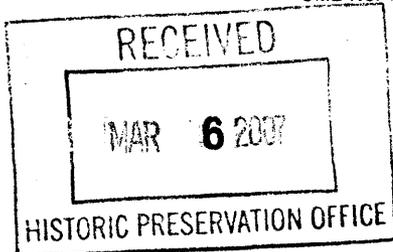
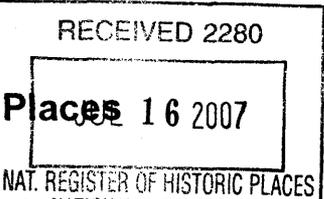


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



878

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or 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 listed in the instructions. Place 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 Cedar Brook Park

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number See continuation sheet

not for publication
 N/A

city or town City of Plainfield & Borough of South Plainfield

Vicinity N/A

state New Jersey

code NJ

county Union &

code 039

zip code 07060

Middlesex

023

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I 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.

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

Amy Cradic, Assistant Commissioner Natural & Historic Resources/DSHPO

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:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

Edson H. Beall

8-28-07

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	
0	2	Buildings
1	0	Sites
0	3	Structures
0	0	Objects
1	5	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

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE / PARK

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE / PARK

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

walls N/A

roof N/A

other N/A

Narrative Description

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

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.)

- X 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.
X 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.

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 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 #

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1921- 1939

Significant Dates

1921
1924
1931-1939

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

John Charles Olmsted
Fredrick Law Olmsted Jr.
Percival Gallagher (Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects)

Primary location of additional data

- State Historic Preservation Office
Other State agency
Federal agency
X Local government
University
X Other

Name of repository:

Union County Dept. Parks and Recreation, Elizabeth, NJ 07207

10. Geographical DataAcreage of property 78**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 Zone Easting Northing

2

3 Zone Easting Northing

4

 See continuation sheet**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared Byname/title April M. Stefel, Certified Landscape ArchitectOrganization _____ date June 2006street & number 935 Madison Avenue telephone (908) 754-8918city or town Plainfield state New Jersey zip code 07060**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets**Maps**A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.**Photographs**Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Union County Department of Parks and Recreationstreet & number Elizabethtown Plaza, Administration Building telephone (908) 527-4912city or town Elizabeth state New Jersey zip code 07207**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.470 *et seq.*)**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Union/Middlesex Counties, New Jersey

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Location

The park area includes the Cedar Brook and adjacent land along Stelle Avenue on the north to a point about 150 feet from the intersection of Arlington Avenue and to the south, parkland owned by the Borough of South Plainfield. On the east, the park extends to and terminates at the rear yards of residential development along Arlington and Park Avenues and fronts residential properties along Rose Street and Laramie Road. On the west, the park extends to and terminates at the rear yards of residential properties along Kenyon Avenue and Parkside Road.

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Description

Cedar Brook Park is the third Olmsted Brothers designed landscape out of the 26 parks within the Union County Park System. This site was initially identified based on the overall demographics of Union County in the early 1920s. Plainfield, like the City of Elizabeth required the immediate identification and construction of parkland to serve the needs of the existing and future population in these growing municipalities. The site of the park was selected based on demographics, physical characteristics (brook, diverse topography and existing woodlands) and land costs.

Cedar Brook Park comprises approximately 78 acres of land and is bisected by the Cedar Brook. The park is located in the western portion of the Union County Park System and is maintained and operated by the Union County Department of Parks and Recreation, successor agency to the Union County Park Commission. Most of the park is situated in the City of Plainfield in Union County; a small portion is situated in the Borough of South Plainfield in Middlesex County.

The park includes the Cedar Brook, a man-made lake, the "Ford" (original brook crossing), the formal Shakespeare Garden and adjacent land along Stelle Avenue on the north; parkland owned by the Borough of South Plainfield on the south; abuts the rear yards of residential development along Arlington and Park Avenues and fronting residential properties along Rose Street and Laramie Road on the east; and abuts the rear yards of residential properties along Kenyon Avenue and Parkside Road on the west (Map 1). In addition, the park includes three small vehicular bridges that cross the Cedar Brook at Randolph Road, and Stelle and Pemberton Avenues and two contemporary rest room facilities constructed in the 1980's (noncontributing). The original bridges at Randolph Road and Pemberton Avenues were replaced by Union County in the 1980's and 1946 respectively (Photo A & B). It has not been ascertained if the Stelle Avenue Bridge is original or if it too has been replaced by Union County (Photo C). The northern, eastern, and western boundaries of Cedar Brook Park are located in the City of Plainfield, Union County, and the southern boundary in the Borough of South Plainfield, Middlesex County, New Jersey.

In 1924, the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects of Brookline, Massachusetts, began the design of approximately 70 acres of Cedar Brook Park for the newly formed Union County Park Commission and included the area between Randolph Road and Pemberton Avenue (Map 2) (Plate 1). Approximately 8 acres to the north known as the Kenyon Gardens Section between Stelle Avenue and Randolph Road was donated by the City of Plainfield to the Union County Park Commission on November 20, 1925 (City of Plainfield 2004:1 and Union County Park Commission 1928:10) (Map 3). By 1930, the Union County Park Commission in conjunction with the Olmsted Brothers firm had acquired and designed nearly the entire Cedar Brook Park.

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The resources identified in the study area are described in more detail below. Cedar Brook Park is discussed in two sections: the section between Randolph Road and Pemberton Avenue (see Map 2), and the Kenyon Gardens Section (see Map 3). Cedar Brook Park is analyzed as two areas for the purpose of understanding the successive enlargements of the park; however, one area is not more significant than the other. Both areas have equal significance in terms of their overall design and contribution to the Union County Park System.

a. Cedar Brook Park (Randolph Road to Pemberton Avenue)

1) Description and Background

The topography within the Cedar Brook Park between Randolph Road and Pemberton Avenue is characterized as a valley, moderate to steeply sloping from the rear residential property lines along Kenyon Avenue and Parkside Road toward the Cedar Brook and F. S. Mathewson Drive (Park Drive) (Photo 1). From the Cedar Brook east, the land is characterized as a relatively flat floodplain rising ever so slightly to the eastern boundaries of the park at Rose Street and Arlington Avenue (Photo 2). Two vehicular bridges (Randolph Road and Pemberton Avenue) and two footbridges link the western (passive) and eastern (active) recreation sections of this portion of Cedar Brook Park. There are two major and two minor vehicular entrances into the park. The major vehicular entrances from Park and Pemberton Avenues are wide, accommodating two lanes of traffic. At the eastern end of Pemberton Avenue the roadway intersects Park Avenue, a major north/south thoroughfare through the City of Plainfield.

The Pemberton Avenue entrance was designed as part of a planting plan for Cedar Brook Park. In 1925, the Pemberton Avenue entrance planting was conceived as part of the larger design of the lake area (Union County Park Commission 1925). In this locale, a Pin Oak (*Quercus palustris*) street tree planting was proposed on the north side only. The intent of this design was to provide unobstructed views of the lake when approaching the park from the west. Remnants of this planting exist and have been extended west as part of the City of Plainfield's street tree planting program. Most of the street tree loss in this locale resulted from the construction of Parkside Road and the associated residential subdivision that abuts Cedar Brook Park

The second major vehicular entrance exists where Pemberton Avenue intersects Park Avenue (Photo 3). The Olmsted Brothers firm designed the Park Avenue entrance in 1927 (Union County Park Commission 1927). The Park Avenue entrance remains essentially the same today as it did when first created. The entrance is flanked on both sides by a double row of Pin Oaks (*Quercus palustris*) with a shrub underplanting of Cornelian-cherry Dogwood (*Cornus mas*). This mature oak and dogwood planting defines the entrance both horizontally and vertically, provides seasonal interest, and adds drama though a tunnel-like enclosed narrowness before opening into the expansive main body of the park.

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It should be noted, that the Olmsted Brothers firm in conjunction with the Union County Park Commission envisioned not only a system of reservations and large regional parks within the county, but also a roadway network linking the park system together. This idea would be achieved through a system of designated parkways and boulevards that not only linked the large county-owned parks within the municipalities of Union County but to the adjacent county park systems of Essex, Middlesex, and Somerset Counties. On the 1922 Preliminary Plan for Cedar Brook Park, Percival Gallagher, Landscape Architect for the Olmsted Brothers firm, outlined such a link through the City of Plainfield (Union County Park Commission 1922). Cedar Brook Park would be linked to Green Brook Park to the west via Pemberton Avenue, Grant Avenue, and terminating at West End Avenue, the main entrance to Green Brook Park. In addition, a parkway was proposed linking Cedar Brook Park to the Rahway River Park. This proposed parkway would utilize South End Avenue (now South End Parkway), intersect with Woodland Avenue, and extend eastward to the City of Elizabeth. Unfortunately, the only part of this eastward connection that came to fruition was the widening and renaming of South End Avenue to South End Parkway.

