, with Lisa E. Crowder.
  Covers sixty-one practitioners—designers, horticulturists, landscape and garden writers, and landscape architects. Each entry contains a brief biographical profile, annotated period and modern sources, a statement on the location and contents of archival collections, and an illustration of the landscape pioneer or a related landscape project.


- Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.: Cathedral Landscape Architect 1907-1928.

- Forest Park by NAOP board member, Caroline Loughlin, and Catherine Anderson.

- The Park and the People: A History of Central Park by Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar.
  An award-winning history of the first park designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux and of the people who supported it, opposed it, designed it, built it, lived on the land before the park was built, and used and continue to use the park. Now available in paperback from Owl Books/Henry Holt and Company. ISBN 0-8050-3242-8. $19.95.

- "Frederick Law Olmsted's Riverside" by former NAOP board member David Schuyler appeared in Planning History Present, Volume 7, Number 2, ISSN 1071-1953. Published by The Society for American City and Regional Planning History, 3655 Darbyshire Drive, Hilliard, OH 43026-2334, 614 876-2170.

  A soft-cover guide, updated annually, contains a health-awareness calendar and gives names of local organizations. Published by National Recreation and Park Association, 2775 S. Quincy St., Suite 300, Arlington, VA 22206 or the American Running and Fitness Association, 4405 East West Highway, Suite 405, Bethesda, MD 20814, 600 776-ARFA.

- "A Preliminary Agenda for Recreation Programming in Chicago’s Parks" is the report of a study of Chicago parks. See related article under News from the Regions. To order, send a self-addressed 10" x 12" envelope stamped with $2.50 in postage to: Friends of the Parks, Recreational Study, 407 S. Dearborn, Suite 1590, Chicago, IL 60605-1111, 312 922-3307.
EXHIBITION

May 25-
July 10

Wave Hill, NY.

"Private Gardens, Vanishing Art," an exhibition of the photographs of Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932), opens in the Glyndor Gallery at Wave Hill from 10 to 4:30, Tuesday through Sunday. The show includes 70 specially-toned prints of Gertrude Jekyll's photographs taken between 1885 and 1914 of her own gardens and of her native Surrey, England. The Art Museum and Pacific Film Archives of the University of California-Berkeley organized the exhibit to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the birth of Gertrude Jekyll, who was both a promoter and designer of the informal English-style garden and a trained artist and pioneering photographer. Contact: Wave Hill 718 549-3200.

July 27-
July 30

Mount Carroll, IL.

A short course in cultural landscape preservation offered by the Campbell Center for Historic Preservation will focus on identification, documentation, research methodologies, field exercises, treatment case studies, and professional practice directions. The instructors will be Noel Dorsey Vernon and Patricia M. O'Donnell. Contact: Mary Wood Lee, Campbell Center, PO Box 66, Mt. Carroll, IL 61053, 815 244-1173.

CONFERENCES, WORKSHOPS, & TOURS

Aug 25-
Aug 27

San Francisco.

Historic Landscape Workshop: Western NPS/SHPO Conference. Two and a half days of lectures and site visits with a primary focus on cultural landscapes. Contact: Ann E. Huston, National Park Service Western Region, 415 744-3968.

Oct 6-
Oct 8

Seattle, WA.

Applied Preservation Technology Annual Meeting will include a three day conference on cultural landscapes. Contact: Gail Dubrow, University of Washington, Department of Urban Planning, 206 685-4170.

Oct 25

Cambridge, MA.

One-day symposium on the current status of historic landscape preservation in conjunction with the National Trust for Historic Preservation's annual conference. Speakers representing a wide variety of preservation projects will share their experiences. Includes a tour of Mount Auburn Cemetery, the nation's first landscaped cemetery, consecrated in 1831, to see a number of horticultural and monument rehabilitation projects, and a roundtable discussion. Sponsors include NAOP. Contact: Mount Auburn Cemetery, 580 Mount Auburn St., Cambridge, MA 02138. 617 547-7105. For more information about the National Trust Conference in Boston, 800 944-6847.

October

1995

Winston-Salem, NC.

