

THE EVOLUTION OF URBAN PUBLIC PARK
DESIGN IN EUROPE AND AMERICA:
VANCOUVER ADAPTION TO 1913

by

DIANE BEVERLEY HINDS
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Diane Hinds

Department of Community and Regional Planning

The University of British Columbia
2075 Wesbrook Place
Vancouver, Canada
V6T 1W5

Date October 10 1979

ABSTRACT

The 19th Century Victorian writer, John Ruskin, made the observation, "The measure of any great civilization is its cities; and the measure of a city's greatness is to be found in the quality of its public spaces -- its parkland and squares". The objective of this thesis is to trace the ideas, the development, and the evolution of the design of the public park from the eve of the movement for public parks in Victorian England, to the Vancouver park landscape in 1913.

The identification and interpretation of historic design trends, social attitudes and regional influences on urban parks was based on: in the case of Europe and North America, an initial literature review of the history of the urban park -- starting in the 18th Century; and in the case of Vancouver, on archival material from the Vancouver City Archives, contemporary literature and social histories of the City, and contemporary photographs of Vancouver's early parks.

The first public parks in England that were originally designed for public use, were largely the result of the negative effects of the industrial revolution. The already established natural landscape design traditions for the private estates, together with the desire to improve the city living conditions, resulted in the naturalistic park, which was designed to enable people to "escape" back to nature.

The historical study, showed that the first public parks were developed in the industrial North of England, where local philanthropists donated their money, and more importantly, their time toward creating a better living environment for the community. In the City of London where the effects of the

industrial revolution were not as evident on the landscape, the existing royal parks were redesigned to provide passive recreation and aesthetic pleasure for the citizens of Western London. New parks were also created, particularly in the East End of London, where accessibility to the royal parks was limited.

In the early 19th century, Georges Haussmann completely redesigned the central urban structure of Paris. He and Alphand used the English Natural Landscape park as a model for the Bois de Boulogne and the Bois de Vincennes, former royal hunting parks. Although these larger urban parks reflected the English influence, Alphand created numerous smaller parks and squares throughout the city which displayed very formal characteristics and which distinguished them from the British open space system.

The Englishman's traditional love of the rural countryside was transferred across the Atlantic where Fredrick Law Olmsted and his followers became the major exponents of this philosophy in the many park landscapes that they designed in North America. The Americans' most significant contribution to the park movement was the development of park systems, which involved the integration of green space into the city structure.

The French sense of civic pride and flair for formality surfaced in the United States at the end of the 19th century in the Beaux Arts inspired City Beautiful Movement. While the naturalistic design of public parks in the U.S. did not change, the movement influenced the design of the entrance to many parks and the manner in which parks were presented as an important component of the urban fabric.

In Canada, many cities inherited parklands from the federal government, which were former defence posts or training grounds for the military. Canadians did not hire expert landscape architects to design these parks and consequently, the development of urban public parks was usually incremental.

The study of Vancouver indicated that the acquisition of Stanley Park, Vancouver's first and most important park, was not the result of a committed park policy, but the result of the availability of the Coal Peninsula military reserve. Similarly, the acquisition of Hastings Park in 1888 was a grant from the Provincial Government, and Clark's Park was a gift to the City from a Toronto realtor in 1890. The desire to simply acquire land for park purposes was an attitude that was to become prevalent in Vancouver for many years.

Between 1886 and 1913, the development of the Vancouver park landscape was largely influenced by three things: the attitudes held by the people living in Vancouver at that time; the ideas and influences of other places, primarily from Britain and the American West Coast; and the social and political make up of the community manifesting itself in various civic associations and ratepayers groups who asserted themselves in the decision making process.

The basic design features of Stanley Park were developed in the initial years between 1886 and 1900. These characteristics included: the park drive running around the periphery of the park; the walking trails through the heart of the park; the Brockton Point Athletic fields; the relatively formal entrance to the park with the nearby zoo; and the Second Beach bathing area.

During the very prosperous years of 1900 to 1913, these features were further developed in the style that was reflective of the current attitudes held by the influential citizens of Vancouver at that time. These years also saw the first major park expansion in Vancouver as the citizens supported the Park Board's desire to acquire land for park purposes.

The acquisition and development of the neighbourhood parks were usually the result of lobbying by the ward ratepayers. Similarly, the creation of supervised children's playgrounds in the 1920's and the development of Second, English Bay, and Kitsilano Beaches in the early 1900's, happened only after particular groups provided the impetus for these facilities.

In 1913, Vancouver had an expanding and pleasing park system -- but a system that had luckily experienced positive incremental development. Although the Park Board lacked a development policy for Vancouver's parks, the citizens' instinctive desire for naturalistic parks guided the park system through the initial years of development and managed to overcome a major threat to the natural integrity of Stanley Park.

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CHAPTER I

THOUGHTS, IDEAS, AND TRENDS THAT LED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC PARKS

This chapter traces the ideas behind garden and landscape design that led up to the public park movement of the early 19th Century. Garden design was an art that had been evolving for centuries through Roman times and the Middle Ages, to Louis XIV's Versailles and England's Kew Gardens. England and France developed very different schools of garden design, but one could always find a few gardens in both countries that had obviously been influenced by the traditions on the other side of the Channel. The French tended to be more influenced by the Renaissance spirit of man's dominance over nature, which resulted in a more geometric and angular garden design. Englishmen on the other hand have historically expressed a longing for the rural countryside and an attachment to more natural shapes.

Throughout 18th Century England the wealthy and the nobility supported what came to be known as the "English Landscape Movement". In the 18th Century, the term "park" meant a private area of land adjacent to a gentleman's residence which was often designed and planted by one of the supporters of the English Landscape School. These men; Lancelot "Capability" Brown, William Kent, and particularly Humphrey Repton were to have an undeniable influence on early public park design, even though their contributions were made half a century earlier. The creation of a public park as a place within a town to be used and enjoyed by all of its citizens, was essentially a Victorian idea. Early parks were touted as a relief from the unpleasant conditions and phenomenal population growth brought about by the industrial revolution in Britain. It was the Victorian

zeal for reform, together with the established gardening and landscaping traditions that shaped the creation of the first public parks in Britain.

Visual "Greenery" other than Royal parks was first introduced into London by "The London Squares". The emergence of the green space came out of the idea that homes are for comfort and privacy and thus they should be merged into greenery or a soft edge as much as possible. The increased stress in the 18th Century upon the connection of the dwelling with nature, was influenced by the trend of the time toward Jean Jacques Rousseau's writing and the cult of "natural man".¹ In London, these squares which were natural environments within a geometric setting, began to appear.

Rousseau's view on natural man advocated that the original human nature is, itself, good before it has been corrupted by society. "The spirit of society alone introduces and permits inequality unknown in the original state of man".² Rousseau's very positive view on man's characteristics in his natural state became a tremendous influence on 18th Century society, resulting in the widespread desire for a closer association with nature.

The first squares originated in the 17th Century, but were only composed of grass and plane trees because at that time, the squares risked the fate, as all open squares did, of becoming a dumping ground for filth of all kinds. Gradually, as sanitary conditions improved, gardens and flowers were planted in the squares.

The London Squares were not public places, but were used by the well to do, who lived in the houses that surrounded the squares and who had

keys to let themselves inside. While key parks did little to advance the democratic process or encourage public exchange in an open city space, they did symbolize the fact that man feels a need to have some form of nature close to his place of residence and activity.

This idea was also expressed in other ways during the late 1760's. The design and development of the Royal Crescent, the Circus, and Lansdowne Crescent in Bath offered a new form of living. The designers were able to blend the residences together with the natural surroundings in the form of "parks". The structures are all curved in some way with soft edges that melt into the natural backdrop. Lansdowne Crescent is particularly winding, which, from the air, looks like a snake between the trees. Again this desire for nature as a part of ones living environment created new urban landscapes for private enjoyment.

By the end of the 18th Century, the nobility were interested in the development of their estates or parts of their estates into designed "natural landscapes". These estates were located in rural areas outside the great cities. Their significance lies in the fact that the great estate proved to be a design concept in itself. The "English Natural Landscape Movement" arose out of the English traditional love of the natural landscape, and it was from this premise that the group of new garden designers worked. The private estates were also significant because in many cases, it was these wealthy people's hunting parks and wooded retreats that eventually became the great public parks of the 19th century. The Royal Parks of London are an example, and give the West End of London its unique character. There are many English towns that would have an inadequate park system if it were not for those parks which were originally estates belonging to the

local nobility.

The new style of English landscape as a garden art form was directly influenced by the literary rediscovery of nature, which immediately became an inspiration to poets and artists. The art of landscape painting became widely recognized when painters like Claude Lorraine and Nicholas Poussin produced romantic landscapes of the English countryside, and this in turn, influenced garden art. Michael Laurie argues that natural landscape gardening was the product of the Romantic Movement. "Its form was based on direct observation of nature and the principles of painting."³

Unfortunately, a comprehensive understanding of the Romantic Movement defies definition with a few pages. The Romantics from 1770 to 1845, were perhaps the first group in recent history to regard art as an important profession, both socially and philosophically. Other important qualities of Romantic life were energy and robustness. The concern for art therefore, together with channelled energy and society's current interest in nature, resulted in a tremendous desire and development of natural landscape gardening. In the late 19th Century the wealthy began to hire landscape gardeners to design the grounds of their great estates.

