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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

SEP 15 1989

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

NATIONAL REGISTER

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Eastern Promenade

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number Bounded by E. Promenade, Casco Bay, Fore Street

N/A not for publication

city, town Portland

N/A vicinity

state Maine

code

ME

county Cumberland

code

005

zip code 04101

3. Classification

Ownership of Property

- private, public-local (checked), public-State, public-Federal

Category of Property

- building(s), district (checked), site, structure, object

Number of Resources within Property

Table with 2 columns: Contributing, Noncontributing. Rows for buildings, sites, structures, objects, Total.

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official

Maine Historic Preservation Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

Date

9/8/89

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register (checked), determined eligible for the National Register, determined not eligible for the National Register, removed from the National Register, other (explain):

Signature of the Keeper: Melissa Byrum

Entered in the National Register 10/16/89

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Landscape/Natural FeatureLandscape/Park

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Landscape/Natural FeatureLandscape/Park

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

No Style

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/Awalls N/A

roof N/Aother

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

In 1828 the City of Portland came into the possession of a twelve acre site on Munjoy Hill which, rising from the shore of Casco Bay to a height of 161 feet, forms the eastern terminus of the Portland peninsula. The site offers extensive views of Casco Bay, the harbor, Forts, and outlying islands. Through the commitment of concerned citizens and city officials, the area of the park, including the three-acre Fort Allen Park, today totals about 32 acres. Bounded by Eastern Promenade to the west, Fort Allen Park to the south, East End Beach and Casco Bay to the east, and Concourse to the North, the linear site dips eastward and includes nearly a mile of shore frontage. The uniqueness of the Eastern Promenade has long been recognized and throughout its history all of the proposed improvements have been consistent in their intent to maximize and preserve the scenic qualities of the site.

The Promenade has been the focus of three major design efforts. First in 1837 with the construction of the drive around Mount Joy (Munjoy Hill); the second beginning in 1878 under the direction of William Goodwin, City Civil Engineer; third, the addition of Fort Allen Park in 1890; and finally in 1905 when at the direction of Mayor James Phinney Baxter, the Olmsted Brothers firm prepared a plan for the Promenade and included it as a component of the Portland Parks System.

Improvements in the 1830's included grading, filling, constructing a road and planting trees. On June 3, 1837, the City of Portland advertised for proposals to construct a road, "40 feet wide around Mount Joy" (Eastern Argus). The work was completed by August when the following letter of praise appeared in the Eastern Argus:

We hardly know why we have so long neglected to say a word in praise of a road around Mount Joy. - It is one of the most beautiful drives we have ever met with, and one which we may invite strangers to improve without any fears that our city pride will be wounded by an expression of their opinions. We say nothing about the expediency of the expenditure - there would be no use in talking about that now - but the drive is what every Portlander has reason to be proud of. We wish some of our friends who are good at describing beautiful scenery, would furnish us with a description of the sublime and beautiful prospect from this new public improvement.

See continuation sheet

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The 1876 Birds-Eye-View of Portland illustrates the tree-lined drive along the Promenade which existed at that time.

Despite these improvements concern was expressed continually about the condition of the Promenade and the fact that much of the land was still privately owned and development could threaten the scenic qualities of the site.

In 1878 Calvert Vaux, landscape architect, was invited to come to Portland and advise the city regarding the improvement of its public grounds. He spent two days with William Goodwin, City Civil Engineer, making suggestions. In a talk entitled, "Our Public Grounds", Mr. Goodwin reported that, "It does not require an expert to show us that from whatever direction we enter either of the Promenades, it begins at nothing noticeable throughout. The outlook is grandly beautiful; the foreground contemptible, the trees few and unsightly, devoted in their early infancy to the attrition of cows and the tethering of goats without compensating allowances thereafter. Such grounds should have an approach commensurate with the value of the outlook." Under Goodwin's care work on the Promenade continued with filling and grading, the addition of loam for lawns and the planting of trees and shrubs.

William Goodwin, credited with the development of Deering Oaks, (see Deering Oaks, N.R.N.) had a vision of developing a park system throughout Portland. He wrote in 1881:

The circuit of our public grounds, beginning with either Promenade and thence passing through our shaded streets and the Oaks to the other Promenade, affords a variety and natural beauty of scenery to be found in but few cities of the country. The foreground of these several landscapes and marine views will doubtless be cared for little by little as the means of the City will warrant (Auditor's Report, 1881-82).