"The Influence of Women on the Southern Landscape" is the title for the tenth conference on Restoring Southern Gardens and Landscapes, hosted by Old Salem. The organizing committee is asking for suggestions and proposals for lectures, workshops, and panel discussions. Contact: Landscape Conference, Old Salem, Inc., Box F, Salem Station, Winston-Salem, NC 27108 or call Darrell Spencer, Director, Horticulture Program, 910 721-7337.
News from the Regions

NATIONWIDE

From Livability. Partners for Livable Communities "is organizing an eighteen-month project to create a National Livability Index to give communities a way to assess livability and the quality of life. The Index would identify key benchmarks for excellence in the areas of human development, jobs and economic opportunity, community leadership, and physical and environmental conditions."
Contact: Partners for Livable Communities, 1429 21st St., NW, Washington, DC 20036, 202-887-5990, fax 202-466-4845.

EAST

National Park Service, North Atlantic Regional Office, Boston, Massachusetts. NAOP has written to Congressman Barney Frank opposing the proposed consolidation of the North Atlantic Regional Office of the National Park Service in Boston into the Mid-Atlantic Regional Office in Philadelphia. If approved, the consolidation could result in severely reduced funding for the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site and the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation. While intended as a cost-cutting measure, the consolidation could result in increased expenses for travel to parks served from Boston.
Contact: NAOP Co-Chairs Newt Levee, 51 Stella Rd., Belmont, MA (w) 617-227-0720, (h) 617-489-1261, fax 617-227-0243, or Marion Pressley, 219 Parker St., Newton, MA (w) 617-491-5300, (h) 617-527-2844, fax 617-491-7502.

Massachusetts, Arnold Arboretum. The Hunnewell Visitors' Center is again open to the public Monday through Friday from 10 to 4, following renovation. The Arboretum, in Jamaica Plain, near Boston, is open every day.

Maine, Acadia National Park. From the Maine Olmsted Alliance for Parks & Landscapes Bulletin: "Rehabilitation work will continue in 1994 on the system of historic roads designed and constructed in the first half of this century by a number of individuals, including John D. Rockefeller, Jr., the Olmsted Brothers firm, and the then Bureau of Public Roads."
Contact: Maine Olmsted Alliance for Parks & Landscapes, PO Box 6176, Falmouth, ME 04105.

New Hampshire, Moses-Kent House Museum. The Friends of the Moses-Kent House Museum write: "We are looking for organizations interested in helping to preserve this landmark property, which is listed on the National Register] by managing the maintenance and having a long range plan with an on-going support group for the future. At this time we would appreciate learning about anyone, organization or group who might be interested in assisting us." According to Four Walking Tours of Exeter, N.H., published by The Exeter Area Chamber of Commerce,

[East]

the house was built in 1868 and "the yard was designed by Frederick Law Olmsted." The house, which is open seasonally, is a short walk from Phillips Exeter Academy.
Contact: Jane Kent Rockwell, Moses-Kent House Museum, 1 Pine St., Exeter, NH 03833, (h) 603 964-8851.

New York, Niagara Falls Reservation. Following a public outcry, a redesign is promised for a massive toll booth and office building proposed for the Rainbow Bridge at Niagara Falls. Opponents of the previous design include NAOP and Buffalo Friends of Olmsted Parks. Both groups believe that the proposed design would have created a significant intrusion on the views from the Niagara Reservation, which was created in 1885, largely through the efforts of Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux. Olmsted and Vaux prepared a master plan in 1887.
Contact: Buffalo Friends of Olmsted Parks, 2318 Main St., Buffalo, NY 14214, 716 838-1249.

New York, Downing Park. Federal ISTEA funds have been approved for the restoration of the Shelter House in Downing Park in Newburgh. The Downing Park Planning Committee reports that the stone shelter house was built in 1934 as a WPA project. According to an article in the Times Herald Record, the Downing Park Planning Committee will receive a grant of $127,000 toward the restoration, estimated to cost $159,900. The Shelter House would then house the committee's headquarters, a concession stand, and a visitors' center. Governor Mario M. Cuomo announced other grants at the same time, including $54,400 for the restoration of Downing Vaux Park, also in Newburgh.

