

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received 877 9 12 84

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic WHITE PARK

and/or common WHITE'S PARK

2. Location

street & number Boundaries are, Washington, Centre, High,
Beacon & White Streets. not for publication

city, town Concord vicinity of ~~Congressional district~~ (Second)

state N.H. code 33 county Merrimack code 013

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: recreation

4. Owner of Property

name City of Concord

street & number 41 Green Street - City Hall

city, town Concord vicinity of state New Hampshire

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Merrimack County Courthouse/Registry of Deeds

street & number PO Box #248 - North Main Street

city, town Concord state New Hampshire

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title None has this property been determined eligible? yes no

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 <u>n/a</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed			

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

White Park is an area of about twenty-five acres located in the western portion of the compact part of Concord, New Hampshire. The park is bounded by five residential streets which intersect at various angles and render the outline of the property an irregular polygon. Along the west side of the park is high land which terminates¹ in a steep declivity; this has been identified as the east edge of a glacial kame. The slope of the kame drops some forty feet to the generally flat plain that constitutes about 80% of the park's area. Along the plateau of the kame runs a public road, High Street. To the east of High Street, as far as the bottom of the hillside, the terrain of the park consists of rocky and well-drained glacial drift and bears a mature growth of mixed hard- and softwoods. Among the trees growing in this portion of the park are eastern white pines, with a few red and pitch pines; oaks of the white and black groups; and American elms. Written accounts of the 1880s and 1890s, at the time the park was first brought under development, attest to the fact that both pines and oaks predominated in this section at that period. The area was referred to by local children as "The Ring Wood", and landscape architect Charles Eliot retained that name in his plans² for the park, urging the preservation of the tree specimens growing there at the time. The terrain at the top of the kame, especially that of a ridge which projects eastward from High Street near the southwest corner of the park, is gently rolling; in addition to mature trees, it bears a growth of younger trees, of mixed grasses, and of wild perennials such as golden-rod, aster, and wild raspberry.

The eastern slope of the kame has long been known to afford several springs of pure water, which had been used as part of the local water supply before the park became public property. These springs were carefully preserved and cleaned during development of the park, and supply the source for a pond (originally for two ponds) at lower elevations.³

All of the land below the hillside is naturally low and laden with ground water, a fact which has afforded the opportunity for ponds and meadowlands as features of the landscaping of the area. In the southwestern corner of the park, just below a projection of the bordering ridge, is a formation of elliptical outline, known as "The Green". When first investigated in 1890, the flat bottom of this area was covered with a growth of alders and was found to be underlaid with "a peat-bed (which) extended to an unknown depth."⁴ Peat was removed and added to the sandy soil of the remainder of the park's lowlands, and the trenches excavated for this purpose were backfilled with rocks and infertile subsoil taken from grading projects elsewhere in the park.⁵ After this basin was cleared of natural growth and levelled, it was planted with grasses and has since been kept mowed to maintain the effect of an open meadow. The Green is circumscribed by a bordering pathway which was planted with weeping willow, silver maple, and other moisture-tolerant tree species. The banks which enclose the area are planted with, or retain indigenous specimens of, American elm, black and yellow birch, gray birch, various maples, and various oaks. Among the vines and shrubs of the walls of The Green are wild grapes, rhododendrons, choke cherries, bittersweet, and wild raspberry; the latter grows in sufficient profusion to restrict travel to cleared paths and thus to preserve delicate plants like the several species of fern that flourish in the area.

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On the southern border of The Green, along Centre Street, is a planting of mature coniferous trees. Many of these probably date from the first development of the park in the 1890s; they include eastern hemlock, red and white cedar, Norway spruce, blue spruce and Douglas fir. A single large locust stands near the intersection of Centre and Washington Streets.

At the extreme southwestern end of The Green the banks along High and Centre Streets converge to form a natural gully. This feature, described in 1890 by landscape architect Charles Eliot as "The Dell", is bisected by a steep path which leads upward to the intersection of the two streets. Plants found in this area include American elm, black and yellow birch, gray birch, pin oak, white pine, large black oaks, and a variety of flowering shrubs and wild perennials. Among the newly-planted trees are basswood and ginkgo.

