

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED AUG 2 1976
DATE ENTERED NOV 7 1976

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Frederick Law Olmsted Summer Home
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER SW of Sunset on Deer Isle
Sunset NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CITY, TOWN Sunset CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Deer Isle 2nd Hon. William Cohen
STATE Maine CODE 23 VICINITY OF COUNTY CODE
Hancock 009

3 CLASSIFICATION

| CATEGORY | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | PRESENT USE |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT | <input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE | <input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED | <input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK |
| <input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE | <input type="checkbox"/> BOTH | <input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS | <input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SITE | PUBLIC ACQUISITION | ACCESSIBLE | <input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT | <input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS | <input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED | <input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED | <input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION |
| | | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO | <input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER: |

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Caroline Olmsted
STREET & NUMBER Sunset
CITY, TOWN Deer Isle VICINITY OF STATE Maine

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Hancock County Registry of Deeds
STREET & NUMBER
CITY, TOWN Ellsworth STATE Maine

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE
DATE FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
CITY, TOWN STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The late 19th century showed a revivalist interest in Colonial architecture which, because of its scale and openness, symbolized a freedom towards natural space. At the same time, Americans began to escape their crowded urban environment in search of more open places. Expectedly, they sought out the mellow surroundings of old Colonial towns. It is because of this migration, as well as some architectural English sources, that the "Shingle Style" originated.

Typical of this style is freedom and flexibility in plan, with several levels of space intersecting around a large central hall lighted by a wall of windows. Shingles cover most of the exterior surfaces, making a shaggy but continuous container for the flowing space inside.

The summer home of Frederick Law Olmsted America's greatest landscape architect of the late 1800's reflects how a simple structure could be enlarged in scale, extended by wings and bays, crossed by axes, protected by porches, and accented by a combination of roof forms, hip and gable, to accommodate a variety of experiences. These Shingle Style characteristics allowed the building to act out its environment-making potential to its fullest.

With everything running together, but the desired continuity of spatial flow nonetheless achieved, the Olmsted House seems earthy, warm, protective, and rooted in its place -- even though perched up on its precarious coastal ledge. The porches surrounding the house seem to penetrate the structure, and the resulting gestalt switch of inside-outside reshapes even the closed interior into its own open form. The gable roof is stretched out to envelop the void of the main porch, and everywhere the desire for simple geometrical order and large encompassing shapes appears.

By the time in 1897 that William R. Emerson had completed the plans for the home on Sunset, Deer Isle, Maine, in Penobscot Bay, he had already gained recognition as a major practitioner of the Shingle Style. Years after Emerson's work on the house was completed, it was enlarged by the addition of a wing to accommodate Felsted, an exclusive coastal hotel with room for forty guests. In its present condition, however, evidence of the resort no longer survives for the wing was removed in recent years.

Resting half on the top of a cliff's edge and half on stone walls, the house's easterly ocean side juts out over the rocky shore below. The main piazza of this facade is supported from below by buttresses extending out of the stone foundation. The porch's three posts support a gable extension of the main house with two windows facing the ocean and a third above it in the triangular pediment. This gable extension crosses through the Georgian hip roof of the main house and projects out the westerly side. Initial entrance to the home is gained through this western gable facade. Two large chimneys appear at opposite ends of the hip roof. The building is given a horizontal orientation by bands of windows and planes, and by the sleek downward continuation of the roof-almost to eye level-on the northern side. Well penetrated in both stories by large windows opening to all sides, the building is advantageously designed for its picturesque surroundings.

(See continuation sheet)

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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By the end of the 19th century the Shingle Style, with its trend towards elongation, horizontal continuity and interpenetration of elements, began to disappear. The Olmsted House remains today as not only having been the home of a famous American, but also survives as an excellent example of the Shingle Style in Maine.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

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

SPECIFIC DATES

1897

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

William R. Emerson

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The seacoast of Maine was the ideal site for "Felsted" the summer residence of Frederick Law Olmsted during his declining years. Olmsted had made his career as the landscape architect of many of the nation's city park systems, national parks, and several college campuses.

Born in Hartford, Conn. in 1822, Olmsted, during his childhood, travelled with his family on many trips throughout the Northeast which nurtured his interest in nature, people, and places. He studied engineering for two years then went into farming and later publishing in New York. He continued to travel, first throughout Europe in 1850 observing and discussing his impressions of parks and gardens. He then travelled to the southern United States in 1852 on a commission from the New York Times and produced the most complete philosophical accounts ever published of the condition of the slave states. These accounts were made into three books which later were condensed into The Cotton Kingdom published in 1861.