The two minor vehicular entrances to Cedar Brook Park are located at Rose Street and Arlington Avenue/Laramie Road (Photo 4). Both of these entrances were designed as part of a planting plan for Cedar Brook Park (Union County Park Commission 1924 and 1925). These entrances were neighborhood links utilized as secondary pleasure drives within a limited area around Cedar Brook Park. The planting design consisted of street trees planted at regular intervals on the roadways abutting Cedar Brook Park. The intent of the street tree plantings is to define the outer boundaries of Cedar Brook without introducing its formality into the confines of the natural and scenic appearance of the park. At present, there are only sporadic locations of these street trees remaining along Rose Street, Arlington Avenue, and Laramie Road.

The only roadway fully contained within the confines of Cedar Brook Park is F. S. Mathewson Drive, formally known as Park Drive (Photo 5) (Plate 2). Unlike the entrance roads, F.S. Mathewson Drive is relatively narrow and is the one-way connection between Pemberton Avenue and Randolph Road through the park. In 1960, the Union County Park Commission honored F. S. Mathewson for his 33 years of service as General Superintendent by renaming Park Drive and planting 33 Scarlet Oaks (*Quercus coccinia*) adjacent to the drive (Union County Park Commission 1963) (Figure 1).

The overall length of F. S. Mathewson Drive within Cedar Brook is quite short. The Olmsted Brothers visually increased the perceived length by its curvilinear design (Photo 6). This technique allows for more views and vistas of Cedar Brook Park with a relatively short length of roadway. At approximately midpoint between Pemberton Avenue and Randolph Road, F. S. Mathewson Drive crosses through the Cedar Brook. The crossing is not done on structure but through the brook at the "Ford" (Photo 7) (Plate 3). This design feature enables the

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roadway users to experience the sounds and sights of the Cedar Brook up close without leaving the comforts of their vehicles.

The path system within Cedar Brook Park is linked to the pedestrian and vehicular entrances, the topography, the brook, and the lake. The Olmsted Brothers firm took full advantage of the change in topography when designing the path system. The nature of the topography physically and visually separates the passive and active recreational areas within the park. The upper path system is limited and parallels the rear yards of residential properties along Kenyon Avenue (Photo 8). At the southernmost point of this upper path is a tree-lined pedestrian and bridle path entrance (Photo 9). This entrance joins the upper path then transcends down the slope where for the first time, the park user sees the vast openness of the meadow and brook below. This location is somewhat rugged in feel.

Although the upper path system is not extensive, the manipulation of the location, utilization of plant material, and the changes in grade provide many different visual experiences in a limited area. For the most part, the lower path system parallels F. S. Mathewson Drive and the Cedar Brook, and encircles the lake area (Photo 10). From these lower paths, the park user experiences the natural, informal scenic beauty of the park on an intimate scale. These paths also link the Olmsted Brothers designed Shakespeare Garden as well as the numerous "plantations" (mass plantings) designed into the park (Map 4) (Photo 11). Cedar Brook Park is known as the garden park in the Union County Park System. This term was given to the park resulting from the Shakespeare Garden (1927), and the vast and famous mass plantings of *iris* (1931), daffodil (*narcissus*) (1936), dogwood (*cornus*) (1931), peony (*paeonia*) (1939), daylily (*hemerocallis*), and *chrysanthemum* (1950) once abundant in the park (Union County Park Commission 1963) (Plate 4). The Shakespeare Garden is a well defined formal designed garden area featuring evergreen topiary (clipped geometric shapes or animal forms), a parterre garden (garden with flower beds and a path in a formal pattern) and masses of flowering perennial plants named in Shakespearean plays hence the name. Today, the Union County Department of Parks and Recreation is renewing the dogwood arboretum with mass plantings of specific *cornus* varieties identified in the original dogwood plantings.

The use of water, either occurring naturally or manipulated in a natural fashion, is typical of the design theories prevalent at this time. The two water features contained within Cedar Brook Park are the brook itself and the designed lake. In the northern section of the park near Stelle Avenue, the Olmsted Brothers altered the location of the brook to the north side of Stelle Avenue. This enabled the land on the south side of the roadway to be utilized as playing fields (Photo 12). A new channel was dug for the Cedar Brook in a graceful alignment (Union County Park Commission 1925b:28). The new channel was lined with Belgian block to maintain proper depth and reduce the erosion of the banks. The channel also helped drain the swampy ash dump. It is interesting to note that the only location of the Cedar Brook within the City of Plainfield that is above ground

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and accessible to the public is within the confines of Cedar Brook Park. The lake at the southern end of the park is a water feature that was utilized for both active and passive recreation (Photo 13) (see Plate 3 and 5). It was the location of the children's wading pool and the site of the fishing and model boat sailing area.

Prior to the Olmsted Brothers design for Cedar Brook Park, the site consisted of heavily wooded areas on the steep slopes with meadow grasses and trees tolerating wet soil conditions in the areas adjacent and in proximity to the brook. During construction of the park, the brook was relocated in certain locations and the wet meadows drained. This manipulation of the landscape allowed for most of the shade trees in the meadow areas to remain intact and reduced the need for intensive replanting. Secondary or understory planting as well as shrubbery beds were essentially all that remained to be planted.

The Olmsted Brothers Planting Plans for the Cedar Brook Park have remained essentially intact (Union County Park Commission 1924, 1924a, 1925, 1925a 1927, 1931, and 1936) (Union County Department of Parks and Recreation 1960). As mentioned previously, many of the large shade trees in the park were extant prior to the Olmsted Brothers design (Union County Park Commission 1925b:28) (Photo 14). In fact, they are differentiated from proposed plantings on all of the preliminary and revised plans for Cedar Brook Park. The picturesque design by the Olmsted brothers incorporated most of these native tree species into the overall design of the park (see Map 2). With many of the large shade trees in place, the transformation of the areas was swift. The supplemental ornamental understory plantings have survived and flourished. The formal Shakespeare Garden has also survived due to the stewardship of the Plainfield Garden Club. Only remnants of the massed shrubbery plantings defining the boundaries of the park adjacent to local residential streets have survived. The shrub beds as well as some of the naturalized plantations (mass plantings of iris, daffodil and dogwood) associated with them are part of an ongoing restoration planting plan of the Union County Department of Parks and Recreation (Ryan 2005). Many of the planned plantation plantings conceived by the Olmsted Brothers came to fruition during the Great Depression. Ralph C. Porter, Landscape Architect, worked for the Union County Park Commission under the Civilian Work Administration (CWA). He is credited with the design of the daffodil plantation along Rose Street and the Dogwood Arboretum along Park Drive near the Park Avenue entrance to Cedar Brook Park (Union County Park Commission 1931) (see Plate 1).

Lighting was an integral part of the of the Olmsted Brothers original design for this section of the Cedar Brook Park. In 1926, the firm of Runyon and Cary, Consulting Engineers, Newark, New Jersey, provided a lighting plan as per the Olmsted Brothers direction to the Union County Park Commission (Union County Park Commission 1926). This plan resulted in 23 standards located along Park Drive, the upper path between Randolph Road and Kenyon Avenue, encircling the lake, and along the footpath between Laramie Road to Rose Street. The model of lighting standard selected was identical to that of Central Park. Although the lighting still

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exists at many these locations, the Central Park standards have been removed and replaced by a more contemporary roadway lighting standard.

The active recreational facilities within Cedar Brook Park at its inception included four tennis courts, a baseball field, field hockey (Kenyon Gardens area), the children's wading pool/skating area, skating shelter (lake area), and a cricket pitch (Union County Park Commission 1928) (Photo 15 and 16). More passive activities such as shuffleboard, picnic areas, and chess tables were added between 1946-1981 (Union County Park Commission 1946 and Union County Department of Parks and Recreation 1981). In 1981, a new children's play area was added in the southeastern-most section of the park (Union County Department of Parks and Recreation 1981) (Photo 17). Additional tennis courts and a parking facility were located adjacent to the existing courts in the southern section of the park. Three basketball courts were added in the parks midsection on the eastern side of the Cedar Brook. Two new rest room facilities (non contributing structures) were also constructed, one near the new children's play area and the tennis courts, and the second near the Shakespeare Garden on the site of old the field house and former Dilbra residence (Union County Department of Parks and Recreation 1981).

b. Cedar Brook Park (Stelle Avenue to Randolph Road)

