PRESERVATION DE TONS CONNECTICUT DE TONS

Documenting the Olmsted heritage in Connecticut

While Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903) is widely known as the father of American landscape architecture, and often credited with any important landscape—even ones created years after his death—he was the founder of a landscape architecture firm that operated for more than 100 years and included his two sons, John Charles Olmsted (1852-1920) and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. (1870-1957). Under these three Olmsteds, the firm not only produced thousands of landscape designs but also led the way in building appreciation for landscape design, advocating for scenic and natural conservation, and establishing landscape architecture and city planning as recognized professions.

The Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office and Preservation Connecticut have partnered to create the Olmsted in Connecticut Landscape Documentation Project in observance of the 200th anniversary of Frederick Law Olmsted's birth, in Hartford. While Olmsted's career and influence have been widely studied and written about, the role of Connecticut in shaping his mind and his career have received much less attention. This project, funded through the Connecticut Community Investment Act, seeks to document Olmsted's Connecticut background as well as the landscape designs of the Olmsted firm throughout the state.

continued on page 2

Documenting the Olmsteds in Connecticut, cont'd from page 1







Frederick Charles Olmsted



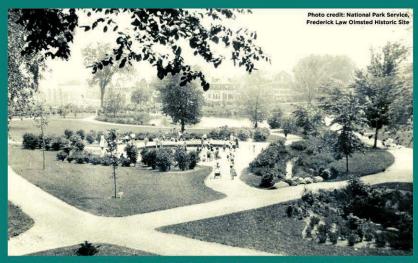
Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.

For over a year, consultants from the Red Bridge Group, a nationwide heritage consulting firm based in San Francisco, researched, and visited Connecticut sites associated with the Olmsted firm. They have produced a statewide context document that describes Frederick Law Olmsted's background and formation in Connecticut, his career as a landscape architect, the continuing work of the Olmsted firm after his retirement, and the place of the firm's Connecticut landscapes in relation to its overall work. In addition, they have surveyed 129 Olmsted landscapes in the state, recording their history and current state, ranging from obliterated to intact.

The next step will be to make this body of information easily available to the public. Currently, SHPO and PCT are exploring options for posting the material online, and SHPO will incorporate information from the survey forms into its new geospatial system, called ConnCRIS. In the meantime, the context report will be available on SHPO's and PCT's websites, and public presentations are being offered to historical societies, libraries, and community groups.

Another step will be to follow up on the consultants' recommendations for listing eligible sites on the National Register of Historic Places or adding information for sites that are already on the Register but not well documented.

Finally, both the State Historic Preservation Office and Preservation Connecticut hope that this project will extend beyond the Olmsted firm and lead to a broader recognition of the importance of historic landscapes and the necessity of preserving and enhancing them. *



SATURDAY IN THE PA

a celebration of the Olmsted landscape heritage in Connecticut Lewis Fulton Memorial Park, Waterbury October 1, 2022 12:00-4:00pm
Rain date: October 15th

Preservation Connecticut, the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office, and the City of Waterbury invite you to a celebration of the Olmsted landscape heritage in Connecticut. Join us for:

- A preview of the Olmsted documentation project
- Tours of Fulton Park
- Exhibits
- · Activities for kids
- Food trucks
- And more!

Find out more: www.preservationct.org/ saturday-in-the-park





FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

t's been a busy summer. Circuit Rider Stacey Vairo has been spending a portion of her time assessing early listings on National Register of Historic Places (NR), as part of our Circuit Rider contract with the State Historic Preservation Office. As a former NR specialist at the SHPO, Stacey is uniquely qualified for this job. She opened, read, and reviewed each of the 511 Connecticut NR nominations produced roughly before 1984/5 for completeness.

Each was assigned a basic indicator reflecting its status and completeness. Items checked included sufficient description and/or significance statement; for districts, whether there was an inventory and if properties were designated as Contributing or Non-Contributing; map sufficiency; adequate attention to social history, with particular attention to women's and minority history; additional areas of significance that could be explored; and current status or condition of the buildings, if known. Complete and accurate survey work such as this is the basis for good preservation planning.

I had the pleasure of attending, along with trustee Ed Gerber, an onsite awards presentation to The Norwalk Art Space, a project which received a 2022 Connecticut Preservation Award of Merit in May. On hand were Robin Panovka of The Norwalk Art Space, Mayor Harry Rilling, and members of the project team. The space came to life that evening as an important exhibit, "Where Do We Go From Here?" and a performance by resident artist Iyaba Ibo Mandingo were happening at the same time. It was exhilarating to experience this historic space as it was intended, full of music, poetry, and creative energy.

Another note on awards: We have created a rolling nomination period by keeping the online nomination portal open throughout the year. To be considered for our next awards celebration, submit by **4:00 p.m. on February 3, 2023.** Awards will be presented on Thursday, May 4, 2023, at the New Haven Country Club.

During July and August, we have had the pleasure of working with intern Amelia Mower, of Milford, entering her senior year at Central Connecticut State University in

the fall. Amelia has been assisting with Circuit Rider duties including providing grant writing assistance, program planning and local historic district commission outreach.

We're pleased to announce the latest addition to the Preservation Connecticut website, our new job board. Need a job completed but you don't have a formal RFP? Post it on our new job board! Just submit a form with the job information and we will share it on our website and social media to advertise your project to our wide network of business members and

Our year-long celebration of Frederick Law Olmsted's 200th birthday continues. In early July, we partnered with our neighbors The Eli Whitney Museum and Workshop on a summer camp for nine-to-twelve-year-olds: "Learning Heroes: Olmsted Park Design and History." Deputy Director Chris Wigren was a guest instructor as campers became landscape architects exploring nearby parks and creating their own park models.