Lancelot (Capability) Brown was one of the original landscape designers to work in the natural style.⁴ He was largely responsible for changing the classical garden forms in England to the natural landscape style. He began his career as an assistant to Sir William Kent, the head gardener at Stowe, a famous garden estate in Buckinghamshire. Brown worked on many gentleman's private estates throughout England before he came back to completely revise Stowe in 1780.

Brown's landscapes produced the effects of smoothness, roundness, and gradual variation rather than the classical tendencies towards contrasts in texture, colour and form. At the end of his career, colour played no part in his designs; he relied on the softened land formations. The Brownian landscape park which was called the "Picturesque" style of landscape gardening, became an accepted formula in England. It always included: encircling belts of trees to contain the view from within; clumps of beech trees within the estate which vitalized the middle distance; wide rolling fields of turf; and a serpentine lake of still water whose ends were concealed and whose banks were naked.

The transformations of the gardens at Stowe are probably a good representation of the evolution of landscape gardening during the 18th century. The Stowe estate was owned by General Sir Richard Temple who, by 1715 obtained the title, of Baron Cobham. The Baron wanted to develop the extensive grounds in a grand manner as visual evidence of his position in the world. He hired the architect Vanbrugh to remodel the house and a man named Bridgeman, a London nurseryman, to organize the grounds. Illustration 1 was the Bridgeman plan of Stowe, which closely resembled Versailles. The major axis, a French characteristic, clearly defined the garden. It also contained fountains, pools, statues, parterres⁵ and canals, all of which are found at Versailles.

In 1769, Stowe was modified by Sir William Kent, a former painter and sculptor. (Illustration 2). He softened the geometric rigidity of the garden and created Italianate gardens and classical structures. The Italian style was to have untrimmed and unkempt trees to create a series of pictures, and to obliterate the relationship of the parts of the garden

to the whole. Kent essentially softened Bridgeman's English version of Versailles.

Stowe was altered for the third time when the English landscape school was firmly established by Capability Brown and others. In 1780, Brown returned to Stowe and set about redesigning the gardens (Illustration 3). All traces of geometry were removed as well as the classical sculpture, temples, and grottoes. What Brown wanted to achieve was a view from the mansion of a "pure" natural English countryside; a picturesque view that Lorraine or Poussin would like to paint. G.B. Tobey describes the transformation; "Gone was the feeling that the estate's chatelain was master of all he surveyed as at Versailles, but was, in effect, the custodian of a portion of an earthly paradise, his own Garden of Eden before the fall."⁶

Capability Brown in his work at Stowe and other English gardens, established a strong influence in Europe. Marie Antoinette insisted on a "natural wilderness" garden at her chateau, modelled on what the French thought was an English landscape garden. In this park was a lake, where, on the banks, there was a little farm village including a "mill, dairy barns, and all the trappings of a stage set for Marie Antoinette and her maids to play at being farmerettes."⁷ In 1789, a portion of the Villa Borghese just outside the Porta del Popolo in Rome, was remodelled in the latest landscape style. What resulted was the original Borghese Gardens with a little vision of England. Although Capability Brown devoted his career to "improving" the English landscape, other landscape gardeners, some through apprenticeship, soon began to "do" English gardens throughout Europe.

Capability Brown was also a tremendous influence on European and North American city parks. This was primarily because of the Picturesque styles' adaptability to large areas, and to its lingering influence on estate design at the time of the Industrial Revolution, as will be seen later.

The style of English gardens went through further development with the career of Humphrey Repton. Repton was always interested in gardens, but his ideas for gardens were later applied to parks. He would have undoubtedly been very involved in the creation of the first parks in England had he not died in a boating accident at an early age.

Repton's design style was an extension of Brown's natural landscape style, but the significant difference was the scale of spaces in the gardens. Repton felt that there needed to be privacy in a garden, so created many segregated spaces and did away with the expansive view of the grounds from the mansion or house. Whereas Brown insisted that grass continue up to the foundations of the house, Repton, on the other hand, modified Brown's style to restore the terrace to connect the house to the garden. (Illustration 4). Gardens were no longer a planned unity after Repton, with neither an axial development or the controlling sweep of a belt walk to give physical coherence to the design. Private areas in the gardens began to be developed to the shape of the land.

What essentially happened, was that the garden and landscape design went from the "landscape park" at its best, to the advocacy of a new system of gardening based upon a smaller scale. This scale was to become increasingly familiar to the Victorians. Repton's personal theory went from the visual "picturesque" to the idea that the qualities of utility (which Repton

defied as "convenience, comfort, neatness and everything that conduces to the purposes of habitation with elegance,") were most important in landscape gardening.⁸

The idea of utility in a garden led to the practice of planting plants, not necessarily where they had the best effect, but where they grew best. Poets and architects did not have this technical knowledge, whereas gardeners did. John Claudius Loudon, who later developed Repton's ideas one step further, in his work and in his writings, put his finger on the change from the 18th to 19th century. He noted that previously there had been many books available on the aesthetics of gardening, but that these were all being replaced by botanical gardening literature.

The career of Humphrey Repton therefore, was a tremendous influence on the field of landscape design at the turn of the century. Although he died before becoming involved in the design of parks for the public, his ideas and designs can be recognized in many parks today. Regent's Park for example was designed by John Nash, an architect who was once in partnership with Repton. Although their association was broken off late in Repton's life, the designs of Regent's Park are clearly characteristic of Repton's work.

As the Victorian age emerged, landscape gardening was at the stage where, it, together with factors such as the new Industrial Revolution and extensive travel abroad, produced yet another landscape school called the "Gardenesque". The Gardenesque school of design had essentially been inspired by Repton's work, but it was finally brought to the forefront of the profession in the writings and the work of John Claudius Loudon. Loudon as

a follower of Repton, was also concerned with smaller scale landscape. His Gardener's Magazine was the first published on gardening, and in addition, he ran several other journals which ran articles on the state of the gardening art.

The Gardenesque style of landscape design involved arranging trees, plants and shrubs according to their kinds and their dimensions. It brought, once again, an order to gardening although not in the geometric sense of the former classical gardens. Loudon in his Gardener's Magazine explained what he saw as the difference and the evolution of landscaping from the Natural Landscape or Picturesque School of Capability Brown to the Gardenesque School of the early Victorian era. He saw the former Natural Landscape School as being concerned with trees, shrubs, and flowers that were indiscriminately mixed and crowded together in shrubberies, and generally left to grow up and destroy one another as they would have done in a natural forest. This trend was also accelerated by the taste for landscape painting and poetry which prevailed at the end of the century among the higher classes of British society.

Loudon pointed out that the early 1800's showed a shift in emphasis in gardening from the Picturesque to that of botany and agriculture and the introduction of new plants from other countries. In order for some of these plants to survive in the open British climate, new systems of laying out and planting grounds to display these new plants were introduced. The influences for this new gardening were coming from England's access to many parts of the world. G.A. Jellicoe pointed out that, "it was the double victories of Trafalgar and Waterloo in 1805 and 1815 which gained England access to all parts of the world and made it possible for all kinds of plants to be

introduced to this country."⁹ There arose an interest for the "exotic specimen" that was consequently reflected on the landscape and became the strongest characteristic of the Gardenesque. (Illustration 5)

The original method of "bedding" began to be widely used because these plots could display similar specimens in a neat and tidy manner. This garden structure was very different from the Natural Landscape style and was also reflected in painting. Whereas a landscape painter would deal with distinct foregrounds, middlegrounds, and distance, a painter of a Gardenesque landscape would be concerned with the grouped individual species that would almost serve as architectural embellishments in the garden. Jellicoe was aware of the influence of the Gardenesque on later park layouts and saw this as a negative influence. He noted that "the meaningless scattering of 'specimen trees' or shrubs over the lawn between the foreground flower garden and background encircling trees was a problem of Victorian parks as well as of present day parks."¹⁰ Whether one agrees with this viewpoint or not, it is obvious that this "specimen" style of English gardening and landscaping has been carried over to park and garden design in North America as well as England today. The idea of the botanical garden, although originating long before the Victorian era, is a strong example of this manner of displaying particular species. Most large city parks have some section that is devoted to this method of gardening.

The early 1830's were the formative years in the cry for public open space. 1833 saw the appointment of a Select Committee on Public Walks which was appointed to consider the best means of securing "open spaces in the vicinity of populous towns, as public walks and places of exercise

calculated to promote the health and comfort of the inhabitants." The committee, understandably, favoured the provision of Public open spaces and suggested legislation to facilitate the dedication of land for that purpose. The legislators were not convinced however, so the public remained dependent upon the generosity of some individuals to open their gardens or to donate their land. Loudon wrote in his Gardener's Magazine in 1835, "Public gardens are just beginning to be thought of in England and like most other great domestic improvements in our country, they have originated in the spirit of the people rather than the government."¹¹

SUMMARY

In the eve of the public park movement in England, the well known landscape designers were still providing their talent to royalty, the nobility, and the wealthy. Although these private estates and parks were for the privileged few, they, together with the London Squares, public walks, and Medieval remnants of the past, were forerunners of the urban public park. They were the expression of the "state of the art" in landscape and garden design, and provided a design basis upon which the new public park designer would build, in the early stages of the movement. In some cases, such as the Royal parks in West London, these private landscapes were eventually turned over for public enjoyment.

