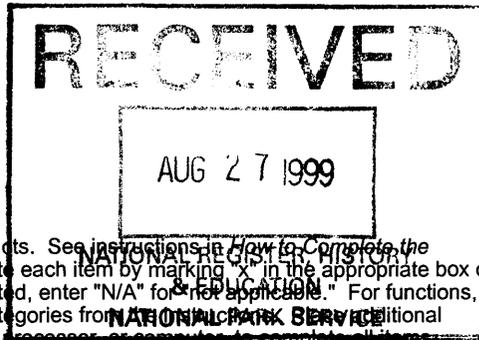


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

1184



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the *National Register of Historic Places*. For additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name High Street Historic District (Boundary Increase)

other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Southeast Corner of Main Street and Atlantic Avenue N/A not for publication

city or town Camden N/A vicinity

state Maine code ME county Knox code 013 zip code 04843

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Eileen S. Frederick 8/23/99
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Maine Historic Preservation Commission
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): _____

Edson H. Beall 9/24/99
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)
 private
 public-local
 public-State
 public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)
 building(s)
 district
 site
 structure
 object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)
Contributing Noncontributing
_____ buildings
_____ sites
_____ structures
_____ objects
_____ Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

_____ N/A _____

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

_____ 63 _____

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

_____ Recreation & Culture/Outdoor Recreation _____

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

_____ Recreation & Culture/Outdoor Recreation _____

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

_____ N/A _____

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation _____ N/A _____
walls _____

roof _____
other _____

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

HIGH STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT (BOUNDARY INCREASE)

KNOX, MAINE

Section number 7 Page 2

A boundary map showing the area of increase in relation to the original district boundary is appended to this nomination. Harbor Park is located within the existing rectangle whose UTM coordinates locate the High Street Historic District.

[The following text pertaining to the Olmsted firm and their work on Harbor Park is adapted from the narrative prepared by Charles E. Beveridge, Series Editor, the Frederick Law Olmsted Papers Research Professor, American University, Washington, D.C., that was included in the report titled "Camden Library Grounds, Camden Amphitheater & Harbor Park: Historic Landscape Preservation Treatment Plan" (1997).]

Path System

The path system was constructed as originally designed. The unusual aspect of these paths is that they were considerably narrower than one would expect in even a small Olmsted park. Most Olmsted firm paths in public spaces are wide enough to handle large numbers of users, and permit couples to pass in opposite directions without inconvenience or fear of collision. The average width of the paths in Central Park in New York, for instance, was thirteen feet and only a few of the narrowest paths in the constricted areas of the rocky site of the Ramble were as narrow as four feet. In Prospect Park in Brooklyn, the narrowest paths were nine feet wide. The gravel walks of Harbor Park as shown on the Preliminary Plan vary from five to seven feet wide, while on the Planting Plan they appear to be about 5 feet in width. These gravel paths may have been constructed at a five to six foot width, but today measure from about 36 to 50 inches with the narrower dimension on the steps that align with paths. This means that the entrances and paths of the park today do not provide the openness and inviting quality, the ease of movement, that is characteristic of the Olmsted tradition of park design.

Plantings

Photographs show that most of the plantings shown in the planting plan of April 7, 1931, were installed and had reached good size by 1935. The hedge of Japanese barberry along Main Street was planted, as was the dense mass of lilacs, snowberry, roses and hydrangeas on the steep bank between the Main Street entrance and the broad top of the hill beyond. Two other photographs from the 1930s show the dense plantations of shrubs that extended further into the park along the path that passes in front of the lilac bank. The dense planting of American arborvitae proposed in the planting plan to block out the view of the fish market was also in place by the fall of 1931. The photographic record shows that a few small trees and shrubs already planted on the steep bank facing the Megunticook River falls were allowed to remain, and were supplemented by extensive new shrub plantings. Other shrub masses were planted above and below the path that runs across the hill from the amphitheater, at the point where that path meets the path that descends steeply to the harbor edge. Other photographs show that the dense planting of shrubs planned for both sides of the wide granite steps in the park in front of the amphitheater was also well established by c.1935, as was a buffer of planting at the east boundary of the park that obscured all structures at that edge of the park except for the facade of the Curtis garage. Some photographs show the simple but solid wooden