The Olmsted commemoration continues on October 1 with Saturday in the Park at Fulton Park in Waterbury, when we'll unveil and celebrate the Olmsted in Connecticut landscape documentation project. Registration is open to sign up for walking tours. Children's activities will be provided by the Mattatuck Museum, and music by The Band of Steady Habits, state historian emeritus Walt Woodward's band. We hope to see you there! 🍫

–Jane Montanaro

Preservation Connecticut is a statewide nonprofit membership organization established as the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation by a special act of the State Legislature in 1975. Working with local preservation groups and individuals as well as statewide organizations, it encourages, advocates, and facilitates historic preservation throughout Connecticut.

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Preservation Connecticut News is published bimonthly by the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation, doing business as Preservation Connecticut, 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, Connecticut 06517. Publication is made possible by support of the members of Preservation by support of the members of Preservation Connecticut and by funds provided through the Community Investment Act in the State of Connecticut. The contents and opinions stated herein do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the State of Connecticut. Advertisements do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of Preservation Connecticut. Preservation Connecticut does not endorse advertisers and assumes no liability for

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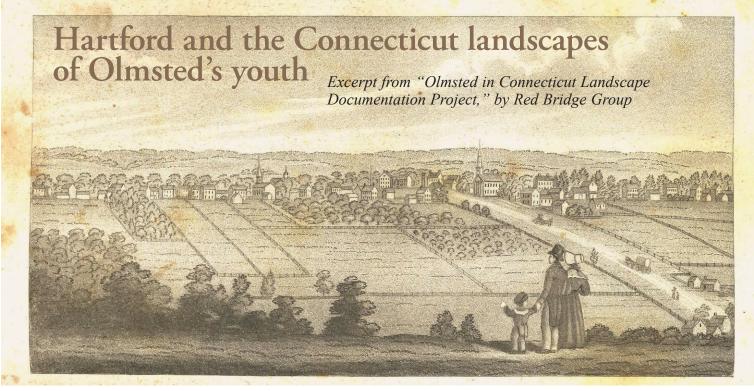
Owning an old house is the best way to create historic preservation...

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Travels with his family shaped the young Olmsted's taste for scenery. In this print by John Warner Barber, a family resembling the Olmsteds enjoys the view of Litchfield.

rederick Law Olmsted was born in 1822 to John Olmsted, a dry-goods merchant, and Charlotte Hull Olmsted, daughter of a Cheshire farmer. From Hartford, the young Olmsted had access to places around the state and beyond with the city's location along the Upper Post Road between New York and Boston, as well as regular steamboat service to New Haven and on to New York by 1825. This gave the curious and outgoing Fred access to all classes and types of people as well as all types of scenes and scenery. As the oldest son of a generous father, he benefited by having a moderately wealthy and well-connected family in a respected society, which for its size, had a significant intellectual life with many residents concerned with issues of social reform, domesticity, and creating and maintaining a civil society.

In his youth, Olmsted particularly enjoyed being out of doors. He is also known to have explored the countryside around the places where he lived away from home while going to school. Additionally, he was exposed to the outdoors and natural scenery during

the extended family trips throughout New England. Fred and his father often roamed the countryside, walking long distances and visiting family and friends in other communities.

The family also spent time at Fred's mother's family's farm, Brooksvale Farm, in Cheshire. Olmsted would later spend



time on the property learning to farm, an experience that greatly influenced his future career as a landscape architect. Today, Brooksvale Farm is still owned by a descendent of Olmsted's 19th-century relations. A family letter preserved onsite recounts that Olmsted planted a grove of hemlock trees approximately 200 feet west

of the house of which several still exist.

As Olmsted came to the completion of his formal schooling, the industrial revolution was changing the philosophical, aesthetic, and educational underpinnings that had governed society. The rapid growth of cities in the Northeast caused deteriorating living conditions, disease, damage to the environment, and other health and safety hazards. Clergymen like the Rev. Horace Bushnell, pastor of the Olmsteds' church and their neighbor, philosophized about the moral and physical decay that accompanied

continued on page 13

Frederick Law Olmsted often visited his mother's relatives at their Farm in Cheshire, still owned by their descendants. A family letter documents that he planted some of these evergreens on the property.

The work of the Olmsted firm in Connecticut, 1860–1979 Excerpt from

Excerpt from "Olmsted in Connecticut Landscape Documentation Project," by Red Bridge Group

Over a period of more than 100 years, the Olmsted firm worked on nearly 300 jobs in Connecticut, representing a wide variety of landscape types. This overview describes the types and how the Connecticut examples fit into the firm's overall work. "Job numbers" refers to job files kept by the firm and now preserved at the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site in Brookline, Massachusetts.

Parks, parkways, recreation areas, and scenic reservations

National: 1,085 job numbers Connecticut: 48 job numbers; 33 surveyed

Frederick Law Olmsted's name is inextricably linked to park design in the United States. Beginning with architect Calvert Vaux at New York's Central Park (1857), Olmsted was clear about what he believed a park should be. According to Olmsted scholar Charles Beveridge, the purpose of an "Olmsted park," as opposed to public recreation grounds, was to "counteract the

enclosure of the city by providing 'a sense of enlarged freedom."

Today, Connecticut has its share of important Olmsted parks. Beveridge notes that Bridgeport is the only city of its size to have two parks designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.: Seaside and Beardsley parks. In addition to these, Olmsted worked very early in his career on Walnut Hill Park in New Britain. Later, he would return to Hartford to lay out a park system that included Pope, Goodwin, Keney, and Riverside parks, in addition to modifications to Bushnell Park, by later iterations of the firm.

Outside of Hartford, the most significant park work done by Olmsted Brothers in the 20th century was for New Haven, which included three new parks—Beaver Pond, West River Memorial, and East Shore parks—and the expanded Edgewood

and East Rock parks. Individually, and more importantly as a system of parks to encircle the city, the New Haven work as conceived is some of the most important, but largely unrecognized, work of the firm. With varying degrees of integrity, many of the parks and the opportunities they could provide to the community go unrealized due to maintenance challenges.

