

FORM A - AREA

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
294 Washington Street, Boston, MA. 02108

Form numbers in this area	Area letter
N/A	F

Photo (3x3" or 3x5")
Staple to left side of form

Photo number VLNR-2-34

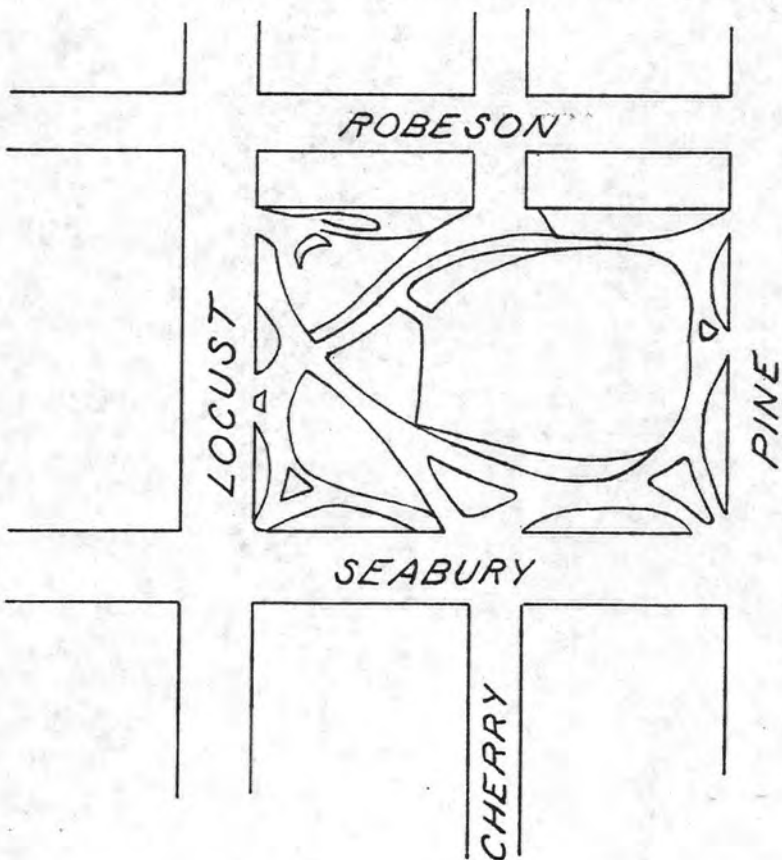
Town Fall River, Mass.

Name of area (if any) Ruggles Park

Seabury Street, between Pine & Locust streets

General date or period 1868-present

Sketch map. Draw a general map of the area indicating properties within it. Number each property for which individual inventory forms have been completed. Label streets (including route numbers, if any) and indicate north. (Attach a separate sheet if space here is not sufficient)



RUGGLES
PARK



Recorded by Pamela Fox

Organization FROHP

Date 4/12/82

(Staple additional sheets here)

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE of area. (Describe physical setting, general character, and architecturally significant structures).

Ruggles Park, established in 1868, is a small square park of about 9 acres located in a densely settled working class neighborhood in the north-central section of the city. The principal design feature is the high granite retaining wall which separates the elevated land in the northeast corner of the park from the rest of the property. The only large flat open space is now a ballfield. Plantings are now relatively sparse.

Ruggles Park is an important focus for the surrounding neighborhood. Above the high granite retaining wall, a row of tenement houses looks over the park. The remaining architectural enframing is composed of a variety of 19th century house types, including stylish Second Empire and Italianate examples.

From the west, Ruggles Park marks a change in elevation from the Highlands to the edge of Flint Village, and a corresponding change in social and architectural character, with high-styled residences giving way to mill-workers' housing like that
HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE of area. (Explain development of area, what caused it, (cont'd) and how it affected community; be specific).