1) Description and Background

The section of Cedar Brook Park between Stelle Avenue and Randolph Road is known as the Kenyon Gardens. This area encompasses approximately eight (8) acres of relatively flat land with the channel of the brook located in proximity to the western boundary of the park. On November 25, 1925, the City of Plainfield gifted this land to the Union County Park Commission to be utilized as part of the enlargement of Cedar Brook Park. Preliminary grading plans for this location began by the Olmsted Brothers in 1926 (Union County Park Commission 1926a). By 1930, the final design consisted of a field hockey athletic field on the eastern side of the Cedar Brook and a path system paralleling the brook on the western side with pedestrian access points at Stelle Avenue and Randolph Road (Union County Park Commission 1930:15). No vehicular drive was built through this area. Because of the relatively flat topography this location was an ideal site for a large athletic field devoid of vegetation. Today, the area continues to be utilized for active recreation in the form of soccer fields (Photo 18). The path within this area has since been overgrown with grass.

c. Integrity (includes the entire park between Stelle and Pemberton Avenues)

Cedar Brook Park between Stelle and Pemberton Avenues possesses integrity of location. Integrity of materials and workmanship is also present, exemplified by the presence of the mature shade trees and other plantings, the preserved wooded slopes, the Shakespeare Garden, the pedestrian paths, the "Ford", the footbridges, Park Drive/F.W. Mathewson Drive, the skating shelter, the picnic areas, and the athletic fields in the northern section

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of the park. Integrity of design has also been maintained. The primary exceptions are the disappearance of the bridle path and portions of the lower path system near Laramie Road, Arlington Avenue and Rose Street, the path between Stelle Avenue and Randolph Road, the loss of the shrubbery beds, and the perennial plantations/floral displays. In addition, both of the footbridges and two of the three vehicular bridges have been replaced. Although the footbridges have been replaced, the material and location are identical. In 1948, the 1924 Olmsted Brothers designed concrete arch bridge at Pemberton Avenue was replaced (Union County Park Commission 1924b). The bridge at Randolph Road was replaced in the mid 1980's and the replacement date for the Stelle Avenue Bridge could not be determined. The park also retains integrity of setting. No development has encroached into the park. Integrity of feeling and association is also present, since the major infrastructure of the design of the green spaces, structures (vehicular/foot bridges), paths, the Shakespeare Garden, the "Ford", the entrances, and shade tree plantings remain to convey the naturalistic environment the park was intended to convey.

The boundaries of Cedar Brook Park today mirror the boundaries that were finally established by 1926. The design intent of the Olmsted Brothers, and ultimately of the Union County Park Commission, was to provide open space and relief from the heat, congestion, and burden of urban life through the design of pastoral landscapes linked with other parks inside and outside of Union County through a series of parkways. This intent was successfully executed in the design of Cedar Brook Park.

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Statement of Significance

Cedar Brook Park is a well-preserved Olmsted Brothers-designed scenic and recreational park that is a key element of the Union County Park System. Third out of the 26 parks within that system, Cedar Brook Park was intended to be one of the initial county owned and operated large municipal parks created to provide open space and recreational facilities for one of the most populated municipalities in Union County. Cedar Brook Park, is also referred to, as the "Garden Park" of the Union County Park System because of the once numerous herbaceous perennial (iris, daffodil, lily and peony) plantation plantings, dogwood plantings and the formal Shakespeare Garden. Though most of the herbaceous perennial plantations are no longer in existence, the numerous dogwood plantings and formal Shakespeare Garden have survived and flourished in their original locations.

The Union County Parks Commission was established in 1921 and hired the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects, to design a park system plan for the county. In 1924, a Preliminary Plan for Cedar Brook Park (Randolph Road to Pemberton Avenue) containing approximately 70 acres was developed by the Olmsted Brothers. In 1926, the Olmsted Brothers began the design for the eight (8) acre Kenyon Gardens section. By 1930, all of the land and most of the garden designs for Cedar Brook Park had been completed according to the Olmsted Brothers design. The park meets National Register Criterion A for its association with the emergence of the Union County Park System, and Criterion C for the quality of its landscape design.

Historic Overview for the Union County Park System

Development of parks on a county-wide basis was rooted in the late nineteenth-century urban parks movement in which Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. (1822-1903), played a vital role (Newton 1971). The idea of large expanses of open space set aside for the benefit of urban centers was not a new concept. In the mid-1850s, Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., traveled extensively through Britain and saw public parkland specifically designed to serve the working classes for respite and relief from the overpopulated and polluted urban centers. Scenes of the British countryside and/or country estates with their gracious pastoral settings, as opposed to the formal designs of private estates such as Versailles, were in vogue. Through his experiences abroad, Olmsted became a champion of social reform. This revolutionary concept won Olmsted numerous urban park commissions, including Central and Prospect Parks in New York; the Fens, Back Bay, and Franklin Park ("emerald necklace") in Boston, and the position of Chief Landscape Architect of the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Before the end of the nineteenth century, Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. had established himself as the foremost landscape architect in the United States.

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The ideas and concepts for the establishment and development of open space/parkland articulated by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. were carried on by his firm. His stepson/nephew, John Charles Olmsted (1852-1920), joined him in practice in 1875, and in 1884 was made a full partner in the firm, now called F.L. and J.C. Olmsted of Brookline, Massachusetts. Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., retired from the firm in 1895 and died in 1903. John Charles Olmsted became the firm's senior partner, and with Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. (1870-1957), established the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects (1898-1961). By the early years of the twentieth century the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects had become by far the largest landscape architectural firm in the country. At that time, the practice of landscape architecture began to meld with other disciplines, such as city and regional planning. The "City Beautiful Movement," which resulted from the enormous success of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, placed a high priority on the integration of city planning (architectural) with the provisions of open space and parkland preservation for the enjoyment and psychological health benefits provided to its inhabitants (Newton 1971:413-426).

During the latter part of the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century, states and municipalities of all sizes acquired and developed parkland for their citizens. In intensively developed metropolitan areas, however, the parks movement confronted problems arising from the presence of numerous political jurisdictions. One of the first innovative solutions occurred in Boston, Massachusetts, where the Metropolitan Park Commission was established in 1893. From this commission and through the work of its advisor, Charles Eliot (of the firm Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot, 1893-1897), the concept of linking large expanses of parkland with tree-lined boulevards or parkways began. Two years later, the New Jersey legislature passed the Park Act of 1895. Through this legislation, the first county-wide park commission was established in Essex County, New Jersey. In New Jersey alone, the Park Act of 1895 encouraged the creation of county park commissions not only in Essex County, but in the counties of Union, Hudson, Passaic, Bergen, Morris, Camden, Middlesex, and, to a lesser degree, Somerset and Monmouth.

In 1919, Union County Sheriff James Warner observed the effects of pollution on the Rahway River and contacted D.C.N. Collins, an engineer and Cranford Township Committeeman. Mr. Collins, a visionary in his own right, was moved by the pleas of Sheriff Warner and took up the cause of the preservation of a portion of the Rahway River and environs in Cranford as a memorial parkway in tribute to World War I veterans (Foley 1990:3). In an article appearing in the *Elizabeth Journal*, Mr. Collins wrote, "Union County possesses natural advantages beyond comparison with any other county by its numerous rivers, streams and mountains which can be formed into continuous parks and drives, affording a great variety of attractions and ultimately connecting to every municipality in the county for convenient amusement and recreation" (Collins 1919). Mr. Collins, like Charles Eliot and the Olmsted Brothers firm, envisioned the linkage of large county parks through the use of greenways and/or parkways that would provide contiguous open space for the benefit of the county, not just the individual municipality. He also saw this movement as a means to preserve the scenic quality and topographical

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diversity contained within the county's boundaries. In response to public outcry and the dedication of Mr. Collins, the Union County Park Association was formed, its purpose being to establish a park commission (Brown 1941:2).

New Jersey state law mandated that a minimum population of 200,000 residents within any given county was required to form a permanent park commission. Union County fell short of this number. Residents of Cranford canvassed their municipality to locate residents that had not been recorded in the 1920 census. Through the efforts of these diligent townspeople, the 200,000 mark was surpassed by 157 (Foley 1990:3). New Jersey Supreme Court Justice James Bergen was petitioned in April 1920 to appoint a temporary survey commission to study the feasibility of a permanent park commission. On April 30 of the same year, a temporary five-member commission was in place. The members included Henry S. Chatfield of Elizabeth, Charles Hansel of Cranford, Caxton Brown of Summit, Arthur R. Wendell of Rahway, and Percy H. Stewart of Plainfield. Business obligations abroad prevented Percy H. Stewart from serving on the commission. Working with a two-year time limit and a slim budget, the remaining four-member commission began a long and arduous task of identifying lands desirable for county parks. In September 1921 the commission hired the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects of Brookline, Massachusetts, already known for their successful work in neighboring Essex County (Union County Park Commission 1922a:9).