City and regional improvement projects

National: 280 Job numbers Connecticut: 6 job numbers; 2 surveyed

According to Ethan Carr, an Olmsted Papers editor, "No aspect of the Olmsted firm's work is more important—and more overlooked—than its contribution to the history of city and regional planning in the United States." Olmsted's master plan for Boston's park system in the 1880s

National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site

continued on next page



Gently curving paths invite parkgoers to stroll through the landscape in Hartford's Pope Park.

The Olmsted firm in Connecticut, cont'd from page 5

imagined how park planning could reach a regional scale. Although the firm similarly devised a plan for a Hartford park system that featured several parkways, these were never realized.

The closest Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. came to the kind of multidisciplinary planning that would characterize regional planning in the United States was at the end of his career, as a member of the team planning the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The success of that project launched the City Beautiful movement and led to the emergence of city planning as a profession—one in which Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. would take a prominent role.

The 1910 New Haven Plan by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., with Cass Gilbert, is the most significant planning work accomplished by the Olmsted firm in Connecticut. While it incorporates many City Beautiful design ideas, especially around proposed civic architecture and associated spaces, the plan demonstrates a transition to the "City Practical" in its use of extensive data on demographics, tax rolls, and industrial

trends. Later assessments of the plan lament the fact that many of its architectural elements were not developed but miss the point that many of the parks and landscape elements of the plan were implemented at later dates by the Olmsted firm. Job numbers from this same period include correspondence files relating to planning projects for Milford, New London, and Waterbury, but no plans resulted.

Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects designed the general layout of the Khakum Wood subdivision in Greenwich as well as several individual landscapes, sensitively fitting large houses into a naturalistic setting.

Subdivisions and suburban communities

National: 480 job numbers Connecticut: 21 job numbers; 10 surveyed

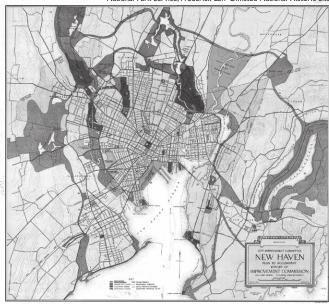
Within this group of landscape projects, there is a tremendous range of effort and thinking by the Olmsted firm. One type

of subdivision is associated with company towns where industrial workers were to be housed in close proximity to the manufacturing complex. Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects prepared plans for worker housing complexes, including the Beacon Falls Rubber Shoe Company community in Beacon Falls (see page 20) and the Andrews subdivision for Stanley Works in New Britain, although little

The New Haven Plan by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and Cass Gilbert proposed downtown improvements as well as a system of parks, many of which were designed by the Olmsted firm. of the latter appears to have been implemented.

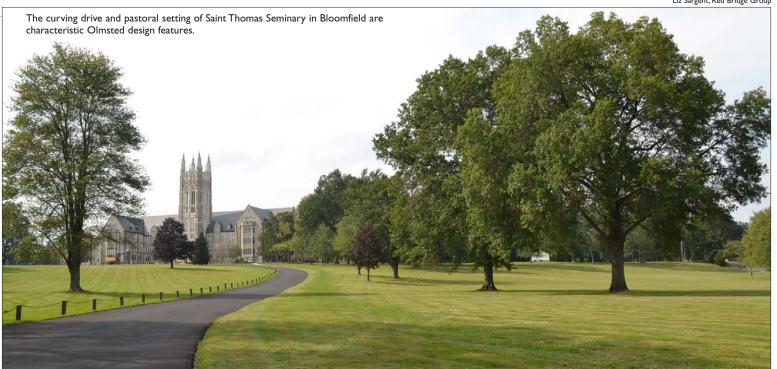
Suburban subdivision work peaked in the 1920s. Several examples were located in Greenwich, where estates were broken up because the original "white elephants"

National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site





Liz Sargent, Red Bridge Group



were unmarketable after World War I. The earliest and best articulated of these subdivisions, because of the continued involvement by the Olmsted firm, is Khakum Wood in Greenwich. During the Great Depression, other owners of large parcels considered subdivision due to the cost of upkeep and taxes on large single homes. This was also true of subdivisions created for Percy A. Rockefeller and W.G. Rockefeller.

Colleges and school campuses

National: 410 job numbers Connecticut: 20 job numbers; 11 surveyed

Campus design is a notable area of landscape project work for the Olmsted firm and one that Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. gave a lot of thought to, believing that the physical environment of learning played a significant role in the success of education.

Within Connecticut, Olmsted, Sr. advised on the siting and site plan for Trinity College in Hartford in the 1870s and 1880s, as well as the Yale athletic grounds (perhaps the first planned athletic complex in America) in the 1880s, the Williams Institute, a school for girls in New London, in 1890, and the Naugatuck School in 1891. In the early 20th century, Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects were commissioned to design campuses for secondary schools such as Westminster and Taft schools (in Simsbury and Watertown

respectively); the latter project having much to do with correcting the drainage of the athletic field that was located at the base of a long slope. One of the most complete is Saint Joseph College in West Hartford (now the University of Saint Joseph).

Plans for these schools incorporate several of the signature design elements of the firm, such as a winding entrance drive leading to an oval or circular arrival point in front of the principal building. In campus designs, the firm often established a framework for building over time, generally in the form of quadrangles or open green spaces edged by buildings. Siting and grading were used to form cohesive spaces intended to engender a sense of community. Olmsted Brothers also used similar principles in designing the grounds of religious residential institutions that served educational functions, including Saint Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield and Saint Joseph Convent in West Hartford.

Grounds of residential institutions

National: 145 job numbers Connecticut: 11 job numbers; 8 surveyed

This is not a large collection of jobs, but it includes the first project that Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. consulted on in Connecticut, beginning in 1860: the Hartford Retreat

for the Insane, known today as the Institute of Living. It remains an active and important facility offering comprehensive psychiatric care, with a relatively intact landscape designed by Olmsted and Vaux along with Jacob Weidenmann.