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Continuation SheetHIGH STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT (BOUNDARY INCREASE)KNOX, MAINESection number 7 Page 3

benches that were designed for the park and installed, and show the planting of shrubs on the planting plan as roses, dwarf bush honeysuckle, low bush blueberry, common juniper and sheep's laurel behind the benches that were set along the top of the bank next to Atlantic Avenue. Most of this bank, as far as the first path entering opposite the amphitheater, was densely planted with these shrubs. These plantings served to clothe the steepest banks in vegetation that prevented erosion and avoided the barren tameness of lawn that one now sees on the bank along Atlantic Avenue. In other places the shrubs helped to block the view of unsightly structures beyond the park, including the backs of buildings on Main Street and Sea Street. Some of the dense shrubs on the steep bank near the falls of the river also seem to have been placed so as to block out Harville's boat house on the shore of the park. Most of the plantings were apparently intended to maximize the beauty of views over, from and toward the park. The mass of dwarf bush honeysuckle just behind the three benches where the path down to Harville's boat house divided from the path to the amphitheater served to hide two of the three benches from the view of those sitting on the benches near Atlantic Avenue -- although one bench was planned to be fully visible. That shrubbery and topography would have hidden all three benches from the view of visitors on the path that enters the park opposite the west side of the amphitheater. As for the plants used in the design, Olmsted may well have been influenced by the desire of the library committee and Mrs. Bok to use plant materials native to the region. This would have helped to unify the effect of the park and the amphitheater. Planting plan no 53 -- and its accompanying plant list -- show that Olmsted made extensive use of native materials in the park. At the same time, he also used a large number of plants not native to the area, but that were known to thrive in similar climates. In this he continued his father's tradition of basing a landscape plan on native plants and then enriching the palette, and the scenery, by the addition of non-native plants. The purpose was not to make an "exotic" or ornamental landscape: rather, it was to give greater subtle variety to the vegetation, and so to the broader landscape effect as well.

Certain additional aspects of Harbor Park plan deserve further consideration. For one, the original report of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., in 1929 indicates that he wished to cut down the hill in the park to the level of Atlantic Avenue, with the intent that the hill would "slope pleasantly toward the harbor" from that elevation. Such an **approach** would have heightened the contrast between Steele's elegant Amphitheater and Harbor Park; it would also have given the Olmsted firm little to do. Not surprisingly, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., instead chose to create a circulation system and planting scheme that made full use of his skills as a designer. He did, however, adjust to the concept of keeping the knoll in the park. He used it as a base to grade out and plant out views of the lower path from above, the backs of buildings above the public landing, and Main Street. The landform and plantings also worked together to enclose and frame harbor views from various vantage points. And he used dense plantings along the bank facing Atlantic Avenue to clearly indicated a separation between the avenue and the park.

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HIGH STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT (BOUNDARY INCREASE)

KNOX, MAINE

Section number 7 Page 4

Based on the historical record, the design of the park was carried out substantially as intended by the Olmsted firm. In addition, no major intrusion or alteration has taken place since construction of the park in the 1930s, with the possible exception of the regrading of the slope along Atlantic Avenue and the flattening of the hilltop. (The park's seawall was also reorganized in a minor way in 1951 under a plan by the Olmsted Brothers firm). Many areas of plantings have disappeared, so that the space is less varied and the views in and out of the park are less carefully structured than was originally the case. The paths have been paved, replacing and narrowing the original gravel surface, and the original benches have been replaced by benches of a quite different design and character. Two intruding structures - the Curtis garage and Harville's boat house - have been removed, while two stone memorials and a sculpture have been added within the park. The buffer planting on the opposite edge of the park from Main Street has been almost completely lost and the cars parked on park property next to the marine brokerage are fully visible from inside the park. The basic character and function of the park as designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and his firm is, however, remarkably intact and lost elements have the potential for recapture.

Note: In 1951-52, the Olmsted Brothers were hired by Mrs. Bok to design improvements to the park that included removal of an old pier and boat house, relocation of a portion of the seawall, and reworking of portions of the lawn. In 1968, the town's Civil War memorial was relocated to the west side of the park from a nearby traffic island where it had been struck several times by automobiles.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Olmsted Brothers, Landscape Architects

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or a grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

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

Name of repository:

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

HIGH STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT (BOUNDARY INCREASE)

KNOX, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 2

Constructed between 1930 and 1935, Harbor Park in Camden is a small downtown greenspace that was a gift of summer resident Mary Louise Bok, the benefactor of the adjacent Bok Amphitheatre and the Camden Village Green. The park was designed by the Olmsted Brothers landscape architecture firm. It is eligible for inclusion in the High Street Historic District (NR 1/5/89) as a contributing resource.