Of particular interest to the commissioners were the large areas of wooded, farm, or wasteland such as ash dumps available throughout the county. In addition, the water supply was of the utmost concern. These men envisioned the parks and their associated watercourses as being natural purifiers for the county's water supply, and as such they needed to be preserved and protected. The commissioners foresaw the future growth within the county boundaries and deemed it critical to preserve the overall quality of the natural landscape while providing land for the enjoyment and recreation of both the existing population and future generations. Using Essex County's South Mountain Reservation as their model, they perceived the need for large areas of natural beauty, such as the Watchung Reservation. These primary reservations and secondary large county parks would be connected by a series of parkways. Furthermore, these visionaries proposed that the Essex County and Union County systems be forever linked, not only through proximity but through the proposed parkway system.

After six months of work, the four-man commission established by Justice Bergen reported its findings. On November 8, 1921, a public referendum to establish a permanent park commission appeared on the ballot in Union County (Foley 1990:3). Streams of voters turned out for the election, especially women, who had just recently won their struggle for the right to vote in the state. It should be noted that not all the county's residents approved of the concept of forming a county-wide park system: the City of Plainfield was a notable exception. Plainfield, one of the wealthier communities in the county, wanted to establish its *own* municipal park program and began doing so with the design for Plainfield Park (now known as Green Brook Park) and Library Park

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(located behind the Plainfield Public Library). Plainfield's corporate counsel, Charles A. Reed, doubted the wisdom of putting "so much power in the hands of five men at this time" (Cunningham 1971). Despite these heavy objections, however, the referendum passed by a vote of 15,475 to 11,462 (Cunningham 1971). On November 19, 1921, Justice Bergen appointed a five-member commission that formed the Union County Park Commission, the second county park system in the state of New Jersey.

The Union County Park Commission included four of the original members appointed by Justice Bergen (Henry S. Chatfield, Charles Hansel, Caxton Brown, and Arthur R. Wendell). The fifth member was Charles A. Reed, the outspoken opponent and corporate counsel from Plainfield (Figure 2). Ironically, Mr. Reed became one of the most ardent supporters of the Union County Park System and served as a commissioner for 19 years. The skating shelter in Cedar Brook Park was renamed in his honor.

Mr. Percival Gallagher, a principal partner in the Olmsted Brothers firm, was assigned the responsibility of supervising landscape architect of the Union County Parks System project. With Percival Gallagher and the Olmsted Brothers firm in place, the Union County Park Commission now needed an engineer to work with the landscape architects. They chose W. Richmond Tracy, a Princeton University graduate, who was lured away from his position as chief bridge builder for the Bronx River Parkway Commission. Mr. Tracy remained at the Union County Park Commission for 35 years and retired in 1957. The success of projects such as the Bronx River Parkway, the Metropolitan Park Commission, and the Essex County Park System were not lost on the Union County Park Commission or their engineer, Mr. Tracy. They saw progress in social reform and improvement in environmental conditions and tax rates as results of these major park projects. They wanted these kinds of improvements for their county. They also knew that their location in the New York metropolitan area would bring the pressures of development and that they needed to move swiftly in the acquisition of land before the purchases of large expanses of land became prohibitive. In 1922, 2,200 acres of land for the Union County Park System was in the process of being acquired (Union County Park Commission 1922a:13). That same year, five fully improved acres of land were donated to the Park Commission by the Wheatena Company of Rahway. In 1923, the four main projects of utmost concern were Warinanco, Cedar Brook, and Echo Lake Parks, as well as the Watchung Reservation (Union County Park Commission 1928:7). By September 1925, either through acquisition or donation, the Union County Park System consisted of seven main units of parkland totaling over 3,100 acres (Union County Park Commission 1925b:8)

In 1922, the City of Plainfield was paying one-fifth of the cost for the Union County Park System, in addition to the cost burden put on its residents by the development of its own municipal park program that included both Plainfield and Library Parks (City of Plainfield 1922:13). Therefore, in 1925, the City of Plainfield, once a staunch opponent of the county park system, donated eight (8) acres known as the Kenyon Gardens to the Union County Park Commission Gardens for the enlargement of Cedar Brook Park. By 1926, an additional 54 acres

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(Plainfield Park) was turned over to the Union County Park Commission. By 1928, land under the control of the Union County Park Commission had reached 4,000 acres. Three new parks — Green Brook, Nomahegan, and Galloping Hill — were now included within the 10 main projects under the control of the Union County Parks Commission. Monies to operate the facilities within the Union County Park System were collected from two sources, tax revenues levied from the residents of the county and revenue-producing facilities within the park system, such as permits for special events.

The city and regional planning concept that provided open space for preservation and recreation and the linkage of these areas through parkways was now in full swing in New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut. In the 1928 General Plan of the New York Park System, which was included in the Regional Plan of New York and its environs, the existing and proposed parks and parkways of Union and Essex counties, as well as that of the Palisades Interstate Park Commission, were considered an *integral* part of this *regional* plan (Zapatka 1995:133; (Map 5).

By 1930, the Union County Park Commission had amassed 4,160 acres and now had its own Department of Police, headed by Lyman L. Parks, and Department of Recreation, headed by F. S. Mathewson (Union County Park Commission 1928:12). Ironically, Mr. Mathewson, the Superintendent of Recreation, like Mr. Reed, came to the Union County Park System from the City of Plainfield. The park commissioners foresaw the need to hire these two men for both the safety and pleasure concerns resulting from an ever-growing population and its more intensive recreational use of the parks.

Between 1931 and 1939, the Union County Park System suffered the effects of the Great Depression, and the employee ranks shrank from 12 to two department heads with two employees (Union County Park Commission 1946:35). Through various government relief programs, such as the Civilian Work Administration (CWA), Work Projects Administration (WPA), Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and the Public Works Administration (PWA), the Union County Park Commission was able to continue its work on the design, development, and construction of the park system. Many experienced landscape architects and architects worked for the Union County Park Commission through the WPA program, and many of the plans for the future development of the park system were developed. The CCC built many of the dams within the Union County Park System, along with scenic overlooks, paths, roadways, and shelters. The Union County Park System provided its residents with numerous types of active and passive recreational activities, including band concerts, archery, baseball, canoeing, fishing, football, golf, horseback riding, ice skating, lawn bowling, softball, tennis, children's playgrounds, and soccer.

During World War II, work in the park system progressed at a slow pace. During the 1940s and 1950s, outside pressure from projects of the State Highway Department (New Jersey Department of Transportation), the New

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Jersey Highway Authority (Garden State Parkway), New Jersey Turnpike Authority, and municipal road networks infringed on the parkland of Union County. Approximately 58 acres for new or improved roadway facilities were turned over to the state or local municipalities (Union County Park Commission 1957:11). Despite the loss of 58 acres, the Union County Park System had grown to 4,804 acres with 18 main project units under its control (Union County Park Commission 1957:13). Development pressures, improved roadway facilities, and the rising cost of land resulted in the chipping away of the proposed parkway system designed by the Olmsted Brothers. The tree-lined boulevards/parkways designed to link the elements of the Union County Park System with each other as well as with other park systems (such as Essex County's) began to become disjointed and never truly materialized as originally envisioned by the Olmsted Brothers.

By the 1960s, the parkland under the control of the Union County Park Commission had increased to 4,881 acres with 868 acres yet to be acquired (Union County Park Commission 1963). In 1978, the once autonomous Union County Park Commission was disbanded and reorganized into the Union County Department of Parks and Recreation. To date, the Union County Department of Parks and Recreation boasts 26 parks with 5,574.3 acres under its jurisdiction (Union County Department of Parks and Recreation 1999) (Map 6). New lands to increase the existing holdings, as well as upgrading and maintenance of existing facilities, are planned. The legacy established by the diligent work and foresight of the original Union County Park Commissioners, W. Richmond Tracy, and the Olmsted Brothers is one of good planning for the benefit of future generations.

National Register Criteria

The designed historic landscape collectively known as Cedar Brook Park meets National Register Criteria A and C. Criterion A refers to association with events that have significant contributions to the broad pattern of our history. In response to increasingly crowded and polluted conditions in the latter part of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, many city officials in the Northeast foresaw the need for the preservation of large open spaces. These preserved areas would provide relief from the polluted and congested urban areas as well as improve the overall visual and physical environment. Parks became the logical solution. The incorporation of parks into the cities became known as the City Beautiful Movement. Out of this idea was born the Essex County Park System (1895), started by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., and continued by the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects. In 1921, through public referendum, the Union County Park Commission was formed, using the Essex County Park System as its guide. The Union County Park Commission became the second park county commission in the state of New Jersey.

Under Criterion C, Cedar Brook Park embodies distinctive characteristics of a type and period, and represents the work of a master. Cedar Brook Park was designed in the 1920s by the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects, considered to be one of the most prominent and highly respected landscape architectural firms of the

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late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The chief landscape architect assigned to the Union County Park System from the Olmsted Brothers firm was Percival Gallagher. Educated at Harvard University, Gallagher like the Olmsteds embodied a nature-culture stewardship ethic with the landscapes they designed (Birnbaum 2005:2). During their long association with the Union County Park Commission (from 1921 to the 1960s), the Olmsted Brothers firm continued to consult and provide guidance on such topics as proposed land acquisition and losses due to development pressures, structures (including bridge design), and improvements within the parks (plantings, recreational facilities, path systems, and maintenance). This relationship ensured that the concept envisioned by the original park commissioners and the Olmsted Brothers firm would continue to prosper and grow.