Most of the work in Connecticut is related to improved hospital grounds and the accommodation of automobile parking. Because these were often newly established institutions in cities where populations and care expanded through the 20th century, such as the Dillon Memorial at Hartford's Saint Francis Hospital, new facilities regularly replaced older ones, and little of the firm's design work survives today.

Grounds of public buildings

National: 145 job numbers Connecticut: 6 job numbers; 5 surveyed

This landscape project type includes everything from significant federal buildings in Washington, D.C. to small community libraries like the classically designed Blackstone Library in Branford. According to Olmsted historian Arleyn Levee, the work conducted on these projects by Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. was characterized by "its curvilinear grace, stately proportions and fitting enhancement for the structure to be served." During the City Beautiful era, however, "the firm designed grounds of

continued on next page

The Olmsted firm in Connecticut, cont'd from page 7

public buildings with more axial formality, to serve as decorative anchors for the municipalities." The Connecticut State Capitol grounds in Hartford is an example of the former, while the unrealized axial formality proposed in the New Haven Plan for a connecting plaza and boulevard between the new train station and downtown is an example of the latter.

Private estates and homesteads

National: 3,215 job numbers. Connecticut: 130 job numbers; 34 surveyed

This category has the greatest number of jobs of any of the landscape types, and except for Biltmore—the 125,000-acre estate for George Vanderbilt at Asheville, North Carolina—is the least remembered and least understood of the firm's work. This is in part because Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. is instead remembered as the "park maker" and for the great public works of his career.

But Olmsted is remembered for his emphasis on what Charles Beveridge called "Designing for Domesticity." Olmsted wrote that the chief sign of civilization was the desire to have "the enjoyment, the comfort, the tranquility, the morality and the permanent furnishings, interior and exterior, of a home."

Olmsted took a decidedly modern and scientific approach to design of the home landscape and looked for practical as well as scenic design solutions that would satisfy, even anticipate, the needs of his clients and that like his parks, stemmed from the natural setting of the property and its enhancement and not the application of a popular style. He also applied his belief of the health effects of landscape and "warned, the inhabitants of even well-built houses would be 'almost certain, before many years, to be much troubled with languor, dullness of perceptions, nervous debility or distinct nervous diseases."

The only significant Connecticut works in this category during Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.'s era to survive are the Robert Scoville property in Salisbury and Tranquillity Farm, the property of industrialist J.H. Whittemore in Middlebury. Substantial work, however, was done in this category by Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects during the Country Place era (1890-1930). A well-preserved example of



The peaceful landscape of the Hartford Retreat for the Insane (now the Institute for Living) was intended to contribute to the patients' treatment.

Lucy Lawliss, Red Bridge Group



Although Frederick Law Olmsted was known for naturalistic landscapes, in the 20th century the firm was often called to create formal designs, particularly gardens such as this one for Mrs. Henry Noyes, in Fairfield.

Country Place era estates is the Harold Hatch residence in Sharon.

Cemeteries, burial lots, memorials, and monuments

National: 282 job numbers Connecticut: 24 job numbers; 9 surveyed

The Olmsted firm designed very few cemeteries as complete, separate projects, most of the jobs in this category being individual grave lots. Thus, the Hillside Cemetery in Torrington is significant as a rare example. The firm also designed individual memo-

rials for several prominent Torrington clients within the cemetery. One of the features common to the firm's designs for cemetery plots, but not surviving at the Waldo plot in Bridgeport, is the creation of family "rooms" for dignified privacy. Similarly, civic monuments and memorials were integrated into appropriate settings, either as individual focal points or within a park landscape. A good example of this might have been the Keney Memorial in Hartford, but the path system and planting have been noticeably altered.

Kevan Klosterwill, Red Bridge Group

For Seymour Cunningham's burial plot in the Litchfield Cemetery, the firm placed a table marker atop a rock outcropping and surrounded it with wild-looking plantings.

Grounds of commercial and industrial buildings

National: 179 job numbers. Connecticut:15 job numbers; 2 surveyed

While neither of the sites surveyed survives, this is an important landscape project type that relates to a period when the economy was expanding dramatically after the end of the Civil War through the end of the 1920s. It is also a landscape type often connected to other projects through shared clients and word of mouth, whereby individuals might engage the firm for industrial or commercial developments as well as their private residences, estates, and/or cemetery plots. It is interesting to note that American affluence in the early 20th century led to the first corporate clients—insurance companies, banks, and manufacturing companies—with projects involving the design of landscaped grounds for their facilities. Torrington, Connecticut, and the work done for the Torrington Manufacturing Company, is an example of work with clients—in this case the Migeon family—on one type of project that led to other projects in the vicinity including family residences for Elizabeth Migeon, neighbors and colleagues such as T.W. Bryant, as well as cemetery lots in Hillside Cemetery for the Migeon family, Mrs. Charles Alvord, Luther G. Turner, F.F. Fuessenich, Fyler family, and L.S. Turner and a drinking fountain commissioned by the Daughters of the American Revolution.

Country clubs, resorts, hotels, and clubs

National: 157 job numbers Connecticut: 6 job numbers; 0 surveyed

Most Olmsted work in this

landscape type is associated with country clubs, a new introduction in America during the late 19th century. While there are no surviving examples of Olmsted firm work in this category in Connecticut, Goodwin, and Keney parks in Hartford, both designed by the firm in the late 1890s, are examples of parks that were adapted for golf.