New York, Buffalo. From Parks Report, Grants of $30,000 from the New York State Urban Development Corporation and $16,000 from the City of Buffalo Community Development Block Grant program "will allow the Friends to hire a consultant to develop a strategic management, marketing and economic development plan for the creation of a Conservancy." The law firm of Superston & Day, PC, donated money and labor for completion of the Ivy Bridge restoration in Delaware Park. Lucy A. Cook has succeeded Susan West as Executive Director and Mark V. Mistretta has succeeded Gretchen Toles as Chairman of the Buffalo Friends of Olmsted Parks. Design disagreements have slowed construction of a jogging path in Delaware Park; planning is beginning for Front Park; the Rumsey Woods section of Delaware Park is scheduled for rehabilitation; and the New York State Council of the Arts has awarded $3,000 for design studies of the Spirohead Gazebo in Delaware Park.

Pennsylvania. The newly-formed Wyoming Valley Friends of Olmsted-Kirby Park describes itself as a group of "dedicated people actively working together to promote the
News from the Regions, continued

Olmsted legacy." The Kingston group intends to "endorse and promote [the] vision" of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., for "the original Olmsted-Kirby park system... [and] a riverfront park system extending from Pittston to Nanticoke."

Contact: Dr. Gerald Reisinger or Richard Hosey, 6 Gershon Place, Kingston, PA 18704-4850, 717 283-5194.

Maryland, Baltimore. The Baltimore Parks Commission is a new coalition of environmental groups and community associations. The group hopes to involve citizens in the planning and protection of park systems to avoid repeated land-use conflicts.

CENTRAL

Ohio, Lake Erie. From Ohio Preservation, "The Submerged Lands Advisory Committee has been formed pursuant to state legislation designed to manage historic shipwrecks in Lake Erie."

Contact: Ohio Historic Preservation Office, Ohio Historical Center, 1982 Velma Ave., Columbus, OH 43211-2497.

Illinois, Chicago. From the Friends of the Parks' Newsletter: "Chicago parks are so badly staffed and organized that two of three Chicagoans 'never' or 'hardly ever' use the parks in their neighborhoods, according to a recent survey conducted by Friends of the Parks.... Their reasons? Uninteresting, antiquated programming, poor supervision and a lack of information such as class schedules and activity listings. Only 13 percent of respondents identified safety concerns as a reason for staying out of parks." See related article under Publications.

NAOP board member Holly Miller, Superintendent of the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation, told the 19th Annual Meeting and Awards Celebration of the Friends of the Parks: "The Olmsted park system can be the metaphor for the larger natural system, and as kids learn to understand and cherish their parks, they will transfer that knowledge to other environmental concerns."

Contact: Friends of the Parks, 407 S. Dearborn, Suite 1590, Chicago, IL 60605-1111, 312 922-3307.

Illinois, Riverside. NAOP board member, Ed Straka, writes: "Riverside is celebrating this year the 125th anniversary of the Olmsted Plan of Riverside, 1869, by Olmsted, Vaux & Co., by a series of lectures and by publishing a document defining the concepts and principles of the General Plan."

"Dr. Charles Beveridge, Editor of the Frederick Law Olmsted Papers and Advisor to the National Association for Olmsted Parks, was in Riverside on April 20, 1994, to speak on Olmsted and the significance of Riverside. Riverside was designated a National Historic Landmark Landscape Architectural District in 1970, due to its importance to the

nation as an extraordinary, significant, comprehensive suburban community design. After 125 years of use, the village retains the magnificence of its abundant public spaces, dispersed throughout the community along its curvilinear roadway system and meandering river. The sylvan and domestic character of the village remains."

Contact: Edward Straka, 228 Shenstone Rd. Riverside, IL 60546 (w) 708 447-7064; (h) 708 447-6689. See related article under Publications.