Harbor Park is located to the south and on the opposite side of Atlantic Avenue from the Camden Public Library (#1 in the original inventory list) and the Bok Amphitheater (#2 in the inventory list). The recent analysis of the park's design history and intent clearly establishes its relationship to the adjacent historic properties, as well as its integrity. There is no change in the existing district's area or period of significance resulting from this boundary increase, nor the applicable National Register criteria.

[The following text pertaining to the Olmsted firm and their work on Harbor Park is adapted from the narrative prepared by Charles E. Beveridge, Series Editor, the Frederick Law Olmsted Papers Research Professor, American University, Washington, D.C., that was included in the report titled "Camden Library Grounds, Camden Amphitheater & Harbor Park: Historic Landscape Preservation Treatment Plan" (1997).]

At the time that Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., began to design Harbor Park, he had played a significant role in all aspects of the development of landscape architecture during his professional practice. He was fifty-eight years old and for thirty years had been a senior partner in the firm of Olmsted Brothers, the largest landscape architecture firm in the country and with the widest range of commissions. As a member of the MacMillan Commission he had developed the plan for the Mall in Washington, D.C., and had planned the park system of the District of Columbia.

The public ground on the harbor in Camden that the Olmsted firm designed in the 1930s was not a "park" by any definition that Olmsted or his successors recognized. Olmsted's parks were large -- he preferred over three hundred acres to work with and would not have felt comfortable attempting to create a park-like landscape on a site of less than one hundred. Then, too, Olmsted created a separate world in his parks, a world that was to counterbalance the artificiality, hard-surface, fast pace and noise of urban life. This world was separated from the outside by a dense buffer of plantings that blocked out the sights and sounds of the city.

In contrast, the harbor-side park of Camden is tiny, less than two acres. Rather than being visually separate from the rest of the village, its role has been as a shared visual green space, open to views from within and without. Historically its function has been two-fold: it has provided a series of attractive views of the harbor while at the same time providing a series of views toward and over it from other areas around the harbor, including sections of the library grounds that look directly into it. The number of such visual services for surrounding areas that the park has provided is truly remarkable for so small a space.

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HIGH STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT (BOUNDARY INCREASE)

KNOX, MAINE

Section number 8 Page 3

First, it provides an almost perfectly semicircular green foreground for the view from the Palladian window in the library, the key vista from that building. Second, it provides a foreground for views from the edge of the library grounds above Atlantic Avenue. Third, the principal function of the lower section of the park is to frame a vista toward the harbor from the amphitheater. Fourth, the park is a place from which to view the harbor. The plantings at the Main Street end of the park have served to block views of the unsightly backs of stores along that street. Originally, other shrub groups were planted so as to block views of the backs of houses on Sea Street. Today the plantings on the steep hillside facing the cascade of the Megunticook River as it runs into the harbor also block out the view of the barren public landing and the reflections of the chrome and windshields of the vehicles parked there. Fifth, the park is a spacious, green foreground for the view of Mount Battie and Mount Megunticook from the harbor, greatly enhancing that uniquely beautiful harbor view. In his report of visit of October 6, 1928, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., identified five "important prospects" over the Harbor and beyond from the park and its vicinity, as well as the view toward the park from the harbor. He evidently designed the park in a way that would protect and enhance these views.

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HIGH STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT (BOUNDARY INCREASE)

KNOX, MAINE

Section number 9 Page 2

Karson, Robin, and Beveridge, Charles E. "Camden Library Grounds, Camden Amphitheater & Harbor Park: Historic Landscape Preservation Treatment Plan." Prepared by LANDSCAPES, Charlotte, Vermont and Westport, Connecticut, for the Camden Public Library, 1997.

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HIGH STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT (BOUNDARY INCREASE)

