

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Frederick Law Olmsted House

AND/OR COMMON

Frederick Law Olmsted House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

99 Warren Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Brookline

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

4th

STATE

Massachusetts

CODE

COUNTY

Norfolk

CODE

021

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

A. P. Richardson and J. G. Hudak Olmsted Associates

STREET & NUMBER

99 Warren Street

CITY, TOWN

Brookline

VICINITY OF

STATE

Massachusetts

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Norfolk County Registry of Deeds

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Dedham

STATE

Massachusetts

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

none

DATE

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Fairsted was the name Olmsted gave his small estate of house, barn and shed on one and three quarter acres of Green Hill in Brookline.

Although Senior had retired, the momentum of the firm continued to increase and its growth required another physical expansion in 1899 when a second large drafting room was extended out from the first (1889) office wing. Two years later some really substantial additions took place. In 1901 a large two story wing was constructed extending out toward the rear, westerly from the juncture of the original small "office" wing and the large "drafting room" wing. This came to house the planting department, print production division and architectural and engineering sections. Also, a two-story brick masonry vault for drawing storage was built at the end of the large drafting room. The firm had grown so quickly that the drawings not in current use had to be stored elsewhere, in Brookline Village, about three quarters of a mile away. One chamber of the vault was below grade; the other, directly above it, was on a level with and directly accessible from the main drafting room. Just at the vault entrance was the cubicle-headquarters of the file clerk in charge of drawings. The rear entrance to the offices was located just south of the cubicle.

The last major enlargement took place in 1911. A second story was added to the main drafting room and to the vault. This was done by raising the original roofs over both these rooms. The new spaces were high ones, so that the new upper vault was able to incorporate a mezzanine for the storage of file cabinets, besides three thousand additional boxes for drawing storage.

The upper drafting room with its high peaked ceiling, rafter beams, dark wood finish and window walls became an attractive well-lighted working space. Completion of the 1911 expansion created the full extent of office space we see today.

After negotiating for a time with the Clark sisters who owned a house a short distance south of Richardson's, in the spring of 1883 Olmsted acquired what was known as the Joshua Clark house, at 99 Warren Street.

The Clark house was sold to Olmsted on condition that he build a cottage for the current descendants, the sisters Clark, on a corner of the property, for them to occupy for the rest of their lives. This he did in 1883. At this time Olmsted owned a couple of small parcels of land in Brooklyn and a row house on West 46th Street in Manhattan. He kept the house until his death in 1903.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1883-1903

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Frederick Law Olmstead, (1822-1903) this nation's most comprehensive environmental planner and designer, contributed to the development of cities and regions, of a national park system, and of the United States Forest Service. His designs became prototypes for such planned environments as urban parks, parkways, suburban communities and campuses. His work or examples of his influence remain in every region of this country and in Canada.

History

Two distinct periods of creativity can be found in Olmsted's professional career. The first began with the prize-winning design for Central Park in 1858, "Greensward" undertaken with the English born and trained architect Calvert Vaux and continued through a long and troubled career as the Superintendent of New York City Parks. This affiliation ended in 1878 after long years of political pressure, forcing Olmsted to leave New York in 1883 for Brookline, Massachusetts, a suburb of Boston, where he began a private practice. The second period may be said to have begun in 1878, ending in 1893 with his landscape design for the Chicago World's Fair which took place three years before the onset of his terminal illness.

To understand Olmsted's contribution as a social planner through landscape design it is necessary to be aware of the forces that shaped his background. He was a social critic and theorist before becoming a professional planner and designer. Olmsted was 35 when he began work on Central Park. It was not until after the Civil War, when he was more than 40, that his career as a landscape architect was clearly determined.

For much of the period before 1850, Olmsted pursued a career in farming. The establishment of model farms of scientific agriculture and management seemed to him to be in the national interest. On a personal level, scientific agriculture presented a challenge that marshaled all of his interests and talents.