Some of the plantation plantings in Cedar Brook Park were designed by Ralph C. Porter a landscape architect employed by the Union County Park Commission through the government CWA program. Through the benefits of this government program and others such as the WPA, CCC, and PWA, the Union County Park Commission was able to continue its work on the design, development, and construction of their county-wide park system. Though Mr. Porter may not be considered a master in the profession of landscape architecture, the portion of Cedar Brook Park he designed complements that of the Olmsted Brothers design in intent, theory, and concept.

It should be noted, that the Olmsted Brothers firm in conjunction with the Union County Park Commission envisioned not only a system of reservations and large regional parks within the county, but also a roadway network linking the park system together. This idea would be achieved through a system of designated parkways and boulevards that not only linked the large county-owned parks within the municipalities of Union County but to the adjacent county park systems of Essex, Middlesex, and Somerset Counties. Today, Cedar Brook Park continues to be linked to Green Brook Park to the west via Pemberton Avenue, Grant Avenue, and terminating at West End Avenue, the main entrance to Green Brook Park. The parkway proposed linking Cedar Brook Park to the Rahway River Park was never totally realized. Unfortunately, the only part of this eastward connection that came to fruition was the widening and renaming of South End Avenue to South End Parkway.

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Geographical Data

UTM REFERENCES

Cedar Brook Park

	<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>		<u>Zone</u>	<u>Easting</u>	<u>Northing</u>
1.	18	550449	4494386	5.	18	549636	4495428
2.	18	548975	4494229	6.	18	550392	4494671
3.	18	549865	4494427	7.			
4.	18	549539	4494757	8.			

Verbal Boundary Description

The National Register boundaries for the property/historic district are shown on the site map of the district, labeled Map 2 and 3.

The district boundaries are the Cedar Brook and adjacent land north of Stelle Avenue to the boundary of the Plainfield High School; to south of Pemberton Avenue to the boundary of the Middlesex Water Company; rear yards of properties along Kenyon and Parkside Road to the west; rear yards of properties along Arlington and Park Avenues, and frontage along Rose Street and Laramie Road to the east. The land within these boundaries continues to be utilized as public parkland under the jurisdiction of the Union County Department of Parks and Recreation. In addition, this application includes the Stelle Avenue, Randolph Road and Pemberton Avenue bridges.

Boundary Justification

The boundary includes all of the land currently occupied by Cedar Brook Park, Stelle Avenue, Randolph Road and Pemberton Avenue bridges. This boundary includes the parkland, brook crossings and entrances to Cedar Brook Park.

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The following items apply to all current black-and-white photographs, numbered 1 through 18:

Photographer: April M. Stefel

Date of Photographs: October 2004 and March 2006

Location of Negatives: April M. Stefel, 935 Madison Avenue, Plainfield, New Jersey 07060

Individual Photograph Identifications

Photo A: Looking South at the Existing Randolph Road Bridge

Photo B: Looking South the Existing Pemberton Avenue Bridge

Photo C: Looking North at the Existing Stelle Avenue Bridge

Photo 1: Looking North at the Sloping Topography Behind the Rear Yards of the Residential Properties Along Kenyon Avenue

Photo 2: Looking North at the Slightly Rising Topography Near Rose Street

Photo 3: Looking East on Pemberton Avenue Toward Park Avenue Entrance of Cedar Brook Park. The Parallel Street Tree and *Cornus mas* Plantings are Part of the 1927 Olmsted Brothers Planting Plan

Photo 4: Looking North on Rose Street Toward Laramie Road

Photo 5: Looking North Along F.W. Mathewson Drive. Facility #1 is Located Slightly to the Left of Center

Photo 6: Looking East From F.W. Mathewson Drive at the Curvilinear Configuration of the Roadway, the "Ford" and the Basketball Courts Installed in 1981.

Photo 7: Looking Southwest From Under Footbridge #2 at the "Ford", the Lawn Meadow and Pemberton Avenue in the Background

Photo 8: Looking North Along the Upper Path System Paralleling the Rear Yards Along Kenyon Avenue

Photo 9: Looking East From Kenyon Avenue at the Pedestrian Entrance to Cedar Brook Park

Photo 10: Looking South From Footbridge #1 at the Cedar Brook, F. W. Mathewson Drive to the Left and Remnants of the Paralleling Footpath on the Right

Photo 11: Looking North into the Olmsted Brothers Designed Shakespeare Garden

Photo 12: Looking Northeast Toward the Stelle Avenue Street Tree Planting and the Location Where the Course of the Cedar Brook was Altered by the Olmsted Brothers

Photo 13: Looking East Across the Lake at the Charles A. Reed Skating Shelter

Photo 14: Looking West at the Shade Trees Present Prior to the Construction of Cedar Brook Park and Utilized in the Design of the Upper Path System. The Grassy Slope was the Site of the Former Iris Garden

Photo 15: Looking South into the Lawn Meadow From Randolph Road Toward the Cricket Pitch. This is Part of the Original Olmsted Brothers Active Recreation Design

Photo 16: Looking Southeast into the Lawn Meadow from F.W. Mathewson Drive. This is the Location of the Olmsted Brothers Design of the Baseball Field and the Subsequent 1981 Addition to the Active Recreation Fields

Photo 17: Looking Northwest at the 1981 Installation of the New Children's Play Area. This is also the Former Location of the Children's Play Facility designed by the Olmsted Brothers

Photo 18: Looking North From Randolph Road into the Kenyon Gardens Section of Cedar Brook Park at the Former Field Hockey Fields. This Location is Now Utilized for Soccer Fields



Plate 1: Birds-eye View of Cedar Brook Park Including a Portion of the Kenyon Gardens Section

Source: Union County Department of Parks and Recreation circa 1920s



VIEW IN CEDAR BROOK PARK BEFORE DEVELOPMENT



VIEW IN CEDAR BROOK PARK AFTER DEVELOPMENT

Plate 2: Cedar Brook Park. Looking North of Footbridge # 2
Before and After Construction

*Source: Union County Department of Parks
and Recreation circa 1920s*



High Water - Cedar Brook Park - after heavy rains - Sept. 1926.



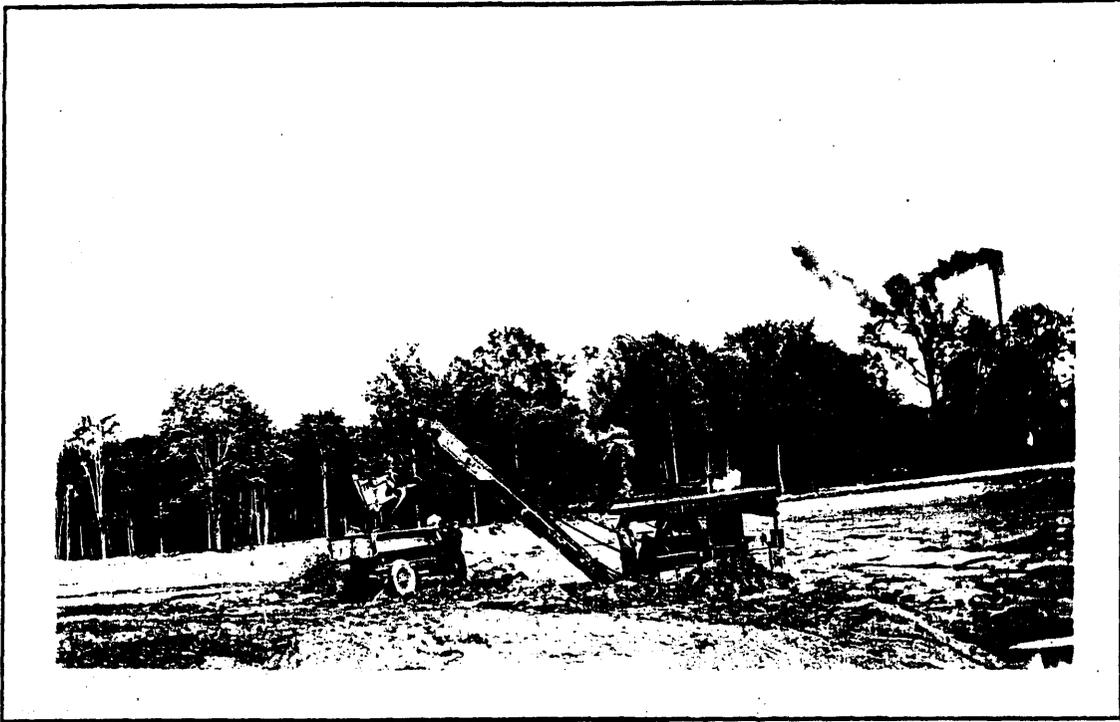
LAKE AT CEDAR BROOK PARK DURING CONSTRUCTION