Ruggles is one of the two oldest parks in Fall River and is of historical interest because of the 1903 improvement plans drawn up by the nationally-known landscape architecture firm of Olmsted Brothers. The land for both Ruggles and South (now Kennedy) Parks was purchased by the city in 1868. During the last half of the 19th century the creation of public parks was seen as the proper response of civilized government to the phenomenon of urbanization, as recreation came to be understood as the natural antidote to the nervous exhaustion of an industrial age.

Ruggles Park, originally part of the old Rodman farm, provided a convenient recreational area for the city's working population. As described in Fall River and Its Industries (1877), the park was originally 15 acres and included a fine natural plantation previously known as Ruggles Grove. The area already had luxuriant trees and required little initial landscaping to make it charming.

In 1901 the city voted to establish a Park Commission, which engaged the well-known firm of Olmsted Brothers to make extensive improvements to South Park and to develop Ruggles, which by this date must have lost many of its earlier trees. At the turn of the century, Olmsted Brothers consisted of a sole partnership between John C. Olmsted and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. the two sons of the pioneering Frederick Law Olmsted, considered the founder of the profession of landscape architecture and one of the first city planners. The 1903 Olmsted Brothers plan and the extensive planting lists survive today in the files of the Parks Department.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES

Phillips, History of Fall River (1944-46) Fascicle II, p. 98-99.

Fall River and Its Industries, p. 158-9.

Fein, Albert, Landscape Into Cityscape (Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1967) pages ix-xix.

INVENTORY FORM CONTINUATION SHEET

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
Office of the Secretary, Boston

Community:

Fall River, Mass.

Form No:

N/A

Property Name: Ruggles Park

Indicate each item on inventory form which is being continued below.

ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE (cont'd)

along Tremont and Robeson Streets.

Ruggles Park is significant as a working class recreational park of the late 19th century-- one of the two oldest parks in Fall River-- and for its association with the nationally known landscape architecture firm of Omsted Brothers. The property meets criteria A and C of the National Register.

Staple to Inventory form at bottom

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only

received 1/5/83

date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number

Page 8 of 10

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic Group

Name Fall River Multiple Resource Area
State MA

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

71. Read, Nathan, House

Substantive Review

Keeper

2/16/83 Bruce K. Doyle

Attest

Entered in the
National Register

for Keeper

72. Ruggles Park

2/10/83 Delores Byers

Entered in the
National Register

Attest

73. Sagamore Mill No. 2

for Keeper

2/10/83 Delores Byers

Entered in the
National Register

Attest

74. Sagamore Mills #1 and #3

for Keeper

2/10/83 Delores Byers

Entered in the
National Register

Attest

75. Sanford Spinning Co.

for Keeper

2/10/83 Delores Byers

Entered in the
National Register

Attest

76. Santo Christo Church

for Keeper

2/10/83 Delores Byers

Entered in the
National Register

Attest

77. Seaconnet Mills

for Keeper

2/10/83 Delores Byers

Entered in the
National Register

Attest

78. Smith, John Mace, House

for Keeper

2/10/83 Delores Byers

Entered in the
National Register

Attest

79. St. Anne's Church and Parish
Complex

for Keeper

2/10/83 Delores Byers

Entered in the
National Register

Attest

80. St. Joseph's Church

for Keeper

2/10/83 Delores Byers

Attest

8. Significance

Period _____ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates _____ Builder/Architect _____

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

- _____ summary paragraph
- _____ completeness
- _____ clarity
- _____ applicable criteria
- _____ justification of areas checked
- _____ relating significance to the resource
- _____ context
- _____ relationship of integrity to significance
- _____ justification of exception
- _____ other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acres of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UMT References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

____ national ____ state ____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature _____

title _____ date _____

13. Other

- _____ Maps
- _____ Photographs
- _____ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: 202 272 - 3504

Comments for any item may be continued on an attached sheet



Fall River MRA, Ma

VL-NR - 2 - 34
Ruggles Park.

Please refer to the map in the
Multiple Property Cover Sheet
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000279