In Britain at this time, the acceptance and vogue of Rousseau's writings about man and nature, the rejection of the formal design trends in France, and the Briton's recent realization of this traditional love of the British countryside were all forces that led to the particular design basis for the development and transformation of the British landscape.

The British landscape went through a transformation from the traditional formal type of landscape to the more natural "Picturesque" and "Gardenesque" styles. The formal British landscapes, like Versailles, included a major axis in the garden as well as fountains, canals, statues, and reflecting pools. While English estates never displayed the extreme geometry and formality of the French estates, they were nevertheless influenced by the French Renaissance style of landscape gardening.

The Picturesque style of landscape design, which originated with Capability Brown, was a style that was directly influenced by the current literary and artistic styles of England. These styles emphasized man's positive relationship to nature as reflected in paintings of pastoral English landscapes. Picturesque landscapes were characterized by huge expanses of lawn, with scattered groups of trees surrounding the fields of turf. Brown usually created an uninterrupted view of the grounds from the mansion. These landscapes showed a smoothness of natural shapes and a gradual variation between lawn, shrubs, and trees. Colour was not important in the Picturesque landscape, and Brown's latest works were completely devoid of colour.

The Gardenesque style of landscape gardening evolved out of the Picturesque style when Humphrey Repton and later, John Claudius Loudon developed the concern for more privacy and thus a smaller scale garden. The Gardenesque landscape designers displayed the individual beauty of trees and plants by specimen groups, often enhancing the "exotic specimen from abroad." This style incorporated the oriental bedding method, which provided a more sophisticated method of displaying plants, while creating smaller contained spaces within a garden. Colour appeared in the landscape once again and a

concern for botany and agriculture in gardening began to replace the earlier emphasis on art and philosophy. Finally, the Gardenesque style of landscape gardening was to become the primary design style for the Victorian parks, both in Britain, and in North America.

FOOTNOTES

1. Sigfried Giedion, Space, Time and Architecture; the growth of a new tradition (Cambridge, Mass: 1967), p. 711.

2. Stephen Ellenburg, Rousseau's Political Philosophy (Ithaca: Cornell Press, 1976), p. 61.

3. Michael Laurie, An Introduction to Landscape Architecture (New York: American Elsevier Pub. Co. Inc., 1975), p. 32.

While the diagonal was still a principle element of romantic painting, it is "nature" as the subject of painting to which Laurie is referring.

4. To the wealthy people Brown worked for, he very soon acquired the nickname "Capability" because when he first viewed a gentleman's estate, he would say that the place had capabilities of improvement."

5. A parterre is a level space in a garden which is subdivided by beds of plots in which flowers are grown. The garden is on the earth and is to be looked down upon rather than to be looked out at.

6. G.B. Tobey, A History of Landscape Architecture; the Relationship to Environment, (New York: American Elsevier Pub. Co. Inc., 1973), p. 135.

7. Ibid., p. 137.

8. George Chadwick, The Park and The Town; Public Landscape in the 19th and 20th Centuries (New York: Fredrick A. Praeger, Pub., 1966), p. 22.

9. Ibid., p. 56.

10. Ibid., p. 57.

11. Ibid., p. 52

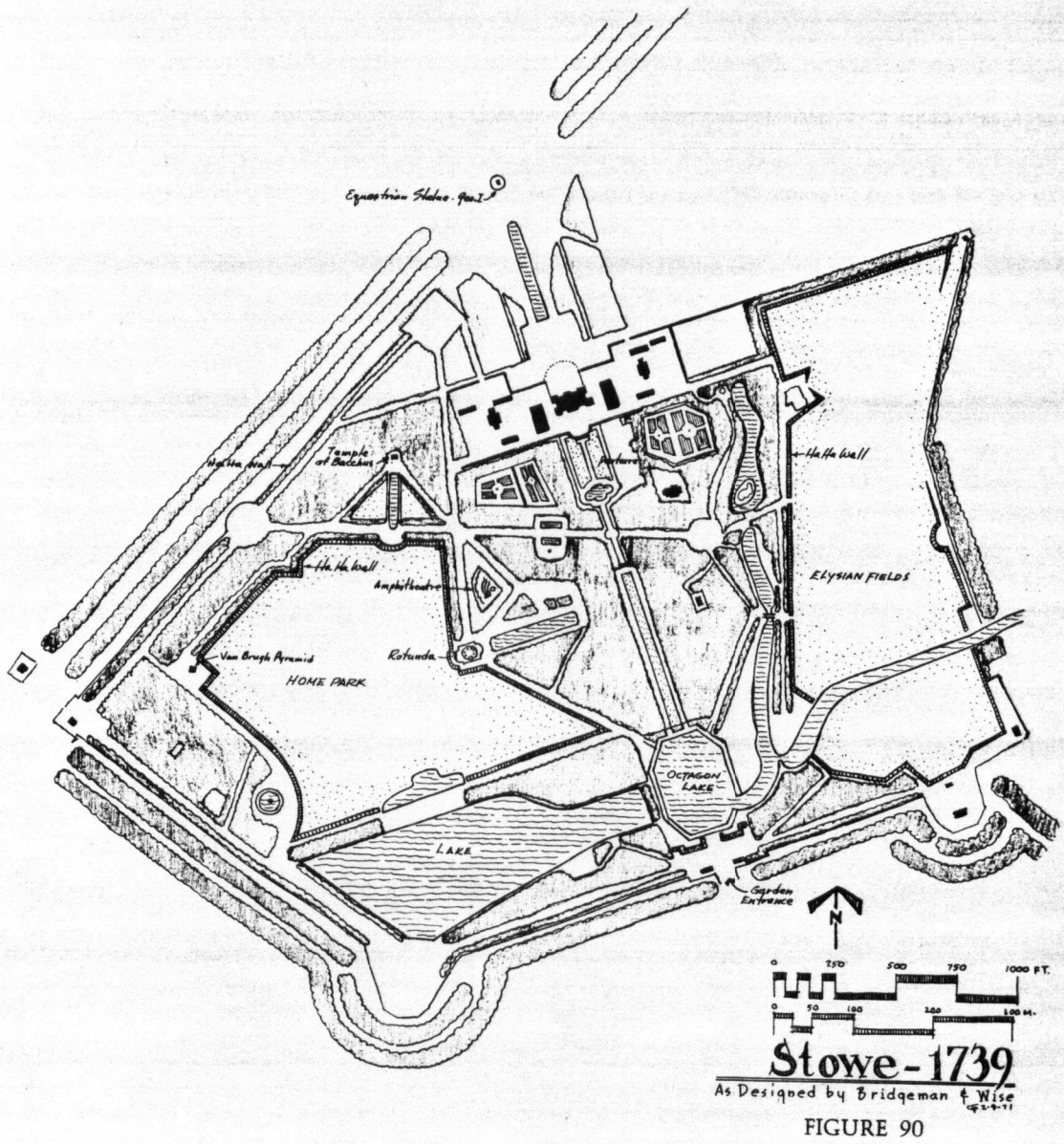
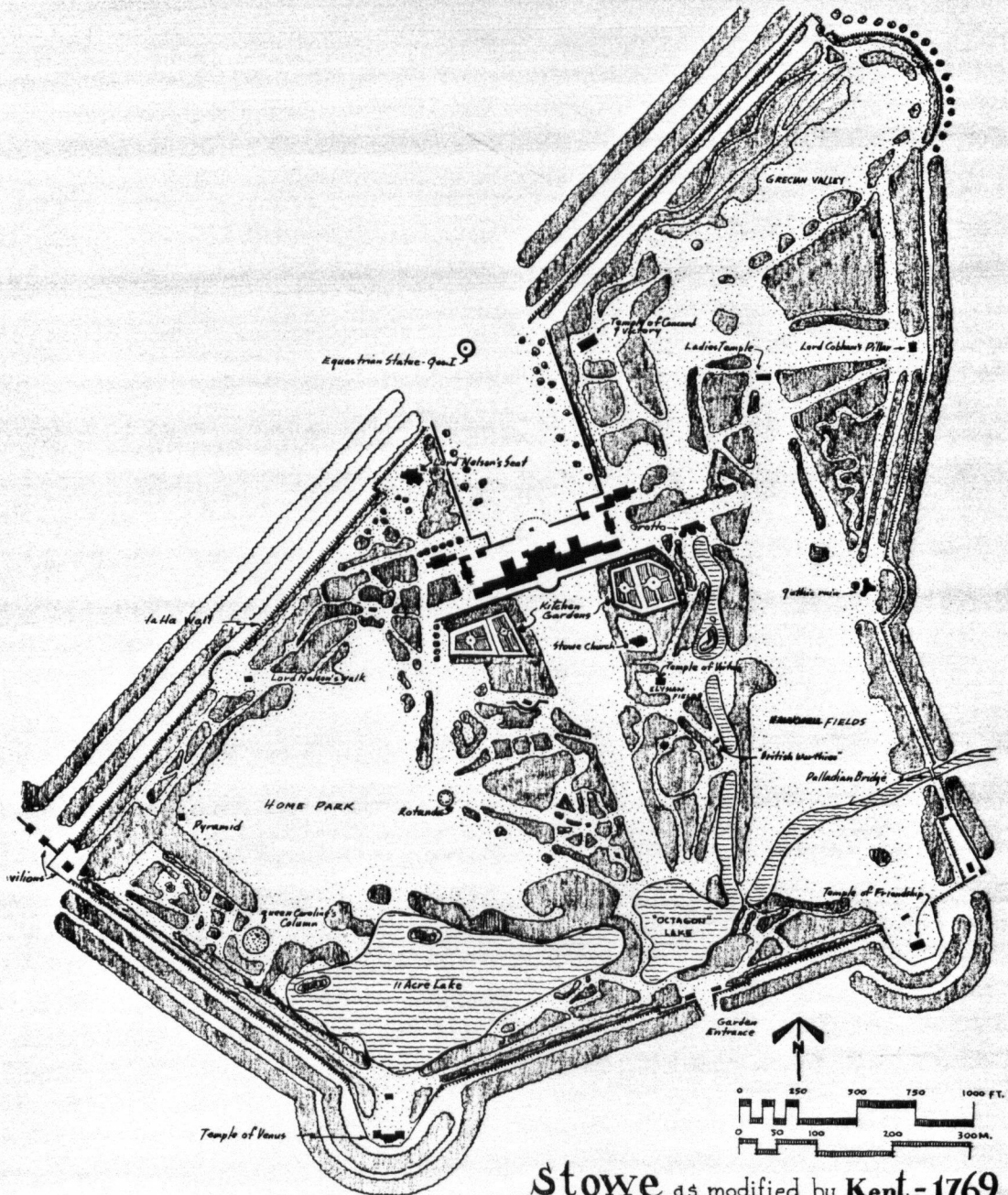