There is no simple explanation for Olmsted's transition from scientific farmer to environmental planner and designer. It is sufficient to note that one occupation replaced the other as all-absorbing and was viewed in precisely the same social frame of reference.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Chadwick, George F., The Park and Town: Public Landscape in the 19th and 20th Centuries, New York, 1966.
- Fein, Albert, ed., Landscape into Cityscape: Frederick Law Olmsted's Plans for a Greater New York City, Ithaca, New York, 1967.
- _____, Frederick Law Olmsted and the American Environmental Tradition, New York, 1972.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1-3/4

UTM REFERENCES

A	1, 9	3, 2, 4	2, 6, 0	4, 6, 8, 7	8, 7, 0	B					
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING				ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		
C						D					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Frederick Law Olmsted House is bounded by Dudley Street on the north, Warren Street on the east, by adjoining properties on the south and by Fairmount Street on the west, including all outbuildings within the landmark.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Patricia Heintzelman, Architectural Historian, Landmark Review Project

ORGANIZATION

Historic Sites Survey

DATE

10/10/75

STREET & NUMBER

1100 L Street

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION
 ATTEST: *[Signature]*

DATE

3/9/77

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER
 (NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

(NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS)

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Presumably all the files and drawings were transferred to Brookline in 1883. Renovation in the house, besides conversion of various rooms into the Victorian style of the day, included one major alteration a few years later of the ground-level northeast parlor into Olmsted's professional office. This was done in 1887 by removing the parlor's north wall, extending the entire room northwards and constructing a large bay window in the new north wall. The short extension walls coming out of the house on either side of the bay window also had windows in them, making an excellent north light location for the entire area. The new space, almost double that of the original parlor, was also where clients were received.

Two years later, in 1889, it became necessary to add an entire two story wing for offices and drafting rooms. This was attached to the house at the north (bay window) wall. Here the eastern third of the bay window became an interior wall and a door built in just next to it gave direct access from the parlor into the office wing. An exterior office door was also arranged at this point.

In 1895 when Olmsted ceased his professional activity at the age of 73, he was one of the most famous men in the United States. His headquarters were exceedingly modest for a man in this position.

Over the years the house was enlarged as well, rearwards on the site, with the addition of a service wing. A breezeway connects the service wing to the barn, which has its own history of conversion and use.

The barn is a two-story structure that initially contained a stable with its usual equipment and also has a lean-to wood shed at its north end. By the 1920's it had been converted to contain a modelling shop, carpenter's shop, lumber storage area, drawing and exhibition panel storage area, book and pamphlet archive and dark room. Today this area is used for storage.

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However, Olmsted could not have found this depth of personal satisfaction had he not already perceived the planning and design of a park in terms of social and cultural issues. Such a perspective was made possible by four experiences that took place between 1850 and 1857; each of these experiences was related to a larger issue of national concern. The first was Olmsted's move to Staten Island in 1848, where he owned and operated a scientific farm. He quickly became part of the social and literary elite of New York. In addition, he adopted the basic tenets of Utopian Socialism held in whole or in part by some of his closest friends, such as Parke Godwin. This group endeavored to improve the city through public institutions such as schools, parks, hospitals, and museums.

The second experience was Olmsted's walking tour through the British Isles and western Europe in search of an understanding of European civilization. Although the principal purpose of the trip was to report on agricultural matters, it is quite clear from the book Olmsted published and from the record of that trip left by his traveling companion and childhood friend, Charles Loring Brace, that they had immersed themselves in a whole range of environmental and social matters. Most significant was Olmsted's awareness that such critical problems as urbanization, poverty, crime, and prostitution were international in scope. Environmental planning and design was an international issue, and Olmsted, like Brace, had profited from the various reform experiments being pioneered abroad.

The third experience was the antislavery crusade, gaining force in the 1850's. In part because of the favorable reception to his book, Walks and Talks of an American Farmer, Olmsted was invited by Henry Raymond, editor of The New York Times, to undertake a series of tours through the South for the purpose of presenting an objective description of the effect of slavery on physical and social conditions there. He did this and wrote three long books on the subject that were considered--then as now--outstanding descriptions of southern life. Just as crucial to Olmsted, however, was the way in which he now perceived social issues. The trips and the writing, in conjunction with the heightening of sectional tensions in 1854-55, led Olmsted to view the nation as polarized between two societies, the chief cause of these tensions being the environmental and social deficiencies of the South brought about by slavery. The need for an improved policy of planning was elevated to a new level of national priority.