KNOX, MAINE

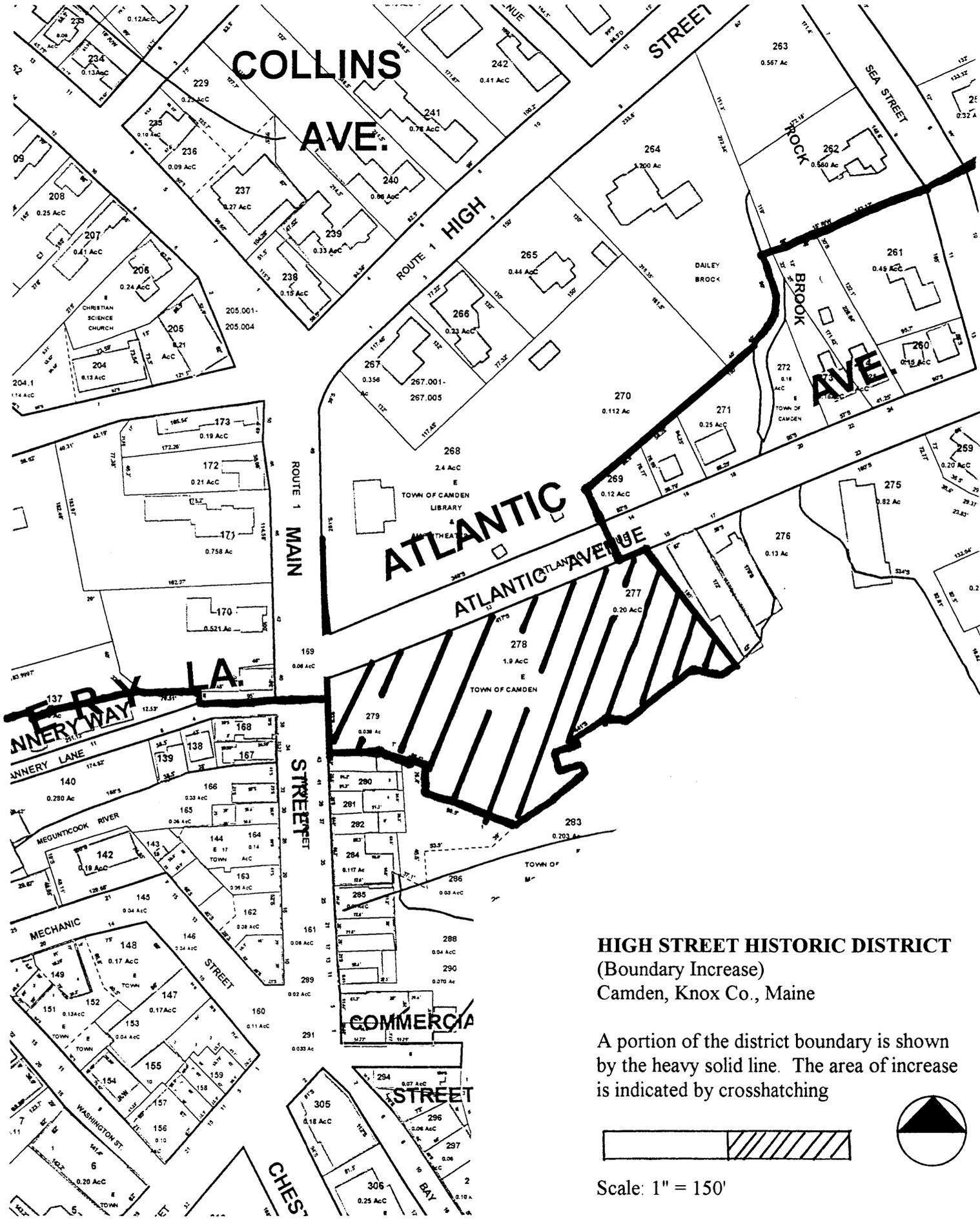
Section number 10 Page 2

Verbal Boundary Description:

See map.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary increase embraces the entire area that is historically associated with Harbor Park.