Goodwin's vision for a park system was shared by James Phinney Baxter, one of Portland's more influential, forward looking, and civic minded citizens. Baxter served six non-consecutive terms as Mayor beginning in 1893. Expanding on Goodwin's vision, in 1895 Baxter proposed the idea of linking the parks with an "arbor way", a shady esplanade that would connect the Western Promenade through Deering Oaks around Back Cove and along the Eastern Promenade. Inspired by visits to parks in Europe and American cities, Baxter pursued his vision for Portland and hired the Olmsted Brothers' firm of Brookline, Massachusetts to prepare a plan.

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The Firm's job records show that correspondence on the Eastern Promenade began in 1904. On May 2, 1905, Mayor Baxter acknowledged receipt of the plan for the Eastern Promenade and stated that, "... I am much pleased with it." John C. Olmsted was the partner in charge of the project. Henry Vincent Hubbard, then an apprentice in the office, was also involved. In 1905, J. C. Olmsted wrote:

[The] outlook has been the governing factor in our design. We believe that no intricacy of tree planting, for beauty in itself or for shade for another road should seriously interfere with the free view from the present roadway.

Olmsted discouraged the addition of new drives, recommended that Cutter Street be discontinued, and that paths be laid out so as not to interrupt the sweep of the land.

We have, proposed a system of paths, connecting at convenient intervals with the existing promenade, forming reasonable boundaries to the natural divisions of the topography, and running for the most part on the brow of the steepest slope, so that persons on foot may enjoy the full sweep of view to the eastward. Along these overlook paths at convenient locations there should be seats, much as shown on the plan, under the shade of the trees where such trees will not too seriously block the view from the promenade.

The Olmsted plan divided the park into four areas: baseball field, play field, children's playground, and little children's lawn. Terminal features defining the site included the Concourse at the northern end and Fort Allen Park at the southern end of the Promenade. A monument was proposed to punctuate the eastward vista down Congress Street. A path system was designed connecting the various areas with seats along the walks. A bridge over Cutter Street was proposed, separating pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

It appears that the Olmsted plan was never fully carried out. In 1905 the Parks Commissioners reported that, "Quite an important change has been made at the northerly end of the driveway at the Eastern Promenade by the building of the Concourse at this point to intersect with Washington Avenue." The following May, the big circle at the Concourse was planted with rosa rugosa with a border of Japanese barberry. The beds skirting the driveway and the bank was planted in an assortment of hardy shrubs and vines. (Auditor's Report, 1906)

The park could be entered formally at the foot of Congress Street and at the Northern Concourse. The Concourse also served as the connector to Back Cove and a link in the Portland Parks System.

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Through the years there have been a number of additions to the park. A pollution abatement facility has been constructed in the northern section. Tennis Courts and a ball field are located in the Olmsted's proposed playfield area. Parking lots and boat launching facilities have been added. Despite departures from the Olmsted plan, the sweep of the lawn and the views from the Promenade have been maintained.

The district contains one contributing site, two contributing structures, as well as one non-contributing structure and one non-contributing object.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Landscape Architecture

Period of Significance

1826 - c. 1920

Significant Dates

1826
1878
1905

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Goodwin, William C.E.
Olmsted Brothers

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

The scenic value of the Eastern Promenade was recognized early on in Portland's urban history. Located at the eastern end of the city with views of Casco Bay and the islands, the site is significant primarily as an early example of a recognized and preserved scenic landscape. The site is also significant as a manifestation of the prevailing 19th century idea, articulated most frequently by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., that the park represented certain democratic ideals. Since 1828 the Eastern Promenade has been a common ground where all citizens may have access to the best scenery of the region. The Promenade is part of the Portland Parks System, laid out by the Olmsted Brothers in 1905. The original twelve acre parcel has been added to through the years; today the site, including the three acre Fort Allen Park, includes about 32 acres. It is eligible for nomination to the Register under criterion C for its landscape design.

In 1905 the Commissioners of Cemeteries and Public Grounds incorporated a brief history of the Park System in its Annual Report.

In May, 1828 the City of Portland came into possession of "12 acres and 105 rods" of land adjoining the driveway of the Eastern Promenade, and while nothing was said about a park at that time, the records of a somewhat later date call attention to the necessity of "keeping clear" the northerly slope of the Eastern Promenade.

Although the intention in 1828 is somewhat unclear, in 1836 when the location of possible public ground was debated in the newspapers, the value of the site and its views were clearly recognized. The concern with increased urbanization and the need for public open space was the subject of much discussion, and the newspapers reported on the various opinions regarding the development of a mall park or promenade for the enhancement of the city. One such opinion, entitled "Breathing Places", carefully expressed contemporary attitudes about the significance of such spaces:

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

City of Portland Auditor's Report. Portland: Ford and Rich, Printers.
1878 - 1930.

Correspondence Between Mayor Baxter and J. C. Olmsted. Library of Congress,
Washington, D.C.