Olmsted's unusual background of engineering and farming and his involvement in local and county affairs as well as his dabbling in home landscaping and a modest nursery business was of major significance in the preparation for his career as a landscape architect.

His career began in 1857 with his appointment to the position of superintendent of Central Park in New York City. This was the first of the many park systems he designed such as the Back Bay area of Boston, and the grounds of the Capital Building in Washington, D.C. He also laid out Yosemite State Reservation in Wyoming and the grounds of the Vanderbilt Estate, "Biltmore", in Asheville, N.C. His designs and writings concerning his work did much to influence the art and science of city planning as well as to promote an increased public appreciation of landscape art.

Olmsted was also involved with the establishment of the Maine Agricultural College at Orono. He not only drew up plans for the physical lay-out of the school, but also offered suggestions concerning the type of curriculum to be taught. Olmsted believed the college should provide young men with a liberal education without making them unfit for an industrial calling. His plans however, laid too much emphasis on required military training and therefore were rejected by the board of trustees.

(See continuation sheets)

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Dictionary of American Biography
 Frederick Law Olmsted 40 Years of Landscape Architecture Industrial Journal, 11/20/96
 1/29/97
 Laura Roper, A Biography of Frederick Law Olmsted . 1973
 Albert Fein, Frederick Law Olmsted and the Environmental Tradition, 1972.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2 acres

UTM REFERENCES

| | | | | | | | |
|---|------|----------------|--------------------|---|------|---------|----------|
| A | 1 9 | 5 2 12 5 13 10 | 4 18 9 11 15 12 15 | B | | | |
| | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING | | ZONE | EASTING | NORTHING |
| C | | | | D | | | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

| STATE | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
|-------|------|--------|------|
| | | | |
| | | | |

11 FORM PREPARED BY

| | | | |
|-----------------|---|-----------|--------------|
| NAME / TITLE | Frank A. Beard, Historian Stephen Kaplan, Graduate Assistant | DATE | |
| ORGANIZATION | Maine Historic Preservation Commission | DATE | July 1976 |
| STREET & NUMBER | 31 Western Avenue | TELEPHONE | 207-289-2133 |
| CITY OR TOWN | Augusta | STATE | Maine |

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL STATE LOCAL

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

| | | | |
|---|--|------|---------------|
| STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE | <i>Earle B. Shettleworth, Jr.</i> | DATE | July 26, 1976 |
| TITLE | <i>State Historic Preservation Officer</i> | DATE | July 26, 1976 |

| | |
|--|--------------|
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER | |
| ACTING DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION | DATE 11/9/96 |
| ATTEST: | DATE 11/2/76 |
| KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER | |

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Other work of Olmsted's in Maine included the planning of a summer residential community on Cushing Island in Casco Bay, and consultation in the lay-out of the grounds of the Merrill-Poor House. His firm which continued with the work of his sons was responsible for the designing of Baxter Boulevard in Portland.

Before his death in 1903, Olmsted had received the honorary degrees of A.M. and L.L.D. from both Harvard and Yale Universities.

After becoming familiar with Olmsted's work one can clearly see why the choice was made to have a Shingle Style house built by the Boston architect William Ralph Emerson as his summer residence. Olmsted had recommended this type of house in his design for the community of Cushing Island. Emerson having a sensitivity for the site, tried to fit his buildings into the surroundings and make them appear part of nature as Olmsted had done throughout his own career.

Emerson, born in 1833, in Alton, Ill, grew up in Maine. Many of his designs were for houses on the Maine coast. Never having had a college education or any formal architectural training, he followed the tradition of self-education and apprenticeship. He was one of the first to express interest in the Colonial architecture of the 18th century, calling it "the only true American architecture". Emerson was considered by some of his colleagues to be the inventor of the Shingle Style. The C. J. Morrill House in Bar Harbor, Maine built in 1879 was the first structure to have the entire exterior surface shingled thus establishing a cohesiveness of design and continuity of texture. Emerson designed many of the residences at Bar Harbor, such as "Redwood", "Thirtstane" and the Cochrane House. Many of them were destroyed in the Great fire of 1947.

The building of "Felsted" was initiated by Olmsted's wife, Mary. At the time of the decision, Mary was in England with her husband. The mild, damp climate of England was prescribed as a possible cure for Olmsted's failing mind. Finding Olmsted more depressed in England, Mary instructed her sons to have a year round cottage built on Deer Isle as a retirement home. Frederick Jr. hired Emerson to design the cottage and arrange for small landscape work to be in continual progress to occupy his father. Olmsted moved in to "Felsted" in 1897, but he was not happy there. His mind had so failed that in 1898 his family was forced to commit him to McLean Hospital in Waverly, Mass, where he remained until his death.