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Finally, in 1855, Olmsted became part-owner and an editor of Putnam's Monthly Magazine, an avant-garde intellectual periodical concerned with social, political, scientific, and aesthetic matters. Putnam's became a national forum for the most advanced liberal thought. Olmsted was in a position to commission articles on a whole range of matters related to the future of the nation.

But before becoming a committed professional landscape architect, Olmsted had two other formative experiences. The first was his direct involvement in the Civil War (1861-63) as Executive Secretary of the United States Sanitary Commission (which was to become the American Red Cross). This essentially private organization commanded the services of most of the nation's leading scientists. It became, under Olmsted's leadership, the most comprehensive effort in the nation's history to research, plan, and coordinate policies and programs affecting the daily life of the soldier.

Olmsted left the Commission in 1863 for the world of private industry. He assumed the directorship of the Mariposa Mining Estates in California, a vast gold-mining enterprise controlled by eastern interests. During his period as manager, Olmsted viewed the enterprise as a challenge to comprehensive planning. He was as interested in the homes of the miners and in making available to them such facilities as reading rooms and coffee houses as he was in the management and design of the physical plant. The two, in his view, were interrelated. While in California he became interested in Yosemite Valley and the neighboring Big Tree Grove. When an act was passed in 1864 granting the area to the State of California for public use Olmsted acted as the first President of the Commission.

By 1865, when he returned to New York City from California, Olmsted had developed a set of social and physical principles on environmental planning, design, and management. Some of these principles would shift as to order of priority or would be reinterpreted to meet new social conditions, but in no instance were they consciously violated or discarded during his long, varied, and politically troubled career as a planner, designer, and manager.

The fact that Olmsted's projects are still extant in every section of the country and in many American cities is a reflection of his concern for the entire nation at a time of rapid development. Environmental challenges were not restricted to any one region. By the 1880's Olmsted was regarded at home and abroad as the nation's principal environmental planner. Olmsted is best remembered for the design of his large urban parks, such as Central Park in New York City, South Park, now Washington and Jackson Parks, in Chicago, Belle Isle Park in Detroit, Franklin Park in Boston, and Seneca Park in Rochester. But he participated as well in the planning and design of many

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other projects, including individual residences, public buildings, mental hospitals, railway stations, cemeteries, campuses, residential communities and national parks. At George Vanderbilt's manorial estate, Biltmore in Asheville, North Carolina, he convinced Vanderbilt to develop a forest plantation and arboretum which resulted in the first Forestry School in the United States.

This comprehensive point of view regarding planning bound Olmsted for long periods to two architects in particular--Calvert Vaux and Henry Hobson Richardson. With Vaux, Olmsted designed Central Park in New York City, Prospect Park in Brooklyn and many of the smaller parks and squares in these cities. In addition, as partners in private practice, Olmsted and Vaux worked on the plans for the University of California at Berkeley and for the community of Riverside, Illinois. In addition, they collaborated on the restoration and preservation of the American Falls at Niagara as part of an international project. With Richardson, Olmsted worked on private residences, railway stations for the Albany and Boston Railroad, the Buffalo State Hospital (for the mentally ill), North Easton Town Hall, the Albany State Capitol, and a "master-plan" for Staten Island, New York.

Olmsted's work always reflected regional and local variations in climate. One of Olmsted's principal contributions to planning was the concept that shape and materials must meet the ecological requirements of a given site. Therefore, he urged--early in his career--that the design of facilities for hot, arid climates resemble southern Europe more than the English precedents that influenced his own work in the East. This scientific element of his planning remained unchanged. However, there was a definite shift in the general approach, reflected in some of his major efforts, and this was a direct result of the changing currents of national experience and of Olmsted's involvement in the mainstream of that history.

The above history and analysis of the life and work of Frederick L. Olmsted is taken exclusively from Albert Fein, Frederick L. Olmsted and the American Environmental Tradition, New York, 1972.

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Roper, Laura Wood, A Biography of Frederick Law Olmsted, Baltimore, Maryland, 1973.

Alex, William "Study of the Frederick Law Olmsted House and Archives," National Endowment for the Arts, 1973.