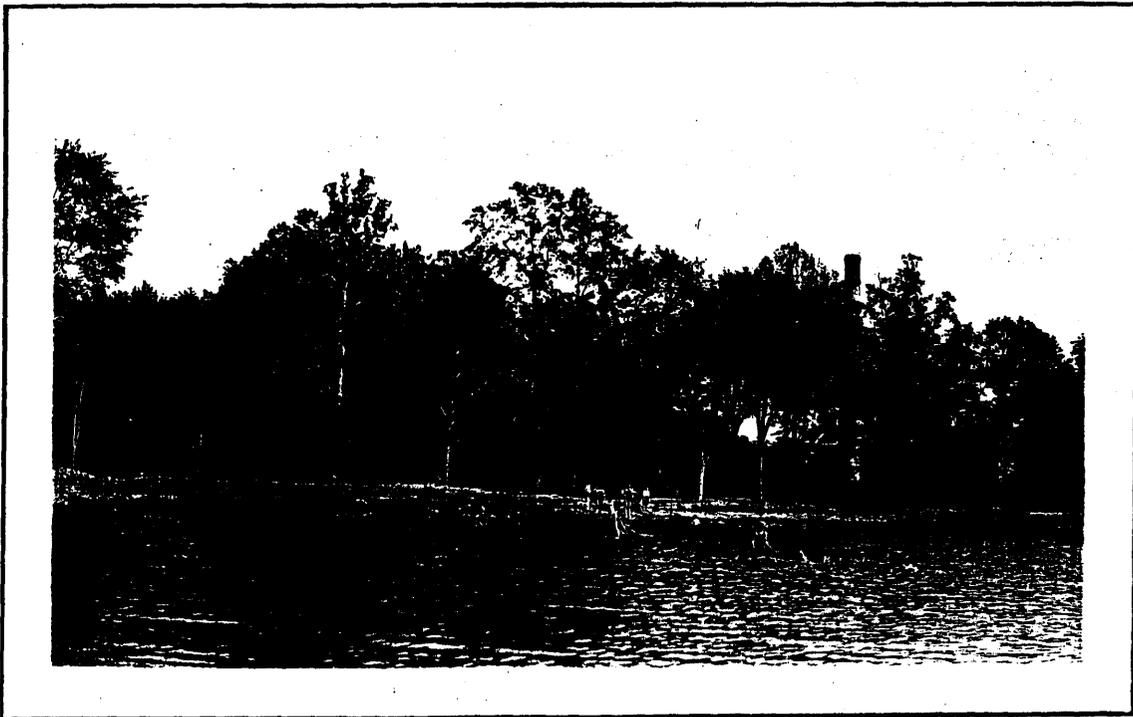
Iris Garden—Cedar Brook Park.



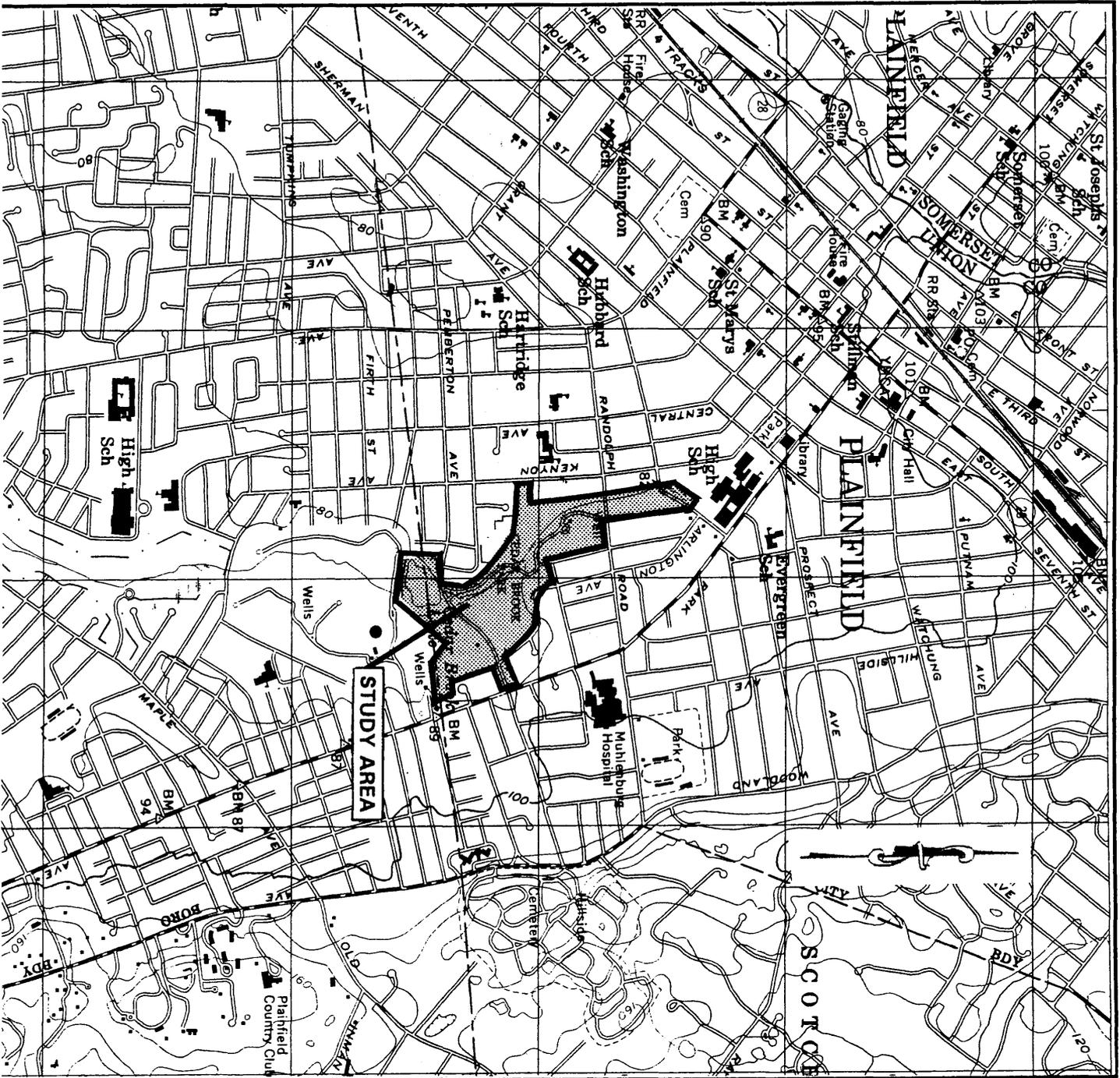
Daffodil Plantation Near Rose Street and Laramie Road



VIEW IN CEDAR BROOK PARK BEFORE DEVELOPMENT



VIEW IN CEDAR BROOK PARK AFTER DEVELOPMENT



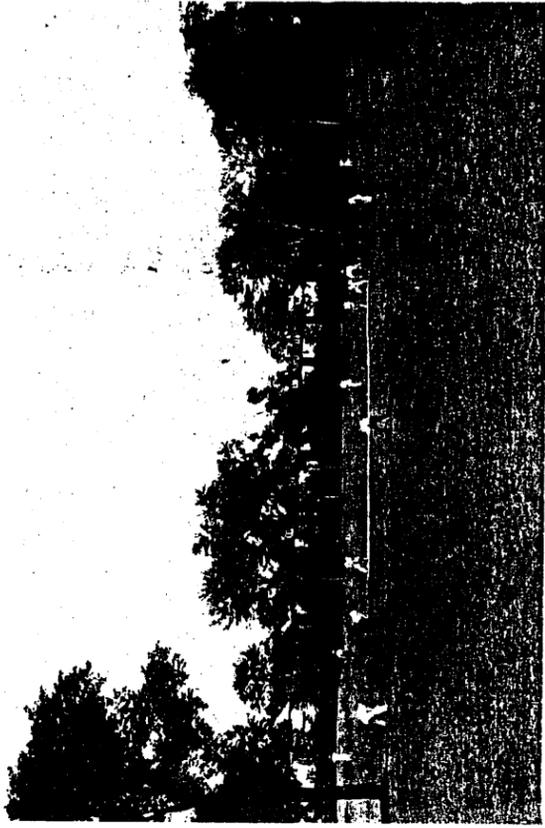
LEGEND



Photo Location and Direction
Existing Plant Material Prior to the Construction of Cedar Brook Park