The remainder of the park is a flat tableland of relatively low elevation. Though separated from The Green in the southwestern corner of the park by a low ridge which is traversed by a pathway, this tableland shares the same general character as the meadow, having a high water table. Early accounts of the development of the park reveal that this extensive tract is underlaid with sandy subsoil, probably an outwash deposit from the glacial lake that flooded much of the upper Merrimack Valley at the end of the Pleistocene epoch. The sandy character of the soil required much conditioning in the early years of the park's development, achieved not only by spreading and mixing peat from the meadow but also by adding hundreds of loads of muck obtained during excavation of the principal pond of the park. Most of the tableland of the eastern portion of the park now sustains a growth of mixed lawn grasses, invaded in the lowest areas by common reed and other meadow grasses, and by rushes and sedges.

The pond lies near a park entrance at the intersection of Washington and White Streets, at the lowest elevation of the park property. This man-made body of water, the larger of two ponds originally included in the design of the park, was created on the site of a natural marsh. Its banks are low and are planted with yellow water flags, cattails, and, on the north shore, is a small stream which passes beneath an arched stone bridge (1896) and is carried away by underground storm sewers.

Near the pond have been planted many individual tree specimens. Some are many years old; others have been set out within the past two years as part of an effort at revitalizing the park. Among the mature trees are a row of sugar maples along White Street and a group of catalpas near the intersection of Washington and White Streets. Both species show evidence of decline and are currently being supplanted by young specimens of sugar maple, basswood, green ash, and ginkgo. South and west of the pond the older specimens include Norway maple, lilacs, mountain ashes, hawthornes and crap apples. These are being supplimented by young crabs and canoe birches.

Along the Washington Street border of the park are a variety of flowering shrubs, some of which were set out in 1893. Among these are Philadelphus, deutzia, forsythia, lilac, privet, hawthorne, quince, honeysuckly and weigela.

-see Continuation Sheet #2

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North of the pond, between the embankment of High Street on the west and White Street on the east, is a broad, flat expanse which was originally lightly wooded. Through this area passed a small stream which drained into the pond; this has now been chanelled into underground conduits. The extreme northeastern corner of the park was originally treeless and served as a playground. In addition to providing recreation for children, this area served the adult Sunset Baseball League of Concord, founded in 1909 and claimed to be the oldest after-supper baseball organization in the country. The entire northern area of the park is now bare of trees and is laid out with one adult baseball diamond, one Little League diamond, and a football field.

White Park contains several man-made structures, some of which contribute strongly to the character of the tract. These include the arched stone bridge over the outlet of the pond, designed by local architect George B. Howe and constructed in 1896; the steel fence which surrounds all sides of the park except the High Street border and was built after 1905; and the main park gate, at the intersection of Washington and Centre Streets. The latter feature, constructed after 1905, consists of a section of wall, composed of naturally-rounded fieldstones, which terminates in two pylons that define the gateway. To the left (west) of the pylons is a stone and wood shelter which provided a waiting area at one of the stops of the Concord Street Railway. The shelter is enclosed on the sides and back by low fieldstone walls into which are built piers that support the roof. The latter is supported on six chamfered 7"x7" pine posts which are connected at their tops by chamfered pine beams of approximately the same dimensions. The roof, of open-ended gable form, consists of 3"x5" chamfered rafters which have ogee-ended extensions at their lower ends to provide flared eaves. The roof is sheathed with matched and beaded ceiling board and is presently covered with asphalt shingles.

Other structures in the park which do not contribute to its character are a gable-roofed concrete block storage shed at the north border, near the end of Beacon Street; two concrete block "dugouts" adjacent to the adult baseball diamond; and a concrete block gasoline pump house south of the office of the Concord Parks Department. The Park Department office is a framed structure on a concrete foundation, and takes the form of a 1½-story gable-roofed structure with wide shed dormers in both the front (north) and rear slopes of the roof. Rising in the same plane as the front and rear walls of the building, and extending nearly its full width, these dormers effectively transform the office into a two-story structure. The office is roofed with asphalt shingles and its walls are covered with siding which simulates log construction. The building was constructed in 1936-7 by Works Progress Administration labor and a combination of Federal and municipal funds.