Missouri, Forest Park. St. Louis Mayor, Freeman R. Bosley, Jr., hopes the city can complete a master plan for Forest Park in 1995. The 1380 acre non-Olmsted park opened in 1876. Draft master plans were issued in 1983 by a group led by Team Four (a St. Louis planning firm), and in 1993 by New York landscape architects Bruce Kelly/David Varrell. A recently passed sales tax will provide more than a million dollars a year for capital repairs and improvements. Major issues: storm water drainage, automobile circulation and parking.

Contact: Caroline Loughlin, 800 Kent Rd., St. Louis, MO 63124, 314 994-0361; fax 314 994-9903.

WEST

Washington, Seattle. From Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks Newsletter: Design work and fund-raising continue for the Volunteer Park Water Tower Interpretive Exhibit; the Seattle Foundation has established the Edward B. Dunn Garden Trust; a feasibility study is being conducted for the Arboretum/Lakeside Trail; a volunteer Green Lake Path Advisory Committee has made recommendations for the existing jogging and bicycling path.

Magnolia Boulevard is an Olmsted roadway that is partly lined with landmark madrona trees in ill health. The Save Magnolia's Madronas Committee has been formed. For details, call Bob Kildall, president of Friends of Discovery Park, 206 285-6862.

Contact: Friends of Seattle's Olmsted Parks, PO Box 15984, Seattle, WA 98115-0984.
Letters

We are gratified with the prominent coverage of Tower Grove Park in the Fall 93 Newsletter, and honored by the visit to the park of so many knowledgeable guests in conjunction with the NAOP symposium on September 28 in St. Louis.

Your readers may find of interest some additional information not included in Mr. Porter’s article. For example, the reference to Tower Grove’s “studied pastoralism” could be unintentionally misleading. It should be of particular note for NAOP members that the style of landscape design chosen by our founder, Henry Shaw, was distinct from the style championed by the Olmsteds. Shaw chose the more formal style known at that time as “gardenesque.” This followed in part from his English background and wide European travels; even today, Tower Grove conveys to many visitors a distinctly old-world flavor.

The article could also leave an inaccurate impression of park safety. It is perhaps understandable in our times that daily writers tend to assume crime inevitably lurks in our large urban parks. I am pleased to be able to report that violent crime has never been significant at Tower Grove; and as Mr. Porter does report, our former problem of vice has virtually disappeared, thanks in part to the deployment of a trained and alert ranger force.

One might assume from the article that the park’s interest in Liberty Elm is merely aesthetic; actually, we seek these trees as a substitute for the documentable role of American elm in the original planting ensemble. Our recently completed Master Planting Plan is intended to guide us toward re-establishment of this original landscape.

Finally, although Mr. Porter is correct that Tower Grove is on the National Register, it is much more significant that it was recently designated a National Historic Landmark. To our knowledge only three other urban parks have been so honored—Central Park, Boston Common, and Boston Public Garden; thus we are, for now, the only such designation south or west of New York City.

We hope none of this sounds stuffy; we love company and hope that all your readers will visit, or visit again. Like all of us, we are learning as we go, and always welcome the opportunity to discuss issues and share notes with our fellow park enthusiasts.

John Karel
Director, Tower Grove Park

From the March issue of Architectural Record:
In regard to Suzanne Stephens’ “For the Record: Schuyler at the 1893 World’s Fair,” Frederick Law Olmsted and Henry Codman did not “landscape” the World’s Columbian Exposition. Frederick Law Olmsted and Henry Codman, consulting landscape architects, were hired by the World’s Columbian Commission to examine and evaluate several possible site locations. Along with Daniel Burnham and John Root, consulting architects, they harmoniously and successfully collaborated to persuade the commission on the Olmsted-Codman recommended site and to complete the adopted master site plan, which was based upon the original scheme prepared by Olmsted. They also generated detailed site development plans for the exposition grounds. This unjust writing unfairly perpetuates the misunderstanding that landscape architects only “landscape” a project.

John Geiger
Landscape Architect, Decatur, GA

Suzanne Stephens replies:

I should have been clearer about the site selection, planning, and development roles of Olmsted and Codman at the 1893 exposition...

Editorial Staff: Caroline Loughlin, Susan L. Klaus, Phyllis Knowles. A new format for the NEWSLETTER is in the development stage. Watch for our summer issue!