ILLUSTRATION I STOWE ESTATE AS DESIGNED BY BRIDGEMAN 1739.
TOBEY P. 132.



Stowe as modified by Kent - 1769

FIGURE 91

ILLUSTRATION 2

STOWE ESTATE AS MODIFIED BY KENT 1769. TOBEY P.134

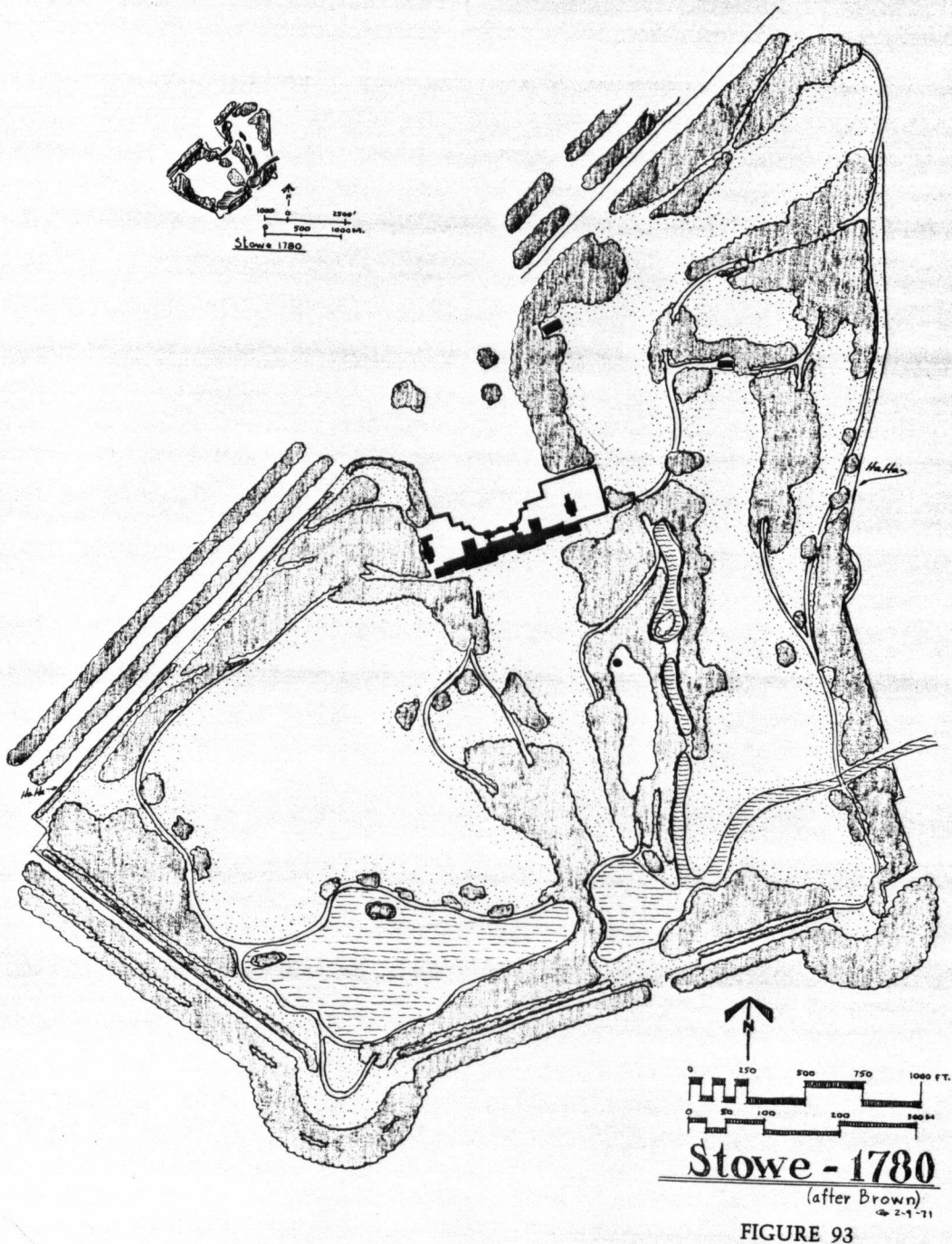


ILLUSTRATION 3

STOWE ESTATE AS MODIFIED BY
BROWN 1780. TOBEY P. 136

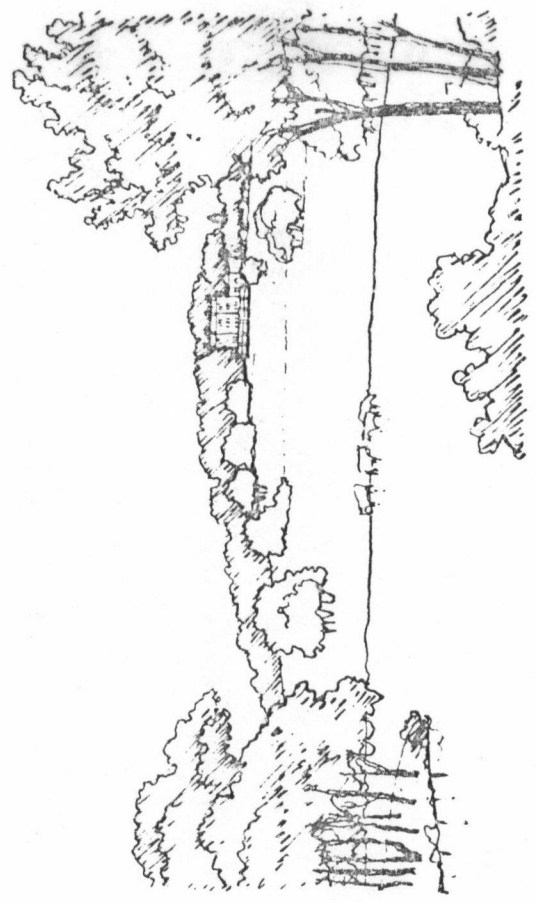
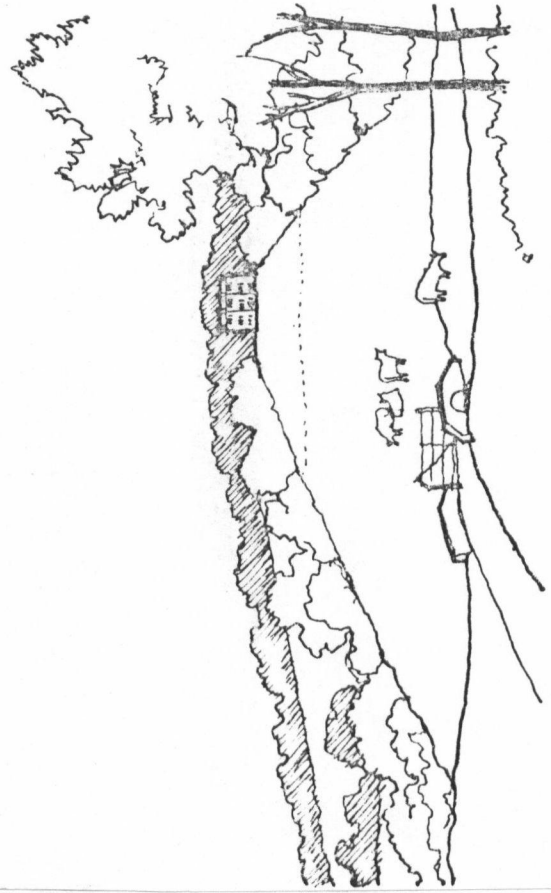