South of the Parks Department office is a concrete swimming pool; this occupies the site of the smaller pond which was excavated when the park was first developed. This pool and a locker and shower building were constructed by the Works Progress Administration in 1938 and 1939. In 1958 the City of Concord built the present bath house and ice skating shelter between the pool and the pond. This is a concrete block structure with a flat roof, the bath house in the main section facing the pool and the skating shelter, in an adjacent lower section whose roof serves as a sun deck, facing the pond.

Between the pool and the Parks Department office is a basketball and handball court.

-see Continuation Sheet #3

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Original appearance: The hill on the western side of White Park has changed little in appearance through the park's development. The lowlands adjacent to the east have been altered greatly, first in an attempt to make them useful and, more recently, in a series of changes to accommodate changing recreational fashions. Landscape architect Charles Eliot described the tract that became White's Park as "a small tract of land which is in part so precipitous and in part so swampy that all the new roads have avoided it."¹⁰ In 1897 the dampness of the tract, still being filled and graded, "developed more or less malaria upon that part of the ground which has not as yet been reclaimed, and this was the cause of a serious illness which incapacitated our superintendent for a few months."¹¹ In order to overcome the sodden nature of the park's flatlands, the architect and commissioners resorted to three methods: excavation, drainage, and filling. The first was accomplished when the ponds were dug in 1889 and 1890; the upper pond collected the water of hillside springs and channeled the flow into the larger pond at the lowest elevation of the park, and the lower pond served also as a basin to collect groundwater. Drainage was accomplished by channeling surface water from the tableland into the larger pond, first by a meandering open stream and later by underground conduits. In 1893 the park commissioners achieved additional drainage by laying underground pipes leading from saturated areas.¹² Filling of lowlands was accomplished from the first days of park development, when peat was removed from The Green in the southwest corner and spread over the adjacent ground¹³ to condition the sandy soil and when muck from the pond excavations was likewise used.¹³ Throughout the 1890s, reports of the park commissioners attest to the thousands of cart-loads of loam which was spread over the surface of the flat areas.

As improvement of drainage was being carried out, paths were laid throughout the park. A summer house was erected in 1892, along with the placement of some thirty benches.¹⁴ The summer house no longer exists, but was a low circular structure of fieldstones with open sides and a conical roof of thatch. Most of the settees have disappeared, and some of the original paths have probably been replaced by others. The most marked difference between the original and present appearance of the park lies in the laying out of baseball diamonds, tennis courts, parking areas, and swimming pools in sections of the tract which were originally thinly-wooded natural areas, a natural extension of the development of use in an urban park.

FOOTNOTES:

¹C.H. Hitchcock, The Geology of New Hampshire (Concord, N.H.: by the State, 1878), Part III, "Surface Geology", p. 84.

²Charles Eliot, "White Park, Concord, New Hampshire," Garden and Forest, August 13, 1890, reprinted with slight changes in The Granite Monthly 13 (1890), pp. 228-229; Concord (N.H.) Evening Monitor, August 20, 1889.

³Report of the Park Commissioners, Concord, N.H., 1889, pp. 1-2.

⁴Report of the Park Commissioners, Concord, N.H., 1890, pp. 1-2.

⁵Ibid., p.2.

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FOOTNOTES: (cont.)

⁶James Walter Goldthwait, The Geology of New Hampshire (Concord, N.H.: Rumford Press, 1925), pp. 42-45.

⁷Report of the Park Commissioners, Concord, N.H., 1890, p. 2.

⁸Report of the Park Commissioners and Treasurer, Concord, N.H., 1893, pp. 3-4.

⁹Eighth Annual Report of the Park Commissioners to the City Council, Concord, N.H., 1896, p. 3.

¹⁰Charles Eliot, "White Park, Concord, New Hampshire."

¹¹Report of the Park Commissioners to the City Council, Concord, N.H., 1897, p. 4.