**COLLINS
AVE.**

ROUTE 1 HIGH

**ATLANTIC
AVENUE**

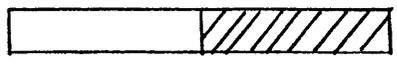
ERRY WAY

STREET

**COMMERCIAL
STREET**

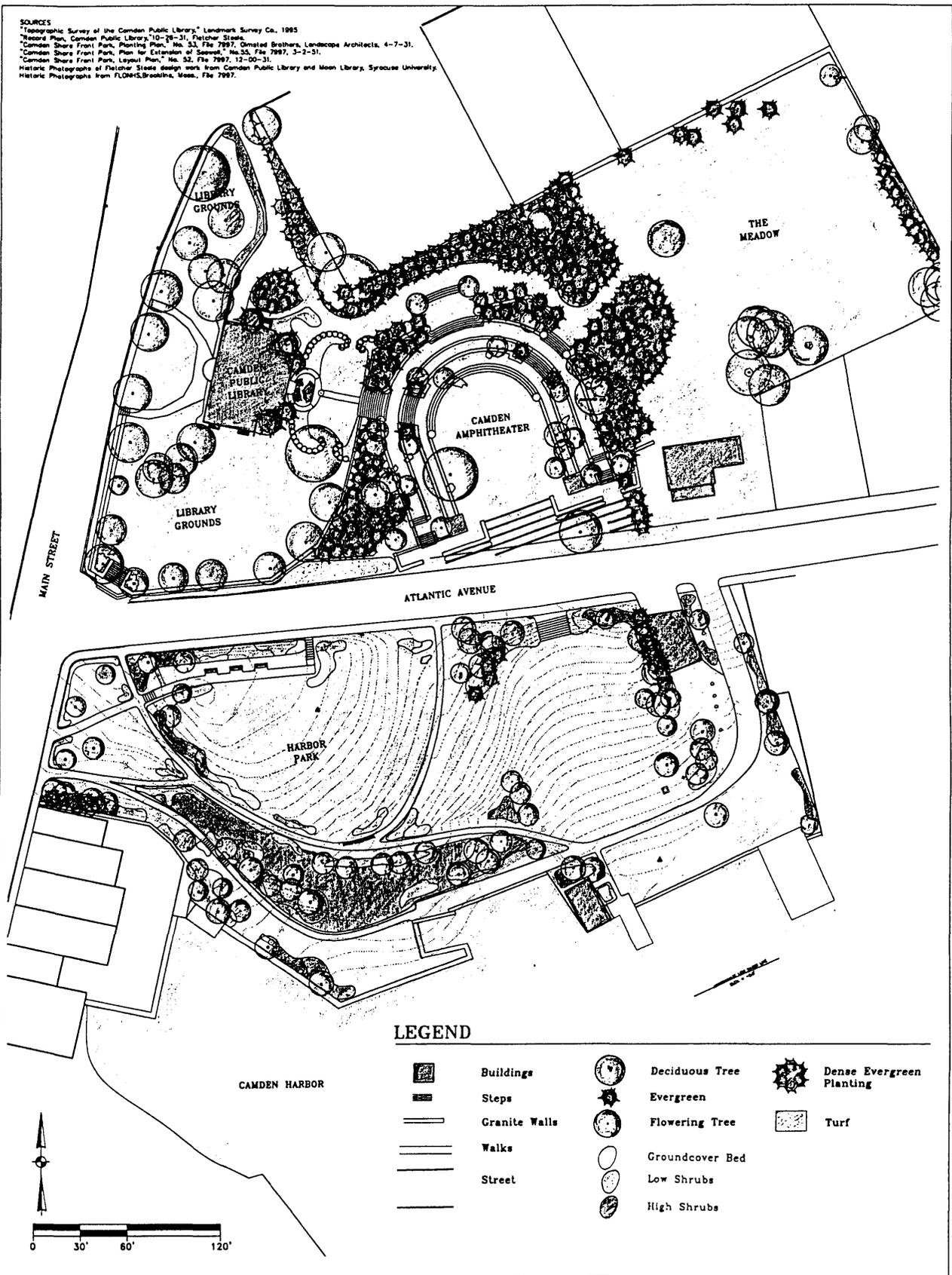
**HIGH STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT
(Boundary Increase)
Camden, Knox Co., Maine**

A portion of the district boundary is shown by the heavy solid line. The area of increase is indicated by crosshatching



Scale: 1" = 150'

SOURCES
 "Topographic Survey of the Camden Public Library," Landmark Survey Co., 1985
 "Record Plan, Camden Public Library," 12-24-31, Fletcher Steele
 "Camden Shore Front Park, Planting Plan," No. 33, File 7997, Omssted Brothers, Landscape Architects, 4-7-31.
 "Camden Shore Front Park, Plan for Extension of Seawall," No. 35, File 7997, 3-2-31.
 "Camden Shore Front Park, Layout Plan," No. 32, File 7997, 12-00-31.
 Historic Photographs of Fletcher Steele design work from Camden Public Library and Moon Library, Syracuse University.
 Historic Photographs from FLOHNS, Brookline, Mass., File 7997.



**CAMDEN PUBLIC LIBRARY GROUNDS
 CAMDEN AMPHITHEATER
 HARBOR PARK**
 Camden, Maine

As-Built Conditions, circa 1935

Figure III.1

1935

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
 L.A. PLANNING • HP

101 Pond Road, York, ME 04390
 (603) 757-8819
 418 Lake Road, York, ME 04390
 (603) 757-8820

Camden, Maine
 Camden Public Library
 Camden Amphitheater
 Harbor Park