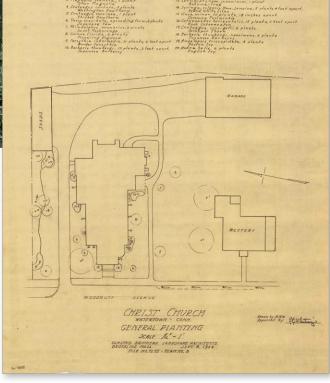
Grounds of churches

National: 95 job numbers Connecticut: 7 job numbers; 5 surveyed

This is another landscape project type represented by a small group of interesting jobs as examples. Most were designed by the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects. Except for Saint Joseph Cathedral at Hartford (demolished), many of the church projects are at their essence drives and parking areas to accommodate the rise of automobiles as the primary mode of transportation to church and the associated need for driveways, parking lots, pathways, and plants to screen or beautify these necessary areas.

The landscape plan for Christ Church in Watertown included provisions for parking, which played an increasingly prominent role in the firm's work as the 20th century progressed.

National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site



Arboreta and gardens

National: 21 job numbers Connecticut: 1 job number; 1 surveyed

Plants of all types—existing and proposed—were essential elements to the Olmsted firm's work, and although there are only a small number of projects in this category, several are significant for their association with larger jobs. The only surviving project related to this landscape project type is the Wadsworth DeBoer Arboretum in Middletown, associated with the nearby Col. Wadsworth estate. Although the firm prepared detailed plans for a Hartford Arboretum, the project was never completed.

Exhibitions and fairs

National: 28 job numbers Connecticut: 0 job numbers; 0 surveyed

This is the only landscape type without a Connecticut job number. However, because of the urban design influence associated

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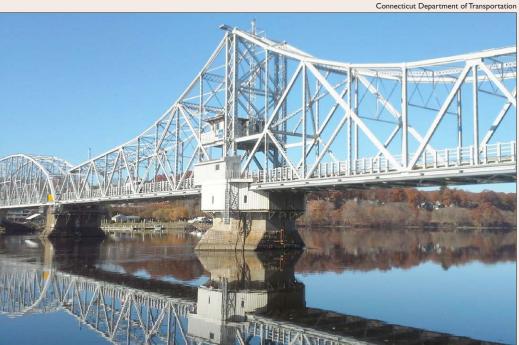
Briefly noted

East Haddam/Haddam.

The Connecticut Department of Transportation is beginning a major rehabilitation project for the East Haddam Swing Bridge. Opened in 1913, it was one of the first bridges paid for by the State of Connecticut and provided the first road crossing over the Connecticut River between Old Saybrook and Middletown. It was technically advanced for its time, nearly 900 feet long and with a 456-foot swing span. The current project involves a major rehabilitation of the structural, mechanical, and electrical components of the bridge. Additionally, a cantilevered sidewalk is being added to the south side of the bridge and approach sidewalks constructed. In a happy coincidence, the work will be carried out by the American Bridge Company of Pennsylvania, which constructed the bridge 109 years ago. DOT has created a project website, which will announce bridge closures once construction begins next year: easthaddamswingbridgeproject.com.

Greenwich.

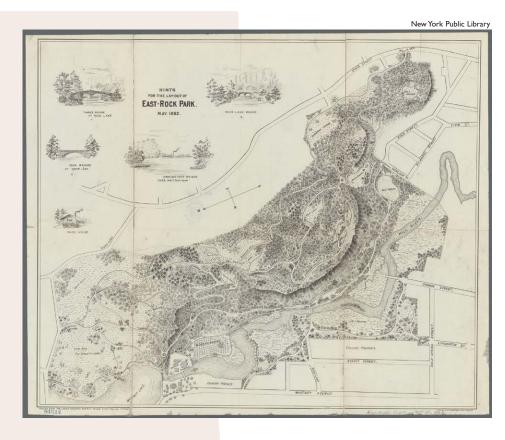
In July developers Church Sherwood LLC withdrew a proposal for a 192-unit apartment building in the Fourth Ward National Register district. The new building would have required the demolition of seven contributing structures in the district, houses dating from the mid-19th to the early 20th centuries, and at seven stories would have loomed over remaining buildings. The developers planned 58 affordable units in the building, allowing them to bypass most planning regulations under Section 8-30g of state law. An online petition opposing the development garnered more than 1,100 signatures, and opponents considered the feasibility of suing to prevent the project under the Connecticut Environmental Protection Act (CEPA), which can block unreasonable demolition of structures listed on





the National Register. Since CEPA does not relate to land use, and since the historic buildings conceivably could be incorporated in a new development, some believe this law could override Section 8-30g. However, this strategy has not yet been tested in court, so its feasibility remains unknown. While

the Fourth Ward houses are safe, for the moment, this episode further highlights the need for a better way to meet the growing need for affordable housing, including greater incentives for incorporating affordable development sensitively into historic settings and structures.



■ New Haven.

Amid the celebration of Frederick Law Olmsted's 200th birthday, New Haven is recognizing another landscape designer who was born in April 1822: Donald Grant Mitchell. Born in Norwich, Mitchell became a successful author and settled on a farm called Edgewood on the then-outskirts of Westville in 1855. Honing his landscaping skills at Edgewood, he became an advocate for public parks and provided the original designs for East Rock park (1880ff.; NR), Edgewood Park (1888ff.; NR), Bayview Park, and Fort Hale Park. For East Rock Park (pictured), Mitchell recommended doing as little as possible to alter the natural setting, writing that there was "little need for decorative gardening upon the mountain mass....The largest charm...must always lie in its commanding views—its savagery of cliffs and of windswept wild tufts of foliage." Eight New Haven-based organizations are leading the celebration with a series of lectures, tours, and exhibits related to Mitchell's life and work. For more information visit DonaldGrantMitchell.com.

▼ Newtown.