See continuation sheet

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property 32.32

UTM References

A

1	9	3	9	8	8	6	0	4	8	3	6	4	6	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

C

1	9	4	0	0	0	2	0	4	8	3	5	0	1	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

B

1	9	4	0	0	3	2	0	4	8	3	5	5	4	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

D

1	9	3	9	8	6	6	0	4	8	3	6	0	8	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property occupies the City of Portland tax map 1-A-3.

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundary embraces the entire parcel historically associated with the Eastern Promenade.

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Elizabeth Igleheart, Architectural Historian

organization Maine Historic Preservation Commission date July, 1989

street & number 55 Capitol Street telephone (207) 289-2132

city or town Augusta, state Maine zip code 04333

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Messrs. Edwards. As our city authorities are now agitating the very popular subject of a Mall, park or Promenade, for the ornament of the town as well as for the health and pleasure of its citizens, and as a committee is now engaged in looking up an eligible spot for this purpose, allow me to make one or two suggestions in furtherance of this desirable project. I do not intend to show its utility, or the necessity of the measure. Those points are as apparent to the reasons and good-sense of the community, as are the rays of this morning's sun to the bodily eye. My intention is merely to present, for the reflection of our city authorities two sites, one each at the extreme end of the town, both admirably adapted for the object. First, "Bramhall's Hill" where a delightful Promenade or Park can be made, running along the brow of the hill, from the Arsenal to the new Cemetery, affording a pleasant and picturesque view of the country for miles around, with all the variety of hills and dales, of plains and waters, villages and farm houses, requisite to romantic scenery and a delightful landscape.

The other extremity of the city, however if but one site can be secured, to my mind presents the stronger inducement of a location altogether surpassing any other in New England. I would therefore and [add?] the suggestions made on this location, and advise that a good road eight rods in width be laid out commencing from the termini of Washington Street at the Bridge and following the various curves and indentations of Mount Joy, near the water surrounding that unequalled promontory, to the old site of Fort Burrows so called on Fore River, a distance of about 1-2 miles. Let this road be ornamented with four rows of young elm trees so arranged as to accommodate both carriages and promenaders. This would be approached also, after the continuation of Cumberland Street over Mount Joy, by three several points; - and thus the ride or walk could be shortened at pleasure. This could be properly called "Washington Park Promenade", and an account of its unrivalled water scenery, so magnificently presented, the refreshing breezes of Casco Bay and the retirement from the noise and dust of the city, would at once embrace both the objects of a promenade and a ride, with probably more acception to the public and with less expense to the city, than the purchase of any less desirable location in the heart of the city.

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Making these suggestions, I shall be willing to be taxed accordingly, and uniting in the common voice of my fellow citizens, I would say to our City Government, "go ahead." (Eastern Argus, June 2, 1836)

Pride in Portland's scenic resources was frequently expressed throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as in the following paragraph from the 1902 Annual Report:

Every citizen of Portland should be proud of our two promenades, for no other city in this country can avail themselves of the privilege of obtaining the extended views which are only attainable from these promenades and the views are entirely different; from the Eastern Promenade you get a view of "old ocean", and from Western Promenade the eye takes in a large area of the surrounding country, with the Presidential range of mountains in New Hampshire for a back ground.

Designs for the Eastern Promenade were prepared by the City Civil Engineer's Office and the Olmsted Brothers, Landscape Architects. William Goodwin, City Civil Engineer from 1872 to 1892 was a vocal supporter of public grounds (see Deering Oaks N.R.N.). James Phinney Baxter, mayor of Portland for 6 terms saw the social and aesthetic value of parks and was a driving force behind land acquisition and public improvements. The Olmsted Brothers were hired by James Phinney Baxter and commissioned to lay out the Eastern Promenade. John C. Olmsted was the partner in charge. Henry Vincent Hubbard, apprentice with the firm, was also involved.

John C. Olmsted, Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.'s, stepson was a senior partner at the Brookline, Massachusetts firm from 1898 until his death in 1920. Although John Olmsted continued his stepfather's principles of design, his emphasis changed, in response to increased development, from not only promoting the pastoral landscape but protecting scenic landscapes and incorporating structured recreational facilities into his designs. In addition to the Portland Parks System, J. C. Olmsted planned park systems for Dayton, Ohio, Seattle and Spokane, Washington, Essex County, New Jersey, Portland, Oregon, Fall River, Massachusetts. He expanded his stepfather's park designs in Boston, Louisville, Hartford, Atlanta, Buffalo, Rochester and Brooklyn, New York.