ILLUSTRATION 4 BROWN'S FORMULA LANDSCAPE AND REPTON'S MODIFICATION.
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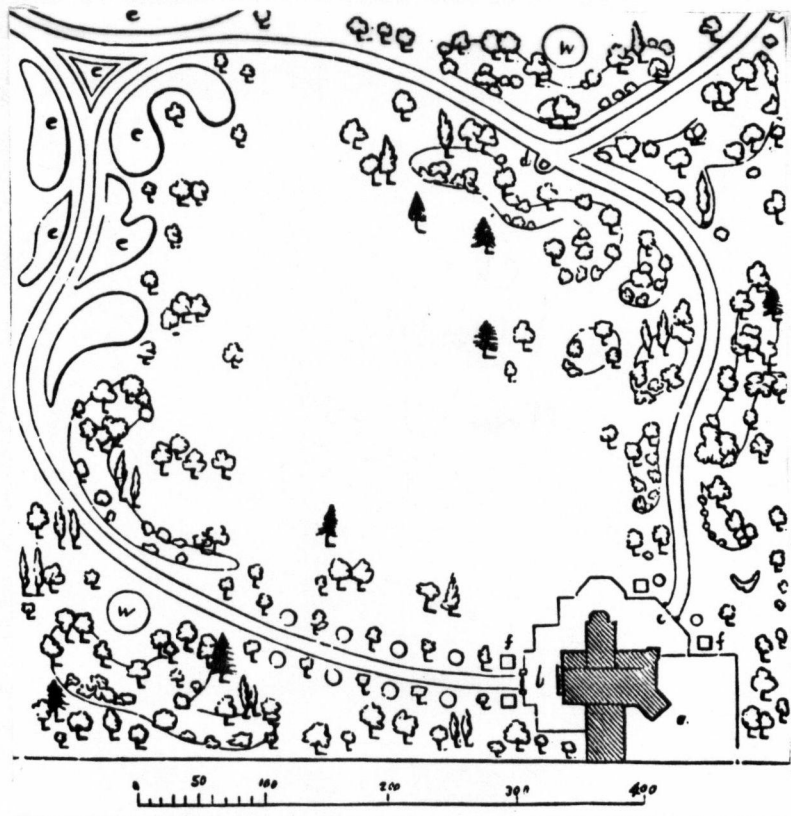


ILLUSTRATION 5 A GARDENESQUE LANDSCAPE.
CHADWICK P. 56

CHAPTER II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC PARKS IN BRITAIN, FRANCE AND THE CONTINENT

The Legacy of Industrial Britain

The great industrial cities came into existence during the early 1800's on the new economic foundations laid in the eighteenth century. These foundations were based on the growth in population and expansion of industry in Britain at that time. The pressure of rapidly increasing numbers of people and the social consequences of the new industrial techniques and new ways of organizing work involved a sharp break with the past. The population gradually had to deal with these new industrial cities and their eventual reorganization as a result of social concerns. The recognition and encouragement of public parks was, in part, a reaction to the conditions in these cities, and during the mid-1800's the British government began to acknowledge the integral part that parks could play in the alleviation of unfavourable conditions. This chapter will discuss the various steps that were a part of the development of public parks; both in terms of the change in attitude towards parks designed for the public and in terms of the actual legislation and government support. The discussion will focus first on Britain, and then on France and Europe.

John Ruskin was one of the first writers to enunciate the unpleasant living conditions of the cities. He was an extremely influential writer in Britain during the early 1800's, and often wrote in "near hysteria" about the filth and unpleasantness of the new industrial cities. He identified the negative aspects of industrial development, and he carefully watched newspapers and advertisements in the city for indications of the direction of society. Ruskin articulately expressed a feeling that many

other writers and citizens felt at that time:

"And beneath it lies a more serious social protest: one that was shared by many other commentators at that time. It included such factors as a hatred of the mammoth industrial city and its debris: a fear of the techniques of manufacturing industry and what damage they would do to the dignity of man: a prophecy of the depersonalization of the worker because of mass production techniques. The implication is that aesthetic, moral and social judgements are all related to one another: and the environment is an expression of them - an expression of life and culture."¹

There were many people in Britain at the time who had the foresight to realize that the environment as an expression of the state of "aesthetics", would undoubtedly suffer with the effects of industrialism. Unfortunately the government did not initially concern itself with the issue of the environment because in the Victorian economy, industry had priority, over environmental and housing concerns.

The urban problems created by industrial expansion caused some enthusiastic and educated Victorians to make bold attempts at reform. Parliament was obliged to listen to concerned individuals and interest groups, but action was usually not taken until many years after the problems were enunciated.

Bad health and sanitation standards quickly became the focus for protest. By the 1830's there were various organizations created to combat the sanitary conditions. One of these, the Health of Towns Association had a check list to present to local authorities to ensure minimum health standards. The early supporters of public parks used the argument that public parks and walks would improve the general health of the city's inhabitants.

Asa Briggs points out that Victorians began to take an interest in their cities in the late 1830's when it became impossible to avoid urgent urban problems.² Previously people had looked at the industrial city with horror or fascination. Industrialism ceased to be thought of as fascinating however, when it became common place and complaints about its social consequences were ignored by government. It was at this time that the Victorian zeal for reform began to surface and the movement for public parks found a platform for action.

The Early Support of Public Parks

It is obvious that the government did not initiate the park movement that swept through Britain during the 19th Century. Its first involvement with the movement was in 1833, when Parliament appointed a select Committee to make a record of the condition and availability of public open space in England. The appointment of the Committee was very significant. It recognized the rapid increase in population in the large towns engaged in manufacturing and saw the need for public walks and open spaces for the exercise and pleasure of the middle and lower classes. The Committee pointed out that recreation facilities would undoubtedly improve the health of the workers, and result in greater productivity. The Committee's recommendations to Parliament included:

1. grants from the government should be made to towns to help finance the creation of public walks.
2. some of this money should be raised by local subscription.
3. that a small rate should be assessed on property owners.
4. proprietors of land developments should dedicate a certain amount of land for public walks.
5. recreation grounds should be operated by public authorities.³

Bills for open space were heatedly debated, but were defeated in the early 1830's because most parliamentarians still saw the creation of public parks as a philanthropic responsibility. England had to wait another ten years before the government initiated a policy to financially support the development of public parks.

One result of this period of awareness of public open space was its influence on the Colonial Office and its directions to builders of towns in the colonies. The Colonization Commissioners for South Australia for example sent a letter of instruction to Colonel Willian Light who laid out Adelaide in 1836.

"When you have determined the site of the first town, you will proceed to lay it out in accordance with the regulations for the preliminary sales of Colonial lands in this country (acre town lots). You will make the streets of ample width and arrange them with reference to the convenience of its inhabitants and the beauty and salubrity of the town; and you will make the necessary reserves for squares, public walks and quays."⁴

Light went far beyond this requirement and created the Adelaide circular belt plan in which parkland completely surrounded the original town (Illustration 1). It has not been clearly traced where Light derived the idea, and it was never mentioned in his diaries. It was possible that the idea was strictly his own after visiting European towns. In his book Sicilian Scenery published in 1823, Light included sketches and a description of the town of Catania, which had a circular open space.⁵ Another theory is that the idea for a park system came from Edward Gibson Wakefield, a "Colonizer" whose idea it was to found Adelaide and who was in constant communication with Light when he was laying out the town. Wakefield was also

responsible for the colonization of towns in New Zealand, which also have variations on the park belt, and if this is the case, it would seem that Adelaide's park belt was a part of Wakefield's colonization theory.

(He wrote a book entitled, "The Art of Colonization"). Wakefield could have been influenced by the very early ideas for public parks in Britain and the work of Robert Owen. Owen was the first person to suggest that industrialism did not necessarily have to be tied to bigger cities, but could be introduced into smaller towns; "ideal Villages" incorporating open space.⁶

The final theory as to the origins of Adelaide's extraordinary public parkland, is the possibility that Light got the idea from a book published in 1830 (and later in 1836) called the "Friend of Australia". The book is aimed at a specific audience, the colonizers of Australia, and it contains a plan of a town provided with squares and parks. As the book was published in England, it may have originated as an academic exercise as a result of the early stirrings in Britain for public open space, and Light used it as an opportunity to implement this idea. It was certainly one of the first plans in the Commonwealth to specify the inclusion of public parks. It is interesting that Ebenezer Howard made a journey to Adelaide early in his life and was greatly inspired by the parklands surrounding the city. He acknowledges that it is this principle that he followed and built upon for the agricultural/parkland belt in his "Garden City".⁷

The Contribution of Joseph Paxton

One of the first persons to become involved in the design of public parks, and who received some of the earliest commissions, was

Joseph Paxton. He worked in the north and midlands of England before Loudon died and launched the Horticulture Register in competition with Loudon's Gardener's Magazine. In the early stages of Paxton's career, Loudon and Paxton were at odds on some approaches, but later Loudon recognized Paxton's competence in his own field and invited him to contribute to the Gardener's Magazine. Paxton was not only a designer of parks and gardens but became involved in the movement to provide gardens for the general public. He wrote two articles in his Horticultural Register in 1831 in support of public parks.⁸

The first park that Paxton designed was Prince's Park in Liverpool. It was initiated and financed by Richard Vaughan Yates in 1842, who was interested in the betterment of the town. It passed into public ownership in 1905. Prince's Park was a 900 acre landscape of which 50 acres were in the form of a central park, and the remaining area a series of villas. The villas were large detached homes, each with their own treed groves and plants, commanding a certain area of the park landscape, and adding to the overall landscape effect. This type of development was becoming popular in Britain both for public and private parks because the extra cost of laying out a park was thus covered by the value of the improved housing sites on the periphery.