The town Legislative Council and Board of Selectmen voted in August to approve a National Register nomination for Fairfield Hills hospital. For years, the Town, which acquired the former mental hospital from the State in 2004, opposed historic listing on the grounds that designation would make it more difficult to tear down buildings deemed usable. Seventeen buildings have in fact been demolished while four have been renovated and others remain vacant. Now, in response to a request for

redevelopment proposals issued by the town in 2021, the Boston-based developer WinnDevelopment wants to rehab Shelton House (1933; pictured) and Kent House (1940) for housing and shops. Winn says federal historic rehabilitation tax credits, which would require National Register status, are crucial to the project's success. The State Historic Preservation Office will support a nomination only if all the surviving buildings are included. For many months town officials have weighed this

development proposal against the necessity of maintaining buildings they had targeted for demolition, at least during the five-year recapture period following the awarding of tax credits. However, the town's Fairfield Hills Authority, which oversees operation and development of the property, favors preservation, arguing that reuse of two buildings could spark interest in redeveloping others. With the council's vote, that possibility is a step closer to reality.



The Olmsted firm in Connecticut, cont'd from page 9

with Chicago's 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, it is significant to include. Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.'s involvement in the layout and design of the exposition grounds, and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.'s involvement in the urban planning work that flowed from that project, led to the firm's and Cass Gilbert's commission to prepare the Plan for New Haven in 1910.

Common themes and design elements Numerous scholars have worked to record the themes emerging from the work of the Olmsted firm. These themes are initially articulated in Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.'s, work based on his ideas about social reform, the need for civility and civilization for society to reach its potential, belief in the need to promote health in the environment to ensure the mental and physical health of the public following the ills resulting from the Industrial Revolution, and social equity following the challenges posed by massive immigration. The firm continued to promote a similar approach until the office closed in 1979.

The majority of the job sites observed as part of the Connecticut survey were clearly recognizable as the work of the Olmsted firm. In part, this results from the frequent use of a series of signature design

elements devised over time but rooted in Olmsted Sr.'s earliest work at Central Park. The signature design elements recurring throughout the Connecticut jobs surveyed include:

- Formal or marked property entry
- Curvilinear entrance road
- Oval or circular arrival court
- Orchestrated entrance and arrival sequence,
- Siting of the primary destination to command views and for effect upon arrival
- Separated vehicular and pedestrian circulation
- Modulated graded topography, smoothly rolling in pastoral landscapes and rougher in picturesque landscapes
- Principal open space edged by sweeping curves
- Secondary roads leading to screened service and functional areas
- Naturalistic plantings featuring turf, shade and evergreen trees, and limited shrubs
- More formal features at property entrances, arrival court, and adjacent to main buildings

- rveyed
 - Water features as focal points and for refreshment

public open spaces

· Screen plantings used to limit views of

incompatible adjacent areas and enclose

Conclusion

Frederick Law Olmsted Sr., the landscape architect, is a best expression of the culture and values of the educated and privileged society into which he was born in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1822. Here, he lived out his youth, returned often as an adult, and was, ultimately, buried at Hartford's Old North Cemetery among his family, mentors, and peers. The domesticated and settled landscape of Connecticut's Central Valley with its enclosing hills of the Uplands and Metacomet Ridge, provided Olmsted-an educated and privileged member of this society—a worldview that would later infuse his design ideas regarding the importance of scenic landscape for refreshment along with its restorative values for mental and physical health, and for its civilizing influence on individuals and communities.

While the work of the Olmsted firm had a tremendous impact on the American landscape in toto, their impact on the design and shaping of Connecticut's landscape is less evident. The most significant legacy of the firm's work are the parks in Bridgeport and Hartford—both cities were referred to as "park city" for their unusual collection of Olmsted parks—but the integrity and quality of the original work faded with age. What has survived and grown is the vibrant profession of landscape architecture in the state with a program at the University of Connecticut where students continue to be inspired by Olmsted and his work.

The landscapes of genius represented in the extant work will continue to serve the people of Connecticut and offer inspiration and guidance to all who are willing to use and expand the ethos of parks and shared landscapes as important ways to address the many environmental and societal challenges that face the state, the country, and the world today.



Children wade in a pool at Riverside Park in Hartford—a reminder that Olmsted parks exist for *people*.

unhoused, unfed, and uneducated poor people. It was because of his observations and thoughts on these matters that Bushnell proposed establishing a public park for the benefit of all Hartford residents in the early 1850s.

Another influence was growing interest in the sciences. Yale was the first to establish a "scientific school" and Olmsted one of its early students. Although a persistent eye infection kept him from enrolling full time, he was able to participate in lectures that gave him knowledge of chemistry, engineering, agricultural science, and geology. From his studies at Yale, the practical application of science and health became underpinning themes for Olmsted as he applied these principles to park design.

To learn more...

Read the full context report and follow the Olmsted project at PreservationCT. org/Olmsted and https://portal.ct.gov/DECD/Content/Historic-Preservation/01_Programs_Services/Olmsted-in-CT-Landscape-Documentation-Project.

Olmsted Online, https://olmstedonline.org: a basic source for researching Olmsted records at the Library of Congress and Fairsted.

Olmsted Research Guide Online (ORGO), http://ww3.rediscov.com/Olmsted: another research portal.

Fairsted, the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, nps.gov/frla: the Olmsted home and office in Brookline, Massachusetts, maintained by the National Park Service.

National Association of Olmsted Parks (NAOP), olmsted.org: a national organization dedicated to preserving Olmsted parks and advancing Olmsted's principles.

Olmsted200, olmsted200.org: NAOP's site for the Olmsted bicentennial celebration.

Olmsted Legacy Trail, olmstedlegacytrail.com: a guide to Olmsted history and landscapes in Connecticut, created by the Connecticut chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)

The Cultural Landscape Foundation (TCLF), tclf.org: the nationwide nonprofit for historic and cultural landscape preservation.

Charles E. Beveridge, Frederick Law Olmsted: Designing the American Landscape (1995).

Laura Wood Roper, FLO: A Biography of Frederick Law Olmsted (1973).

Elizabeth Hope Cushing, Beauty, Efficiency, and Economy: A Life of Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., Landscape Architect, Planner, and Conservationist (2021).