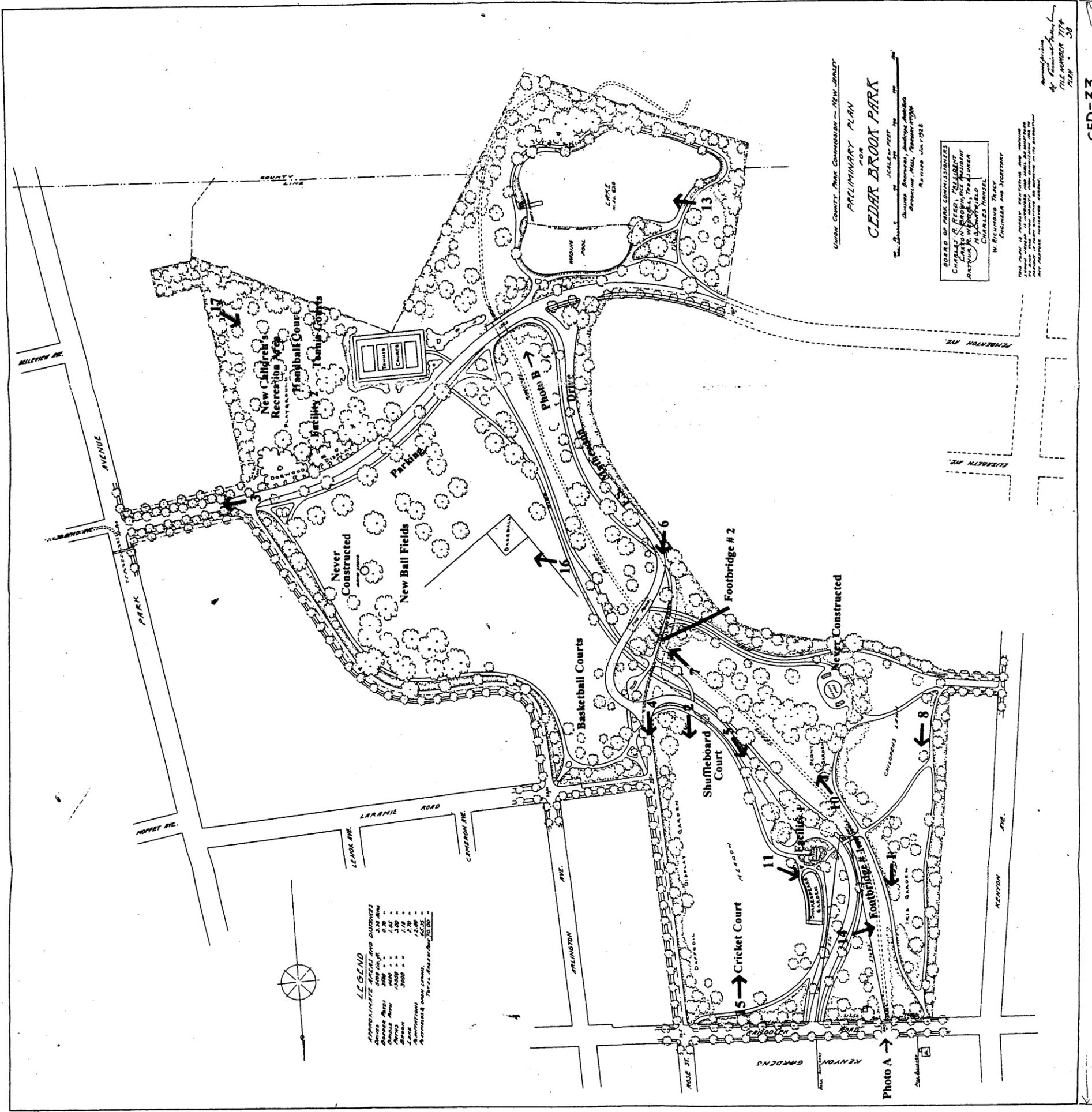
LEGEND

APPROXIMATE AREAS AND DURINGS
 100' x 100' 100' x 100'
 200' x 200' 200' x 200'
 300' x 300' 300' x 300'
 400' x 400' 400' x 400'
 500' x 500' 500' x 500'
 600' x 600' 600' x 600'
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 800' x 800' 800' x 800'
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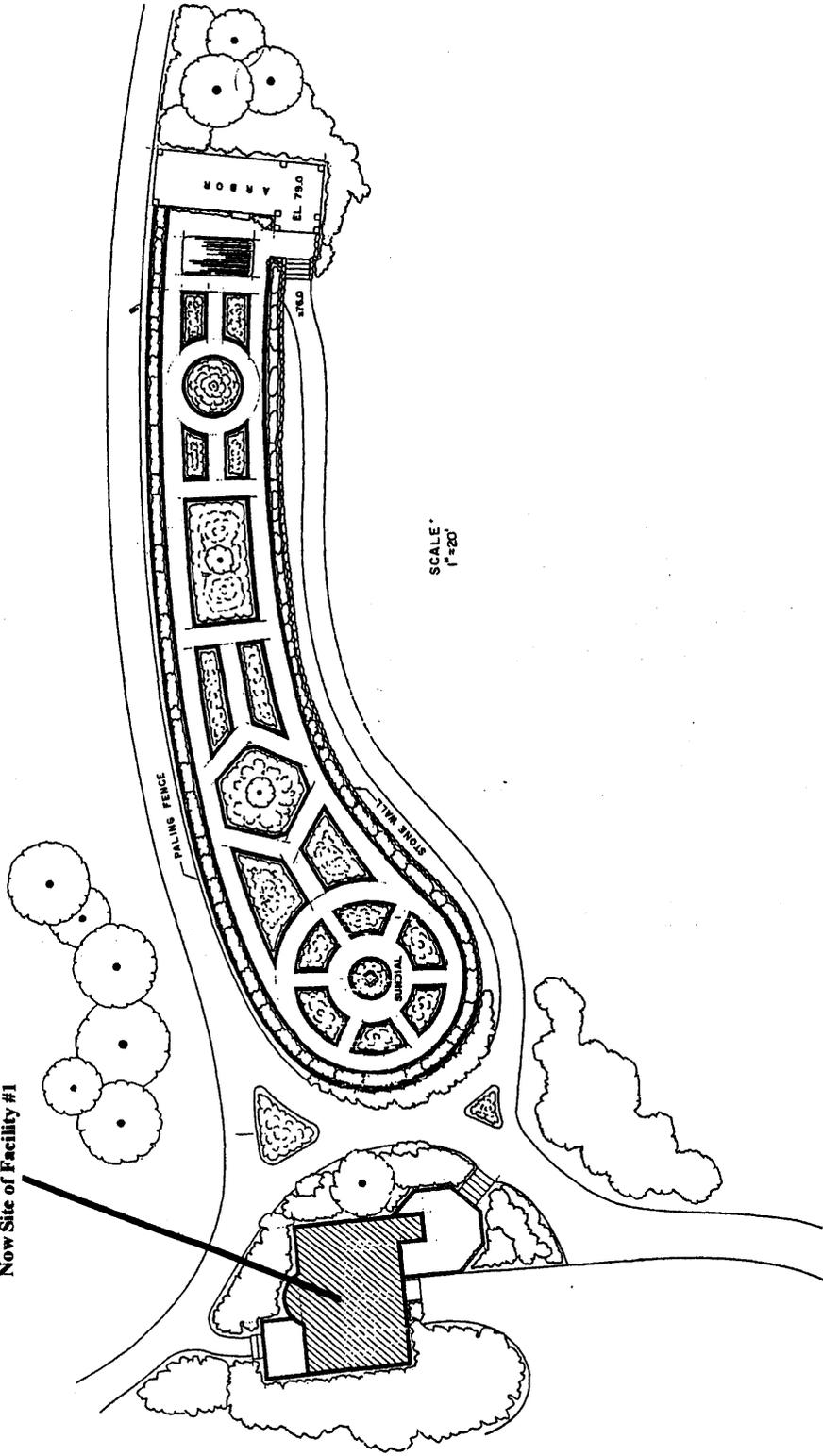


CRICKET AT CEDAR BROOK PARK.