¹²Report of the Park Commissioners and Treasurer, Concord, N.H., 1893, p. 3.

¹³Report of the Park Commissioners, Concord, N.H., 1890, pp. 1-2.

¹⁴Reports of the Commissioners and Treasurer of the Public Parks, Concord, N.H., 1892, pp. 3, 6.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input 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 checked="" 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 1884 **Builder/Architect** Charles Eliot of Boston, MA

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

White Park is significant in landscape architecture not only as an example of late 19th century naturalistic park development, but also as the design of Charles Eliot, a student of Frederick Law Olmstead and later partner in the Olmstead firm.

Landscape architecture: White Park was donated to the city of Concord, New Hampshire, in 1884 by Armenia White (1817-1916), a local philanthropist. In addition to the twenty-five acre tract of land, long considered worthless for development, Mrs. White gave the city an endowment of \$1,700 for initial expenses of transforming the site into a public park. The city appropriated \$1,000 in 1887 and again in 1888 to match the White endowment, and with this fund the park commissioners employed landscape architect Charles Eliot (1859-1897) of Boston in 1888-1889. Eliot communicated his ideas to the Concord commissioners, suggesting a deliberately naturalistic program for the development of the park:

A small park for Concord ... should have in it no carriage drives, and no decorative gardening Looked at with this reasonable end and purpose in view, I am sure it would be difficult to find a piece of land so near the town which presents so many natural advantages as does the White land. Here is a steep ridge, the summit of which commands (through the trees) broad views of the Merrimac valley; here is a flourishing natural wood containing many trees of considerable size and dignity, and many wild flowers from Mayflower to Goldenrod; here, in fact, is that very bit of typical New₂England scenery which Concord should preserve for her stay-at-home citizens ...

Along these lines, the architect rapidly prepared a preliminary plan, perfecting it in 1890. In 1890 Eliot also published a description of his ideas for the park, noting that his plan provided

for the enhancement of the natural beauty of the park by spreading water in the lowland where nature made a marsh, by making grassy glades in two or three hollow parts where nature grew Alders and Birches, by planting a thicket of Mountain Laurel here and opening a vista to the Merrimac there; and then the plan leads paths in such directions and by such routes as will best display the beauty of the place while injuring it least.³

Eliot's plan grew directly from the principles of landscape architecture he had learned from Frederick Law Olmstead, Sr. (1822-1903), the foremost American landscape architect of the latter half of the nineteenth century. After graduating from Harvard in 1882, Eliot had prepared himself for the practice of landscape architecture at the Bussey Institute, Harvard's department of agriculture and horticulture. In 1883, he secured an apprenticeship with Olmstead, and remained with the older architect for two years. After a tour of Europe, Eliot established an independent landscape practice in Boston in 1886. White Park was one of his earliest large commissions.⁴

9. Major Bibliographical References

-see Continuation Sheet #7

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property 25

Quadrangle name CONCORD, NH

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A	<u>1 9</u>	<u>2 9 3 1 8 0</u>	<u>4 7 8 6 6 8 0</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<u>1 9</u>	<u>2 9 3 0 8 0</u>	<u>4 7 8 6 4 9 5</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<u>1 9</u>	<u>2 9 2 9 0 5</u>	<u>4 7 8 6 4 1 5</u>
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D	<u>1 9</u>	<u>2 9 2 8 5 5</u>	<u>4 7 8 6 8 8 0</u>
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E	<u>1 9</u>	<u>2 9 3 0 0 5</u>	<u>4 7 8 6 9 5 0</u>
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F	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
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G	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
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H	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
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Verbal boundary description and justification

City of Concord Tax Assessors Records- Maps 48, 49, 52, & 53. (No parcel number.) See Cont. Sheet #8/Sketch Map; boundaries are outlined in red.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	n/a	code	county	code
	n/a			
	n/a			

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Mrs. Robertson Page (Mary Hastings Holloway)

organization President, Woman's Club of Concord date 23 April 1982

street & number 6 Cambridge Street telephone 603-224-0862

city or town Concord state New Hampshire 03301

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 [Signature]