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HISTORIC PROPERTIES EXCHANGE

Threatened Buildings and Easement Properties Available — September/October 2022

Preservation easements protect the historic character of old buildings, structures and landscapes and require approval of proposed changes. When one of the many properties throughout the state on which Preservation Connecticut holds easements is on the market, we may list it here. To learn how to safeguard your property for future generations through an easement, explore Stewardship on our website, preservationct. org/steward, or contact Christopher Wigren, Deputy Director.

PRESERVATION CONNECTICUT EASEMENT

Thomas Lyman House 105 Middlefield Road, Durham (between 1787 and 1798)

\$780,000

Distinguished Georgian house on over 13 acres. Built by prominent Durham farmer, merchant, and town selectman Thomas Lyman, the house stayed in the Lyman family for nearly two hundred years. House measures 3,999 sq. ft. and features double-hipped roof, spacious central hall floor plan, and elegant paneling. Includes five bedrooms and three bathrooms and many recent interior updates. Preservation easement protects the exterior of the house plus further development of the property. Individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places which makes it eligible for historic rehabilitation tax credits.

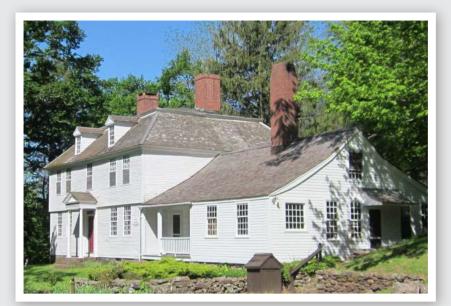
Contact: Patricia Moreggi, Coldwell Banker, 203-215-6957, patricia.moreggi@cbmoves.com



\$2,900,000

Redevelopment opportunity for historic textile mill. Constructed in phases between c.1837 and 1966. Original occupant, Parley Converse Mill, occupied the site until 1851 when acquired by C. Fox and Company which ran the mill until the 1890s. Purchased in 1907 by Rhode Island Worsted Company which remained in operation until 1954. The final long-term occupant was Stafford Printers which began leasing a section of the plant in 1940 to produce printed silk fabrics, flourishing during World War II manufacturing camouflage silk and rayon for parachutes. Stafford Printers closed in 1981. Preservation Connecticut's Making Places industrial heritage project identified the property as potentially eligible for listing on the State Register of Historic Places, which would allow it to qualify for State historic rehabilitation tax credits. Building area is 131,193 sq. ft.; 10 acres.

Contact: Paul Bongiorni, SR Commercial Real Estate, 413-459-0570





Deadline for the next issue is October 20, 2022

Historic Properties Exchange is published to advertise endangered properties in Connecticut by Preservation Connecticut, a statewide nonprofit organization located at 940 Whitney Avenue, Hamden, Connecticut 06517. Real estate advertised in this publication is subject to the Federal Housing Act of 1968. Neither advertisers nor Preservation Connecticut are responsible or liable for any misinformation, misprints, or typographical errors contained in Historic Properties Exchange. To list a property or learn about properties listed, contact Kristen Hopewood, at khopewood@preservationct.org, or call (203) 562-6312.



220 Middlesex Turnpike, Old Saybrook (1875)

\$5,900,000

Restoration opportunity in Old Saybrook on 124-acres. Historic house built in 1875 by sea captain. Features include an octagonal tower with views of the Connecticut River and Long Island Sound and front porch with hand carved columns and pilasters. At one point known as Fairview Farm, the house and accompanying acreage, including a manmade reservoir, supplied goods and produce to Hartford. Received later attention as a filming location for the 1971 horror movie, *Let's Scare Jessica to Death*. 7 bedrooms, 5 ½ bathrooms, 5,000 sq. ft. Vacant for decades, needs TLC to be restored to original grandeur.

Contact: Matt Merritt, William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty, 860-729-2290, mmerritt@williampitt.com



Lost Acre Farm 132 Curtiss Road, Warren

\$12,000,000

Opportunity to own over 100 acres overlooking Lake Waramaug. Property includes c.1820 farmhouse of 3,372 sq. ft. with three bedrooms and four baths, prominent stone fireplace and exposed timber framing and beams. Property also includes three guest cottages, terraces and gardens, equestrian barn, pool, and pool house. Property consists of four parcels totaling 114.64 acres and faces the threats of subdivision and development.

Contact: Pat Kennedy Lahoud, William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty, 860-866-7756, plahoud@wpsir.com

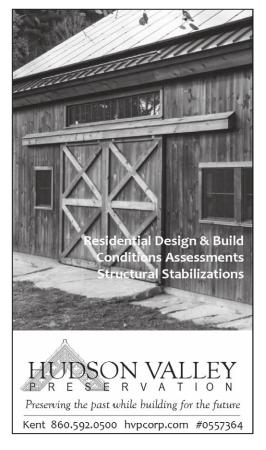


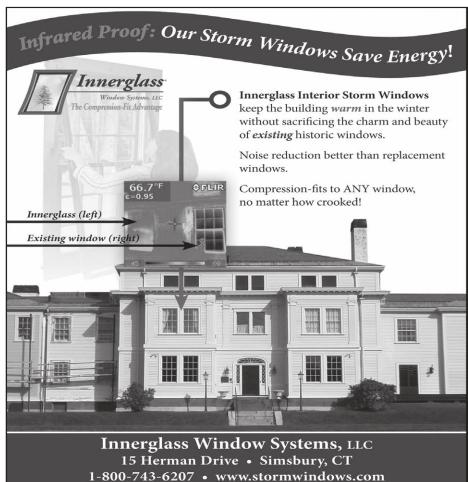
Over 151-acre property available near Warren's Lake Waramaug. Former home to Mountain Lake Bible Camp, established 1947. Property includes contemporary camp dormitory, multiple original cabins, two ponds, and a mixture of forest and pastures. Faces the threats of subdivision and development.