This method of development had been used in Regent's Park in London on a larger scale, and echoed the design of Lansdowne Crescent in Bath from the 18th Century. John Nash, when laying out Regent's Park was upset when the Commissioners reduced the number of villas to be built because he felt that the absence of the villas would result in a more open

"duller landscape" with a simple scattering of trees. He did not want uninterrupted views from within the park and considered the foreground of tremendous importance. Thus the villas themselves were an important part of the design scheme for Regent's Park. The design of the Prince's Park itself tended to be in the Gardenesque style with a small lake, Swiss boat house, and rustic footbridge. The characteristic belts or groups of trees and special specimen sections reflect the influence that Loudon had on young Paxton.

In 1845 Paxton laid out the Coventry Cemetery, his first connection with the town which he was later to represent in Parliament. Although a cemetery is not a park in the conventional sense, it was, at that time, a public open space which was very frequently used. Cemeteries were places of peace and solitude, and as the cities became more uninhabitable, cemeteries were increasingly used as places of escape and enjoyment. The designs for cemeteries were followed very closely and development in cemetery design was certainly recorded and discussed.

Paxton began work on Birkenhead Park in 1844, regarded by many as the first public park exclusively designed for public enjoyment. (Illustration 2). Birkenhead was a completely new settlement being developed by Government Improvement Commissioners "as a rival to Liverpool across the river, which was expanding at an extremely rapid rate."⁹ The acquisition for the park was possible because of a major breakthrough in parliament the year before. In April 1843, the Third Improvement Act was given royal ascent and enabled the acquisition of land for the purposes of public parks, for the first time by an Act of Parliament.

At this time town houses were still being built within park grounds as in Prince's Park and Regent's Park. At Birkenhead, however, of the 226 acres developed, 125 acres were to be used for public use in perpetuity and the remainder for housing. Birkenhead was a financial success with a cost of excavating and planting at around £70,000. A thousand men were said to have been employed for more than two years.¹⁰ The return on the land around the park upon which handsome villas were built was very high. Birkenhead Park closely resembled Prince's Park in function, but while the development of Prince's Park was a philanthropic gesture, the development of Birkenhead was due to the intended purpose of creating a public park. The central government was also involved with the creation of Birkenhead park.

Birkenhead Park was opened on April 5, 1847. From the beginning it was designed to accommodate games, and for this reason, was an immediate social success. The idea of games in a park was revolutionary, even more so than the idea of the public park itself. This was the first British park in history to be designed for active pursuits.

The public walk was the first amenity developed in Europe and particularly in Britain in response to a need for public "recreation". These walks are a prominent feature on the British landscape today although they were often on the urban edge in the early 1800's. The "promenade" in one of Loudon's public gardens served a different purpose because while the promenade was a form of exercise it was primarily a social outing. Birkenhead Park was opened while "promenading" was still a general form of recreation.

The idea of recreation as a use of open space was acknowledged by the government in 1838, when Joseph Hume introduced a resolution in the British House of Commons that, "in future, in all enclosure bills, a provision should be made for leaving an open space sufficient for purposes of exercise, and recreation for the neighbouring population."¹¹ One reason for the interest in games and recreation and the government's acknowledgement and support might have been the growing phenomenon of the middle class in Victorian Society. It was widely accepted that "The Victorian Age was the era of the middle class."¹² It was the fastest growing part of society and advanced its position, and more importantly, effectively asserted its values during that time. One very important characteristic of the Victorian middle class was family loyalty. For Victorians of every class, the family was the centre in leisure as well as life. Families invariably did things together, or in groups with other families. The park became a logical extension for their activities, so it was not surprising that group games eventually became a popular form of recreation in public parks.

In 1850, Frederick Law Olmsted, often called the "Father of landscape architecture in North America", and who will be discussed later in the thesis, visited Birkenhead Park. He was enormously impressed by the park, and took back the ideas to be reformulated and reworked on a larger scale, in the creation of Central Park in New York. In his work, Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England, Olmsted recorded his impressions of Birkenhead Park:

"... five minutes of admiration, and a few more spent in studying the manner in which art had been employed to obtain from nature so much beauty, and I was ready to admit that in democratic America, there was nothing to be thought of as comparable with this People's Garden. Indeed, gardening had here reached

a perfection that I never before dreamed of. I cannot undertake to describe the effect of so much taste and skill as had evidently been employed ...

While watching the cricketers, we were threatened with a shower, and hastened back to look for shelter, which we found in a pagoda, on an island approached by a Chinese bridge. It was soon filled as were the other ornamental buildings by a crowd of those who, like ourselves had been overtaken in the grounds by the rain; and I was glad to observe that the privileges of the garden were enjoyed by about equally all classes. There were some who were attended by servants, and sent at once for their carriages, but a large portion were of common ranks..." 13

The informal Picturesque style of landscaping which Brown and Repton pioneered is well expressed in Birkenhead Park. It was originally free of the later excesses of the Gardenesque. The greatness of the Park lies in its utility and its public recreation area, ahead of anything else in its time.

Joseph Paxton began to receive numerous contracts to design other public parks and redesign gardens that were turned over to the public in the 1850's. He tried a new approach to landscape design at Crystal Palace at Sydenham in 1852, but it is felt that he was, in general, unsuccessful with the garden section because it "degenerated" into large scale Gardenesque as it was widely practiced in the second half of the century.¹⁴ The Crystal Palace was a glass building set in spacious grounds. (Illustration 3). Paxton's original design for the Palace was a "Winter Garden and Garden under Glass" situated in Hyde Park for the education and recreation of the people of London. The sight for the Palace was chosen at Sydenham however, so he had to deal with an enormous but superb site on the outskirts of London. Paxton developed very lavish Italianesque type grounds with broad flights of steps, urns, statues, formal flower beds

and huge fountains and water displays. (Illustrations 4 and 5 and 6). The flowers at Sydenham were an attraction from the beginning. Their colour, brilliance and type brought people from London in a steady stream. Chadwick states, "the public loved the Crystal Palace for many years with its flower shows, dog shows, brass band contests, Handel festivals, its exhibitions, and perhaps most of all its fireworks.¹⁵ It seems that although landscape critics thought that Paxton was not totally successful with regard to the overall composition of the Crystal Palace grounds, it was a place that was alive with people and used and enjoyed by many for years.¹⁶

Paxton was a man of great foresight, and seemed to understand the Victorian need for activity in parks. While most British landscapists were still concerned with "passive" landscapes as places to escape the urban environment, Paxton sensed the desire for family recreation areas. He realized that the success of the Crystal Palace beyond the suburbs of London would depend upon the movement and circulation of large crowds, and perhaps more importantly, that the crowds should be able to get to and from Sydenham quickly. Paxton became instrumental in the extension of a railway line with two stations, the High Level at the Crystal Palace and the Low Level which was connected to the Palace by a glazed corridor.

Joseph Paxton recognized the need for a new sort of landscape, one that would be functional as well as aesthetic, and used by all sectors of the population. Unfortunately he was not capable of realizing this in an original way. He attempted a garden on a large scale Gardenesque style. The significance of this attempt is that it had a vast impact on park designers who were laying out parks in the later part of the century.

Ironically in his later parks Paxton generally returned to the informal landscape style with which he was so proficient, but the formal precedent had been set at Sydenham, and was taken up by others at the end of the Victorian era.

Park Development in the North of England

In the north of England, many see the botanic gardens as the forerunner of the public park. They were usually created and maintained by a local society and some of these gardens date to as early as the 17th Century. With the 19th Century interest in botany and horticulture and with new species introduced from travel abroad, there was a renewed interest in the local botanic gardens. Loudon had earlier been involved in designing the botanical gardens for Liverpool and Birmingham. In 1840, the Town Council of Liverpool purchased the right of free access to the Botanic Gardens on Sundays and another day a week for all sections of the population of Liverpool. In the 1840's there were also plans for the development of botanic gardens in Manchester, Bristol and Cheltenham.

The North of England seemed to be greatly involved with botanical gardens and the park movement as the industrial cities in particular were beginning to be concerned about the quality of their environment. This concern, together with the enthusiasm and effort of a few individuals, were instrumental in the push for public parks. A manufacturer named Mark Philips, for example, was instrumental in originating public parks in Manchester. When he began to lobby for the provision of parks, he presented evidence to the previously mentioned Select Committee on Public Walks in 1833, and he was also responsible for a public meeting in 1844 with the local community to call attention to the need for parks.

A month later another meeting was held in the Free Trade Hall, where the working classes of Manchester and Salford constructed a resolution.