Commissioner, Dept. of Resources & Economic Development

title NH State Historic Preservation Officer date September 23, 1982

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I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

[Signature] date 11/9/82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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STATEMENT OF

Soon after planning the Concord park, however, Eliot was thrust into the forefront of his profession. In 1893 he became a full partner in the Olmstead firm. In the same year, that firm was appointed landscape architects to the Massachusetts Metropolitan Park Commission, affording Eliot the opportunity of working on one of the largest and most sophisticated park systems in the United States.⁵

Olmstead had set the precedent for the naturalistic urban park between 1857 and 1863 in his creation of Central Park in New York City. At that time, Olmstead had recommended that city park development

interfere with (the land's) easy undulating outlines, and picturesque, rocky scenery as little as possible, and ... endeavor rapidly ... to increase and judiciously develop these particular individual and characteristic sources of landscape effects.⁶

Following the same principles in White Park, Eliot created what was probably New Hampshire's first large urban park planned with full commitment to picturesque naturalism. While the neighboring city of Portsmouth had created its Langdon Park on the shore of the South Mill Pond in 1876, this small tract lacked the varied topography and mature trees of White Park.⁷ The larger city of Manchester followed Concord's precedent when it established Stark Park beside the Merrimack River in 1893.⁸

White Park has changed since the 1890s, yet it retains the essential features that Eliot carefully preserved and emphasized. A current program of supplanting declining trees with young specimens of similar species, and of replacing missing trees, is bringing the park still closer to its original plan and appearance.

FOOTNOTES:

¹Report of the Park Commissioners, Concord, N.H., 1889, pp 1, 3.

²Charles W. Eliot, Charles Eliot: Landscape Architect (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1902), pp. 227-228.

³Charles Eliot, "White Park, Concord, New Hampshire," Garden and Forest, August 13, 1890, reprinted with slight changes in The Granite Monthly 13 (1890), pp. 228-229.

⁴Sons of the Puritans (Boston, 1908), p. 223; Dictionary of American Biography, VI (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931), p. 70.

⁵Mark Primack, "Charles Eliot: Genius of the Massachusetts Landscape," Appalachia Journal, June 1982, pp. 85-88.

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FOOTNOTES: (cont.)

⁶Elizabeth Stevenson, Park Maker: A Life of Frederick Law Olmstead (New York: Macmillan, 1977), p. 178.

⁷Langdon Park, Portsmouth, New Hampshire (Portsmouth: Charles W. Gardner, 1976).

⁸Dedication of Stark Park by the City of Manchester, N.H. (Manchester: John B. Clarke, 1893).

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MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL

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Eliot, Charles, "White Park, Concord, New Hampshire," Garden and Forest, August 13, 1890, reprinted with slight changes in The Granite Monthly 13 (1890); Concord (N.H.) Evening Monitor, August 20, 1889.

Eliot, Charles W. Charles Eliot: Landscape Architect (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1902).

Goldthwait, James Walter, The Geology of New Hampshire (Concord, N.H.: Rumford Press, 1925).

Hitchcock, C.H., The Geology of New Hampshire (Concord, N.H.: by the State, 1878), Part III, "Surface Geology".

Langdon Park, Portsmouth, New Hampshire (Portsmouth: Charles W. Gardner, 1976).

Primack, Mark, "Charles Eliot: Genius of the Massachusetts Landscape," Appalachia Journal, June 1982.

"Reports of the Concord Parks Commissioners", 1889-1901.

Sons of the Puritans (Boston, 1908); Dictionary of American Biography, VI (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931).

Stevenson, Elizabeth, Park Maker: A Life of Frederick Law Olmstead (New York: Macmillan, 1977).