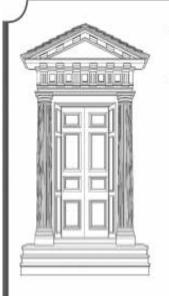
Contact: Steve Pener, William Pitt Sotheby's International Realty, 203-470-0393, spener@wpsir.com











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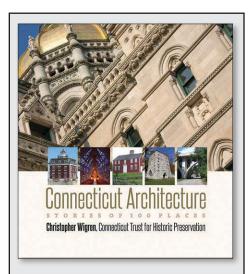
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Upcoming Meetings

Connecticut Historic **Preservation Council**

October 5, 2022, at 9:30 a.m. —Virtual meeting November 2, 2022, at 9:30 a.m. -Virtual Meeting

To participate, contact Jonathan Kinney (860) 500-2380; Jonathan.Kinney@ct.gov

State Historic Preservation Board

December 2, 2021, at 9:30 a.m. —Virtual meeting

To participate, contact Jenny Scofield (860) 500-2343; Jenny. Scofield@ct.gov

For more information call (860) 500-2343 or visit portal.ct.gov/DECD/Services/ Historic-Preservation/About-the-State-Historic-Preservation-Office

Mail to: 940 Whitney Avenue. Hamden. CT 06517-4002

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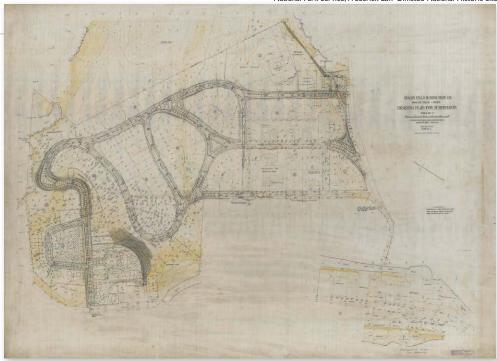
begun before the subdivision, and the winding roads laid out by the Olmsted firm.

The curves in the roads frame views and suggest paths for travel. Discussing his plan for Riverside, Illinois, in 1868, Frederick Law Olmsted set out the design principles that the firm used nearly fifty years later at Beacon Falls: "gracefully-curved lines, generous spaces, and the absence of sharp corners, the idea being to suggest and imply leisure, contemplativeness and happy tranquility."

To see this, go to the intersection of Maple Avenue and Burton Road, where stone steps and a grove of trees draw the viewer's eye leftward, towards the school (now town hall) and the heart of the village.

Another intersection that originally had this visual element was at South Circle and Maple Avenue, but with the view towards the rocky ledge and wooded ridgeline. A copse of trees in the road island has since been lost, so the visual cue is no longer as obvious.

Where topography was particularly steep, the landscape architects called for fieldstone retaining walls, their rustic appearance blending in with the landscape. The firm even provided sample designs for houses (not built), to suggest proportions and materials that would complement the landscape, as well as trellises, foundations, and plantings that would connect the built environment with the natural one.



Curving roads laid out by the Olmsted contrast with earlier, straight ones.

Tracy Lewis built his own house in the new neighborhood, facing a proposed park. Olmsted Brothers provided a separate landscape design for the house, but that appears not to have been executed, and the house was demolished in 2021. The park was built, but little if anything remains or its original landscape.

Beacon Falls is an example of the planning projects that the Olmsted firm increasingly undertook in the 20th century. Worker housing may seem a utilitarian project for a nationally promi-

nent firm to undertake, but the work here expresses the Beacon Falls Company's values, affirming the worth of workers and the need to provide decent housing for all members of society.

The Beacon Falls Rubber Company subdivision is found on Burton Road, Wolfe, Maple and Highland avenues, and North and South circles in Beacon Falls. More information can be found at OlmstedOnline.org, posted under job 06222. Information here also comes from the Olmsted Legacy Trail, olmstedlegacytrail.com.

Connecticut Archaeology Fair

October 8, 2022, from 10am to 4pm Old New-Gate Prison & Copper Mine 115 Newgate Road, East Granby

Come celebrate Archaeology Awareness Month with the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office, the Connecticut Office of the State Archaeologist, and Preservation Connecticut. Exhibitors will have activities set up around the historic prison for children and adults alike while talks about local archaeology sites are discussed by professional archaeologists to help attendees understand the state of archaeology in Connecticut.



Tickets to the mine must be purchased in advance; contact https://www.eventbrite.com/e/light-into-the-dungeon-a-jack-o-lantern-experience-tickets-408869117537

For more information, email Stefon Danczuk, sdanczuk@preservationct.org.





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Editor's note: In 2022 each issue of Preservation Connecticut News features a Connecticut site associated with the Olmsted landscape firm. Material is drawn from the Olmsted in Connecticut landscape documentation project being carried out by Preservation Connecticut, the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Office, and consultants from the Red Bridge Group in observance of the 200th anniversary of Frederick Law Olmsted's birth.

n addition to plans for parks and grounds for public buildings, the Olmsted firm designed residential landscapes. Some were very grand, such as the Scoville estate in Salisbury or Waveny in New Canaan. But they also included more modest properties, as well as subdivisions. In Connecticut, those included the high-end Greenwich community of Khakum Wood, as well as a development of worker housing for the Beacon Falls Rubber Shoe Company.

Founded by George A. Lewis and later headed by his son, Tracy S. Lewis, the Beacon Falls Rubber Shoe Company made shoes for activities including sports, yachting, track and field, even dancing. As the company grew, there wasn't enough housing in Beacon Falls for its employees, and many commuted from other places. To encourage in-town living, the company hired Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects in 1915 to devise a plan for housing.

Tracy Lewis envisioned a village-like feel for the new community on the hilltop, overlooking but separate from the commercial and industrial areas along Main Street. The steep hill, a deterrent to prior development, became a design element in the landscape, with carefully designed roads undulating and curving to follow contours of the land—note the contrasts between the straight lines of Wolfe Avenue, Maple Avenue, and Highland Avenue,