"... Parks must be established, life preserved, health confirmed or restored, intellect cultivated and morals improved, and working men and women must each cast their mites and work heartily in the cause."¹⁷

A fund was set up by the people of Manchester, with contributions from Mark Philips and a few other enlightened manufacturers. There was enough money raised to purchase three sites, two in Manchester and one in Salford. A design competition was held for the design of the parks and over 100 design schemes were submitted. A man named Joshua Major, assisted by his son Henry, won first prize. Major was a very knowledgeable gardener and in 1852 wrote a book called The Theory and Practise of Landscape Gardening. In it he traced the development of the ideas of Capability Brown and Humphry Repton, and wholeheartedly supported the work that Loudon had done in the evolution of the Gardenesque style of landscaping. Major's adaption of the Gardenesque on a park scale is shown in Illustration 7, the design for the Leeds Botanical and Zoological Garden. The Manchester committee had required that besides the traditional features of a park, the competitors provide playgrounds and space for as many varieties of games as possible. Major responded with 12 to 15 acres for "cricket, knor and spell, leaping poles, football and footraces, archery and bowling greens, etc."¹⁸ Major also recommended that the area for games should be grazed by sheep because it would provide an economical way of keeping a large area of grass in order. This idea is still used in parts of New Zealand today, where there is often a sheep paddock to house the "lawnmowers".

In 1844 the idea of facilities for games was still revolutionary, for as late as 1875, the term public park was still synonymous with a public walk as used in the Public Health Act of 1875. The park was still thought of as a place for walking exercise and peaceful relaxation of the mind. Paxton was involved in the plans for Birkenhead Park at that time but it is unclear whether the people of the Manchester Committee were aware of his accommodation for games or whether they arrived at the decision to have space for games on their own.

The total cost for the Manchester parks including the acquisition of land was about £30,000, £3,000 of which had been donated from the government's miserly fund of £10,000 for the encouragement of public parks in all of England, and set up grudgingly after the 1833 Select Committee for Public Walks. Most of the money for the public parks was contributed by the people of Manchester and Salford.

The City of Manchester continued to be a pioneer of public parks and played a key role in the evolution of the urban park. By the 1850's in two of the parks, a gymnasium and swimming baths for women had been installed. The importance of the Manchester parks lies in the fact that the novelty of their conception made a real contribution to urban life rather than just being examples of good landscape.

Edward Kemp, a close associate of Paxton's, was very influential in the evolution of park design in the north. He had worked with Paxton on Birkenhead Park, and eventually became its first supervisor. He was most influential perhaps in his use of the Gardenesque style of landscaping when he laid out public parks. His rationale for using this style in gardens

rather than a geometric or picturesque style is explained, "The geometric or formal style was quite acceptable, but obviously had its limits within the general setting of the English landscape; the Picturesque while attractive in its theoretical possibilities, was sadly lacking in its practical application."¹⁹ The Gardenesque then was a logical development particularly in its historical context.

Joseph Paxton's influence was carried out not only by Edward Kemp, but also by John Gibson and Edward Miller. The responsibility for many public parks and private gardens in England and on the Continent, belonged to these three men. The 1860's saw numerous new public parks opened in the North of England; Albert Park was opened in Middleborough, Alexandra Park in Manchester, and Liverpool obtained three new parks which, together, formed a ring of park on the upland edge of town.

Development of Public Parks in London

The development of public parks was somewhat different in the City of London. The people of London had actually been able to walk through the royal hunting parks for many years. In 1649 these were declared the property of the Commonwealth and by the late 1700's the privilege of walking in St. James Park, Green Park, Hyde Park, and Kensington Gardens, had become a public right. With this historical development London faced rather different circumstances than the industrial cities in the north. Firstly, most parks in London originally belonged to the Crown, and although they were large, they were not originally designed for public use. Loudon pointed out that they were totally inadequate for the "mere pedestrian". Secondly, London faced the problem of being so large, and at that time local

administrative bodies were so hopeless at making improvements and getting things done, that the central government was the only body that was in the position to tackle the problems of that time. The third problem was that the British Government had its own policy on the development of public parks in London. They maintained that non-profitable undertakings such as parks were the business of philanthropists.

George Chadwick states that, "It is not surprising that the first of London's Victorian parks were only grudgingly provided by Government action, pressed by public concern."²⁰ These parks remained in the hands of the H.M. Commissioners of Woods and Forests and the Office of Works until 1887, after which they were transferred to the Metropolitan Board of Works.

By the mid 19th Century, the population of London had doubled from 958,000 in 1801 to 1,948,000 in 1841. The 1833 Select Committee on Public Walks noted that although there had been a tremendous growth of population in the City of London, there was however, a problem of the distribution of parks. The existing open spaces were all located in London's West End - an area already endowed with fine gardens and squares while the East End was virtually void of recreation space.

A British MP, Joseph Hume is usually credited with the call for a public park for the East End. He was also directly involved with a public meeting for interested persons that was held in 1840, to urge the Crown to provide the Eastern area with a park. 30,000 people in the eastern hamlets signed a memorial petition for the new park. Seven years later, the Commissioners of Woods and Forests provided the sum of £115,683

for the construction of "the park to be called Victoria Park."

The site for Victoria Park was on the outskirts of London near the villages of Hackney and Bethnal Green. The design was done by James Pennethorne, an employee of the Commissioners of Woods and Forests. The park was to be 193 acres plus 103 acres for housing, like Regent's Park and Prince's Park. Pennethorne was not concerned with landscape gardening, which in the end was very sparse, but with the general pattern of development. He received scathing criticism from many sources and the Gardener's Chronicle accused the government of considering anything good enough for the east of London.²¹ John Gibson, a man who worked with Paxton was then hired as superintendent of the park and within two years he had made positive alterations and modifications to it. It is due to Gibson that Victoria Park today has a reputation for its lovely floral displays. (Illustration 8).

When the land for Victoria Park was acquired, the Commission for the Improvement of the Metropolis was set up, and it reported in 1844 that it considered the improvement of the embankment of the Thames to be a worthwhile project. Although this open space was not opened for 26 years, the discussion led to the consideration of the Battersea Fields as a place of recreation. The fields were already used as local pleasure grounds for Sunday games and they were extremely accessible to all parts of London by using Thames steamboats. Because of the idea and creation of public parks in the North, and with the precedent of Victoria Park in London, the Commission considered the possibility of the Battersea Fields. In 1846 the government passed the enabling Acts to spend £200,000 on the acquisition of land and the construction and planting for Battersea. It was particularly interested because there were obvious advantages to combining

the park with the embanking of the northern Chelsea shore of the Thames and the construction of a bridge. Building plots would subsequently become more accessible and valuable.

The program for Battersea Park ran into difficulties when the Loans Commission made only a token advance for the acquisition of the land. In 1849 the Commission of Woods and Forests was moved to report, "Our proceedings for the acquisition of this property have been impeded by the want of funds, the delay being manifestly injurious to the interests of the Crown."²² The Park was completed in 1857, but at a considerably higher cost than was estimated ten years previously.

Pennethorne and Gibson worked for the Commission, and were responsible for the development of Battersea. Gibson was responsible for the detailed sections of the park; the many species of trees, the choice shrubs, and the ornamental water, while working within Pennethorne's framework and supervision. The result was a fairly satisfying landscape that was finally completed in 1861.

In 1855 the Metropolitan Management Act set up the Metropolitan Board of Works. It was the first comprehensive body that was put together for the purpose of local government in London, and it relieved the Government of direct responsibility for such things as the provision of parks. By this time the wheels were turning in Britain toward establishing public parks wherever the urban populations were in need. The Board of Works began making provisions and acquiring more parks; Finsburg and Southwark Parks were soon added. In 1887, the royal parks, Victoria, Battersea, and Kennington were transferred to the Metropolitan Board of Works forming the

nucleus of the present park system in London.

The development of public parks in London therefore, was a rather piecemeal process. Most of London's parks were not originally laid out for public use and had to go through improvements and renovations in order to better serve the public need. London experienced a different process than the industrial cities in the north, largely because of the nature and the character of the City, its history, social make-up and residential segregation. The Parks in the East End were developed only after considerable lobbying by a few members of Parliament, and by an organized community effort.

The Parks of Paris

The city of Paris was to experience a different phenomenon during the industrial revolution. The industrial revolution occurred a half century later in France than it did in England, so Paris was still a late Baroque city while England was coping with the new industrial cities. By the time that industrialism was taken up in Paris, it was a much more modern city than had been the case in England. Jere Stuart French attributes the difference to the fact that Paris was, and is, a very "urbane city."²³ The parks of Paris were not created as a reaction to unpleasant surroundings or as a place of escape, but as a part of the city environment.

As early as 1793, the Plan de la Commission des Artistes expressed the desire to organize and modernize Paris. Napoleon III had a clear idea of what he wanted to do with his city and went as far as to outline several projects. Most of his desires were for the sake of military strategy. He hired Georges Eugene Haussmann in 1853 to transform Paris into an efficient city, yet one that possessed a green environment. Almost overnight it became

a modern city. It was a "city of lights" and the Parisians flocked to the sidewalk cafes and the park promenades. Within 30 years the "centuries of medieval clutter was scraped from the face of Paris."²⁴

In 1851 Paris had only 47 acres of municipal parks; the Champs Elysees, the Place des Vosges, the Tuileries, and the Luxembourg Gardens. Within 19 years the acreage had expanded to 4500 acres. The designs reflected the English very informal use of broad sweeping areas with planted terrain so as to integrate the sensitive interpretation of design on the ground. The relation of these new parks in Paris to the parks of England was obvious, and in developing parks for public use, it was very natural to turn to the English examples that could be seen and understood as part of the pioneer movement in public park design.