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ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION:

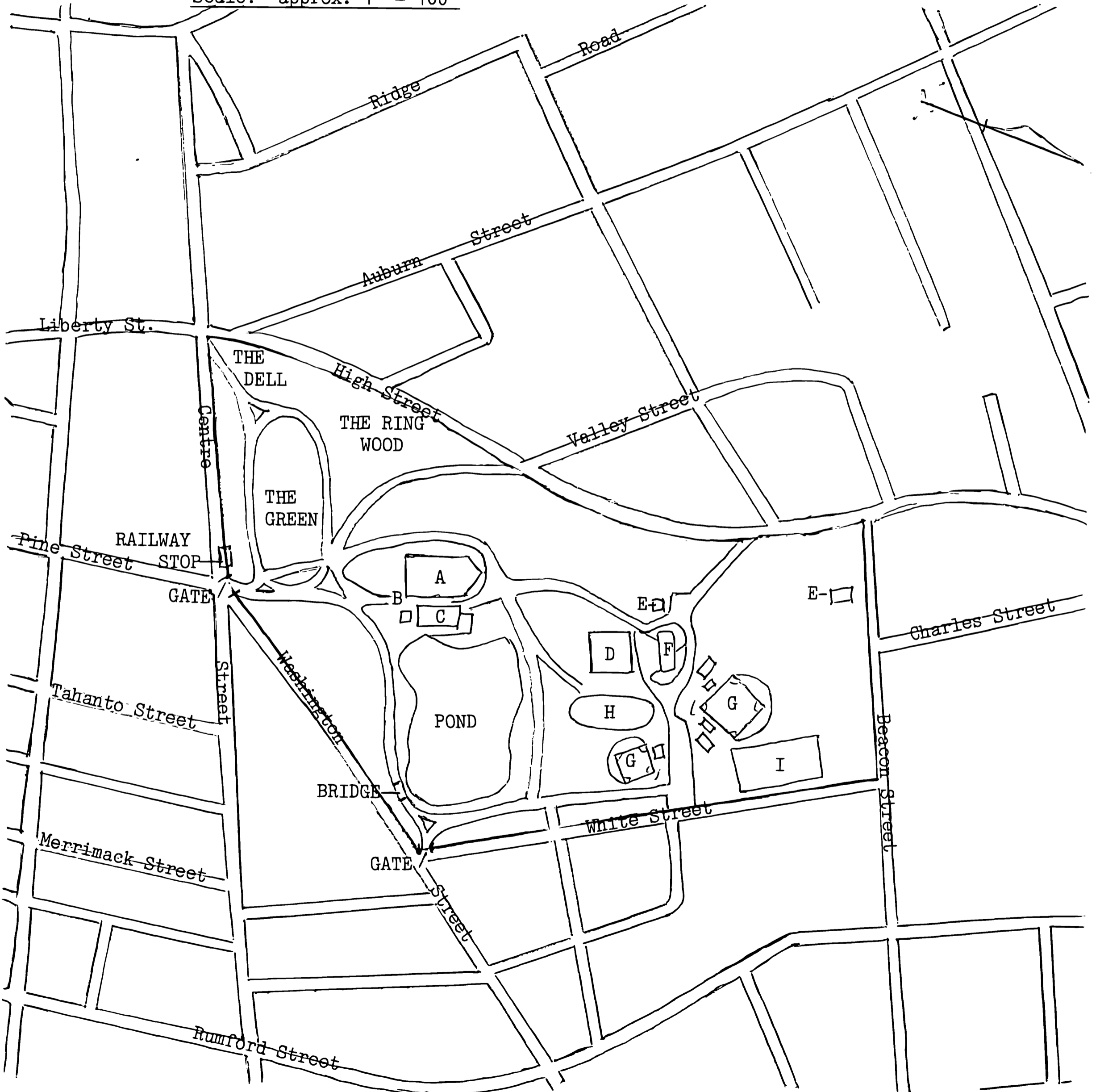
Continuation sheet #8 - SKETCH MAP

Item number --

Page 1

WHITE PARK - Concord, NH
Scale: approx. 1" = 100'

(See reverse side for key.)



KEY TO SKETCH MAP:

- A - Pool
- B - Pump House
- C - Bath & Skate House
- D - Basketball Court
- E - Storage Sheds
- F - Parks Dept. Office
- G - Baseball Field
- H - Hockey Rink
- I - Football Field