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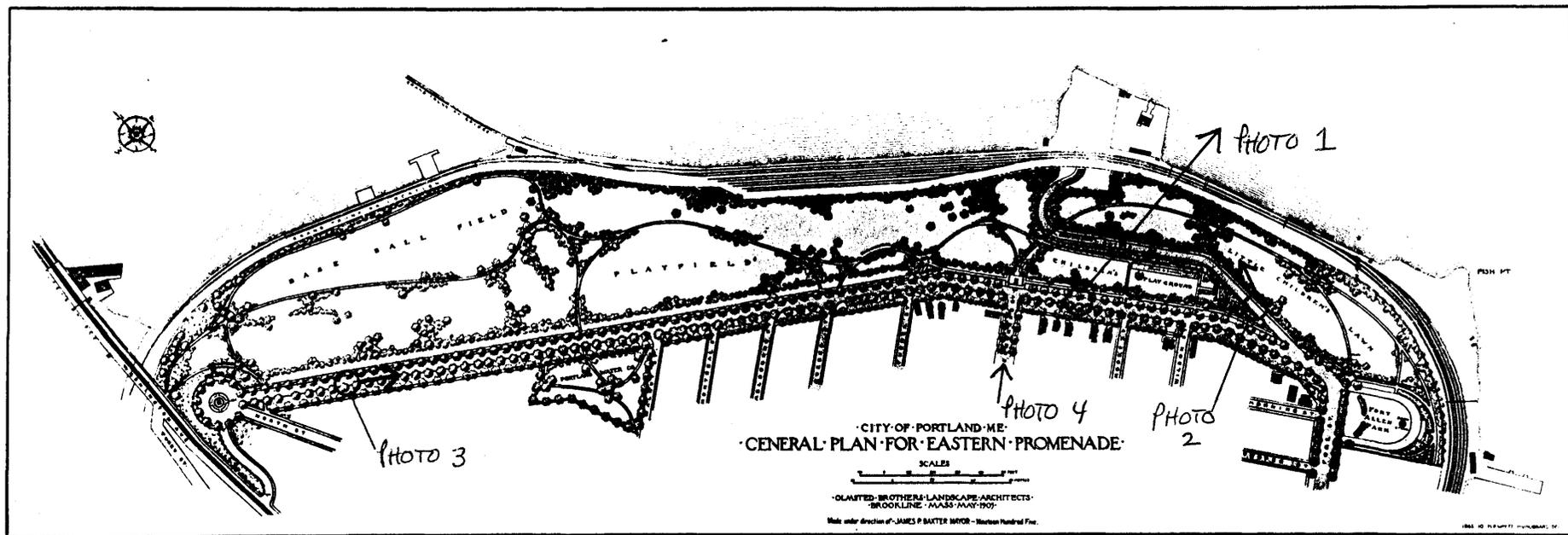
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John Olmsted was a founding member of the American Society of Landscape Architects and as the organization's first president, was responsible for establishing membership standards and codes of practice for the profession. Arlene Levee feels John Olmsted's greatest contribution to the profession was providing ". . . a link between 19th-century romanticism and 20th-century pragmatism, [and] an interpretation of Frederick Law Olmsted's vision in the vocabulary of a new era." (John Charles Olmsted, American Landscape Architecture Designers and Places. Pg. 50)

It was in this environment that Henry Vincent Hubbard served his professional apprenticeship. Trained at Harvard's Lawrence Scientific School in landscape architecture Hubbard was in the Olmsted Brothers office from 1901-1906. He returned to the firm in 1920 as a partner. Hubbard was known primarily for his contribution to the profession as a professor of Landscape Architecture at Harvard and regional planning.

The Olmsted design for the Eastern Promenade is a good example of John C. Olmsted's ability to incorporate structured recreational activities into a pastoral setting while preserving the scenic qualities of the site. At the turn of the century Munjoy Hill was a neighborhood characterized by working class and middle class residences. It was also a neighborhood where many immigrants first settled. The Olmsted design responded to the recreational needs of the neighborhood children within the traditional "Olmstedian", naturalistic setting, by providing a ball field, a children's play field, and a children's lawn.

The Eastern Promenade remains significant today in providing visitors and residents of Portland with a publicly owned and maintained site from which to take in the magnificent view of the harbor and the islands. It also provides the opportunity for structured recreational activities. Thus, it retains the purpose and intent for which it was initially developed and preserved. The parks commission report in 1902 expressed its sentiment for preserving the "invaluable blessings which nature presents" by quoting Charles Jacobs of Springfield, Massachusetts, who said that, "God Made the Country; Man Made the Town." Public accessibility to natural vistas such as those from the Eastern Promenade enabled, in the Commission's belief, the urban dweller to benefit from the "abundant and most perfect gifts" of creation.



EASTERN PROMENADE
 Portland, Maine