Map 2: Site Map of Cedar Brook Park Between Randolph Road and Pemberton Avenue
 Source: Union Count Park Commissioner 1928 and 1937



Field House (Former Dilbra House)
Now Site of Facility #1



SCALE:
1"=20'

TRACED FROM ORIGINAL PLAN DATED MARCH 16, 1927	A.B. WP.	9/2/87
REVISION	BY	CKD
		DATE

CEDAR BROOK PARK
PRELIMINARY SKETCH PLAN
FOR
SHAKESPEARE GARDEN



OLMSTED BROTHERS - LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
BROOKLINE, MASS - MARCH 16, 1927
FILE NO. 7174 - PLAN NO. 103

DIVISION OF ENGINEERING	COUNTY OF UNION, N. J.
MAP NO. CED-36	SHEET NO. 1 OF 1

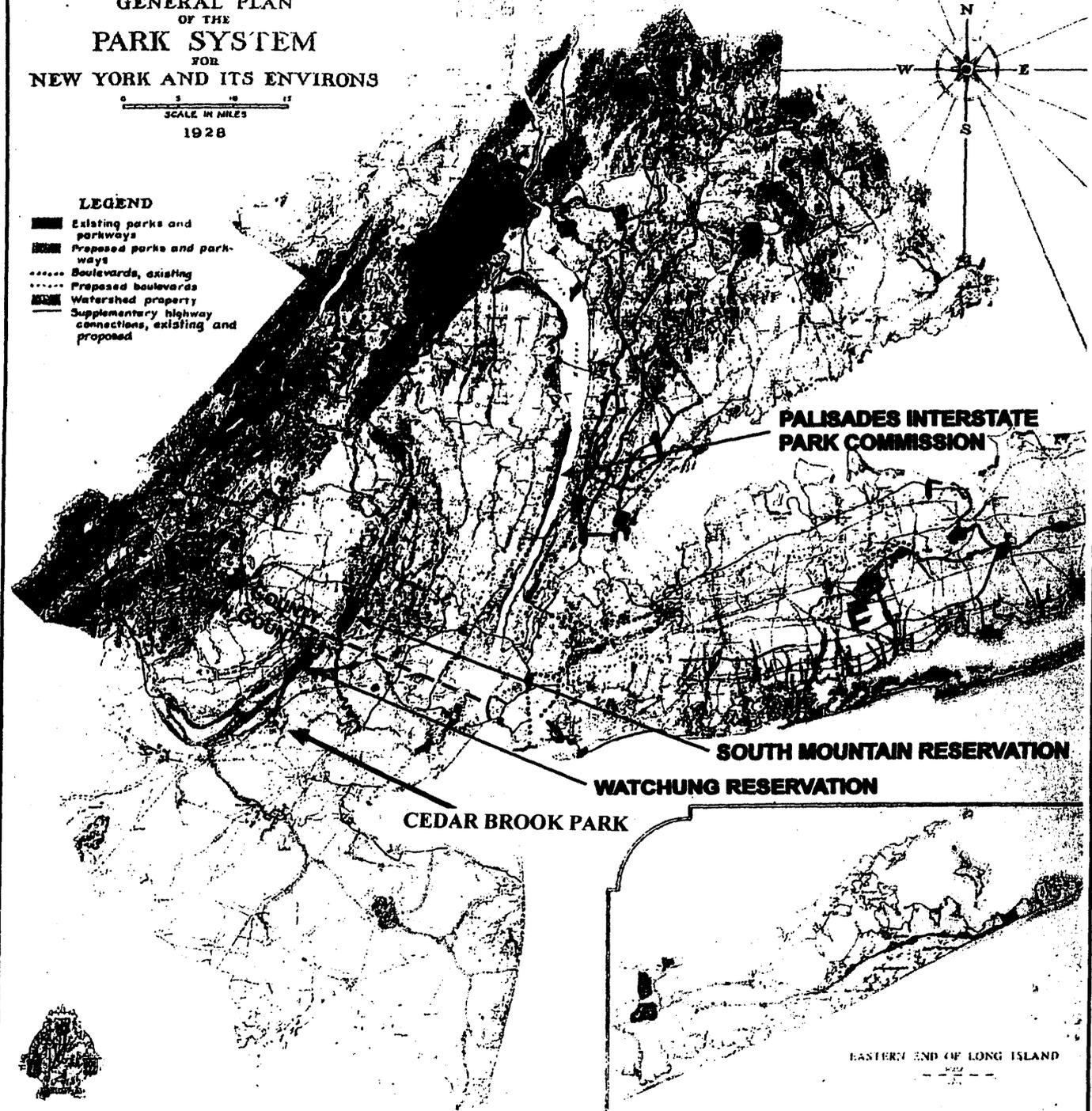
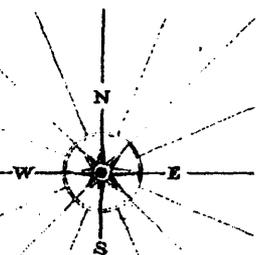
Map 4: Map of the Olmsted Brothers Design for the Shakespeare Garden in Cedar Brook Park
Source: Union Count Park Commission 1927

**GENERAL PLAN
OF THE
PARK SYSTEM
FOR
NEW YORK AND ITS ENVIRONS**

SCALE IN MILES
0 5 10 15
1928

LEGEND

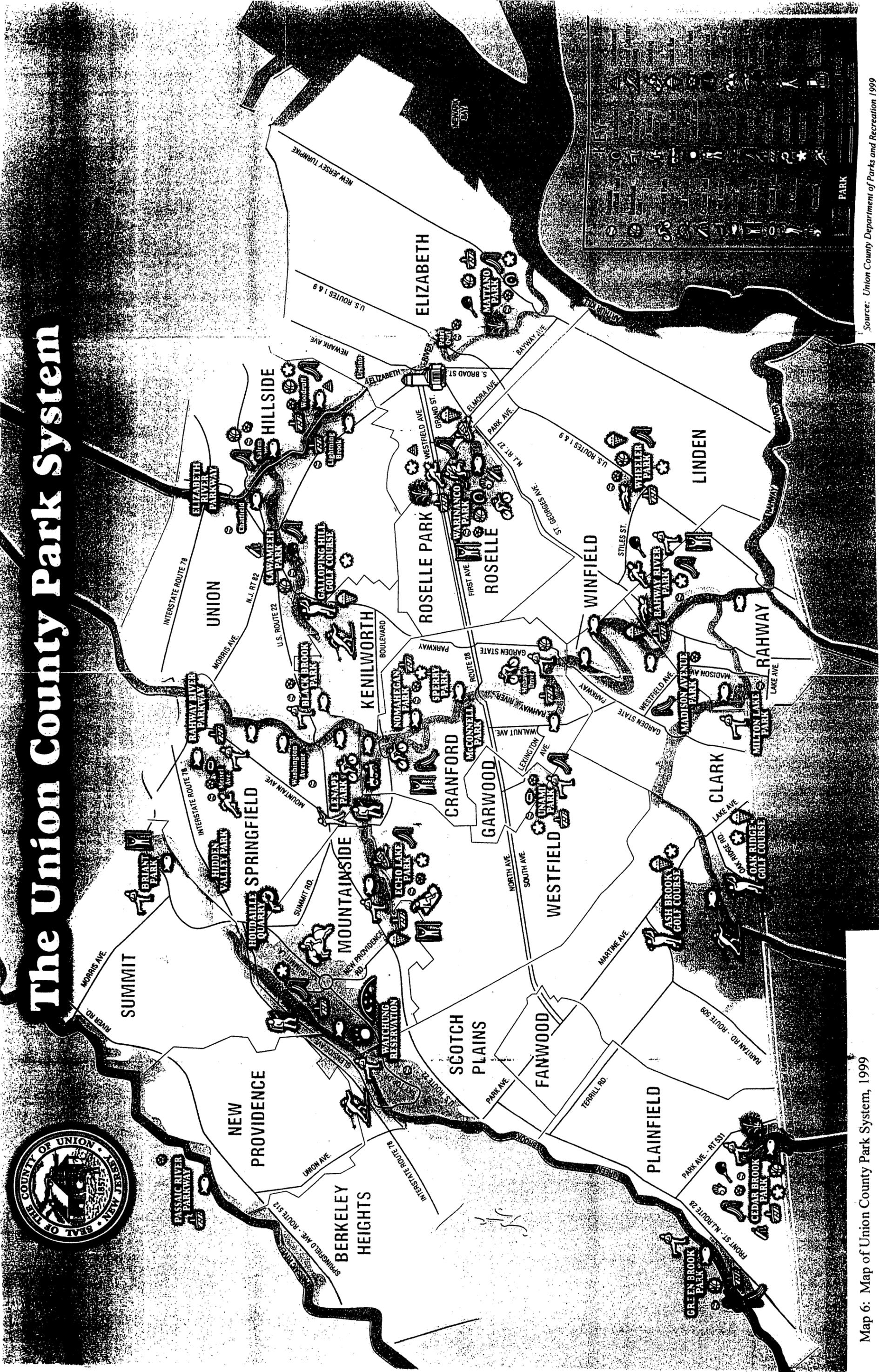
- Existing parks and parkways
- ▨ Proposed parks and parkways
- Boulevards, existing
- Proposed boulevards
- ▨ Watershed property
- Supplementary highway connections, existing and proposed



Map 5: General Plan of the Park System for New York and its Environs, 1928

Source: Zaparka 1995

The Union County Park System



Map 6: Map of Union County Park System, 1999

Source: Union County Department of Parks and Recreation 1999