In tackling the problems that faced the city, Haussmann concentrated on three major areas:

- a) the improvement of health conditions by clearing away narrow alleys and introducing light, air, and sanitation;
- b) the improved appearance of the city. To provide new amenities while at the same time establishing a policy to display the city's old monuments and architectural treasures;
- c) the improvement of circulation to make better access from palaces and barracks to all parts of the city in time of emergency.

Haussmann addressed all three criteria when he created a new park, garden and open space system. He, with the help of Alphand, laid out new parks, redesigned those parks from earlier eras, and connected the parks and open space by the massively planted new boulevards.

The importance of Haussmann's park plans is reflected institutionally. There was a planning agency, the Direction du Plan de Paris under the direction of Deschamps; the Service des Eaux et des Égouts under the engineer Belgrand; and the Service des Promenades et Plantations under the jardinier ingénieur, Alphand.

Work on the Bois de Bolgone had actually started in 1852 before Haussman was appointed. The Emperor wanted a park to rival Hyde Park and the other Royal Parks in London, so the City of Paris took over the Bois from the Crown on the understanding that two million francs were to be spent on improvements. The Emperor's interest was likely the largest factor in reproducing the English landscape style that the Bois was to become.

Previously, the park had been used for traditional hunting rides complete with roundpoints (Illustration 9) before Jean-Alphonse Alphand took over creating level alterations, broad open spaces, and serpentine lakes. He treated the smaller scale sections a little differently by planting many colourful flowers. The Longchamps racetrack was also situated in the park and helped to make the Bois de Boulogne in the bougeois West of Paris, a recreation space not even equalled by London's West End. (Illustration 10)

There was no evidence that the Parisian public was organized in any way to voice the desire and need for public parks. Perhaps it is because they were not experiencing the negative effects of the industrial revolution before the decision was made to "beautify" the city. Nor were the lower classes forgotten. Only a few years after the commencement on the Bois de Boulogne, Haussmann outlined plans for an even larger park, the Bois de

Vincennes in the East End of Paris. Prior to 1840, the area had been a large wood with a few riding paths. This park evolved much more slowly because it was much more expensive than the Bois de Boulogne, costing an estimated 32.7 million francs in the end.

The Bois de Vincennes was ceded to the municipality in 1860, when at that time a new lake, Lac des Minimes had been excavated, and there were considerably more drives through the woods. Alphand then added more lakes, some which were embellished with islands "amidst lawns and trees". He used the excavated material to form a large mound called the Plateau de Cravelle which afforded a magnificent view of the city. Besides the usual paraphernalia of a public park, Alphand and Haussmann also added a racetrack and military training areas.

In addition to two large "landscape parks", Haussmann provided three smaller "parc-intericurs" in the city; the Parc de Monceau, the Buttes-Chaumont which was created out of an abandoned gypsum quarry in the north of the city, and the Parc de Montsouris in the southern part of the city. In the case of the Parc des Buttes-Chaumont, a major road and a railway were ingeniously absorbed by the grading of the park. (Illustration 11) Like the larger parks, these smaller ones were designed in the style of the English landscape park with only small sections devoted to the "French frills" such as geometric settings and a concern for colour and architectural embellishments.

Between 1855 and 1868 twenty two squares were laid out, but unlike London, these were public squares that were maintained by the city. The emperor wanted Alphand to reproduce the character of the squares that he had

seen in London's West End. Alphand, however, did not produce this likeness. While his larger parks were laid out on the informal English style, smaller scale areas and planting were handled differently. Alphand loved flowers and created the squares in his "jardin fleuriste" style. He saw garden squares as "a melody of colours." The flower areas found on the Champs Elysees and in the squares of Paris were used to smooth the junction between grass and shrubs, and were quite narrow with parallel bands of flowers.

Alphand laid out smaller open spaces throughout the city which were to be green interludes in the overall park pattern of Paris. He also remodelled the gardens along the Champs Elysees into soft kidney shapes within the formal rectangular framework plus the garden strips that adorned the boulevards. Haussmann even went as far as to have the old Jardin au Luxembourg remodelled in 1867 at the time of the construction of the Avenue de l'observatoire.

The French garden essentially followed the development of the English garden of the first half of the 19th century. The Picturesque garden of the 18th century became increasingly elaborate as the influence of the Gardenesque spread. The French devoted more space to paved areas which was logical because the lawn did not do as well in the French climate. It also made sense when it is realized that the French's conception of leisure was promenading, and therefore an elaborate system of walks and rides was necessary. In England the formal public walks were giving way to more games areas and less formal space, but in France, this was never the case.

One public park tradition that North Americans have inherited from the French, is the practice of using very complex flower designs to spell or

display messages. The use of floral clocks and designs of welcome, "Welcome to Smithville", and special festive features is a tradition that originated in France. Despite high labour costs today, this tradition is still carried out in many urban parks.

Hausmann is usually credited with three basic accomplishments in the reorganization of Paris: a communications system which was of particular value to the military; a park system; and an administrative organization that enabled the enormous changes to be carried out in Paris within 15 years. The park system was also a part of military strategy to move and train troops quickly, as well as a response to environmental concerns. Nevertheless the result was the first park system in Europe and one that was well balanced in terms of accessibility to most social sectors.

It seems that the French never looked upon their parks as places of escape, but as a continuation of their city. The French have traditionally been very urbane people and have not experienced the same phenomena of suburbanization and decentralization that the British and North Americans have. The French urban dweller does not seem to long for the "rural countryside" as his British counterpart has traditionally done. It seems fateful that the Emperor of the time was so taken with Hyde Park that he ordered Hausmann to develop the same type of landscape in the two Bois. Had this not been the case, the French may have evolved a new and different type of park system, one that was in greater harmony with the urban fabric and experience in Paris.

Development of Public Parks on the Continent

The park movement on the continent seemed to have gone through two phases; the first occurred about a decade before the movement in England, primarily because of damage done in the Napoleonic Wars, and the second was a resurgence of concern about open space as a result of the spread of industrialism. Germany was the leader among the continental countries and had public gardens that were in use before the end of the 1700's

The first public park in Germany was opened in Munich in 1789. It was called the "Englischer Garden" which was along the River Isar and was a 3 mile long riverside promenade. The park was laid out in the early "English Landscape" style. (Illustration 12) The influence came from an Englishman named Benjamin Thompson, who went to Munich in 1784 at the invitation of Karl Theodor of Bavaria. Thompson is credited with suggesting a "people's park" to the prince and subsequently had an influence on its design.²⁵ He was ahead of his time when he suggested a park for the German people, based on the current English private estate design. His influence was immediately popular and in 1807, similar series of small public gardens were laid out in Frankfurt.

The English style of landscaping was used in many cases where there had been damage from the Napoleonic Wars. A landscape architect, Peter Joseph Lenné, was involved in the restoration of several places and was greatly influenced by the British private estates. In 1824, Lenné planted 120 acres of old town fortifications in Magdeburg, which so impressed Loudon that he wrote about it in his Encyclopedia of Gardening. Lenné became very influential in the development of public gardens in Germany as well as the first public parks in Berlin. He was responsible for remodelling the Neuer

Gaten of Potsdam in 1816, and presented proposals for Sans-Souci in 1816 and Charlottenburg in 1819.

Although the German public benefited from the opening of public parks very early in the 19th Century, these parks had essentially all been remodelled from earlier royal gardens or old fortifications. The creation of completely new parks did not occur until Germany too, began to feel the effects of the industrial revolution. Chadwick feels that Lenné's work was the German forerunner of the park system.²⁶ By 1871 all the large towns in Germany had public parks and Berlin even had a Victorian park, just like any English town of that time.

Germany eventually established its own "park style", but this did not occur until the 20th Century when park design had successfully shaken the Gardenesque influence. German landscape architects developed a new style along formal lines that was actually an extension of the Gardenesque, and that led the world in new ideas in public parks for a time. (Illustration 13) The Germans were among the first in the world to produce truly modern landscapes under the auspices of people like Leberecht Migge. (Illustration 14)

The development of parks for the public was slower to start in Holland. In the 1850's the land inside the city fortifications of Amsterdam had been used up, so there was pressure to build outside. A new plan called the UITBREIDINGSPLAN was drawn up in 1886. It was in all likelihood influenced by Haussmann and Alphand's work in Paris, because the plan had a definite pattern of city parks.

The first public parks in Copenhagen, apart from existing royal

gardens, were old fortifications laid out in 1870. Earlier George Cartensen, in a philanthropic gesture, took over part of the ramparts in 1843 and opened them as the Tivoli. In Austria, Josef II had already given the Prater to Vienna in 1776, but again, this was a former royal park and Austria was a long time in developing a "park system".

It seems that while Kent, Brown and Repton were creating private parks all over England at the turn of the 18th century, Germany and Vienna were going ahead with public parks and "people's parks". Indeed, Continental visitors to Britain were surprised to find that the use of Regent's Park and the London Squares were restricted to surrounding houseowners. The cities of the Continent however, did not develop a park system, or lay out new public parks until after they had experienced the effects of the industrial revolution and had seen Haussmann's "new Paris". The Continent initially seemed to be very influenced by Britain and France and it was not until well into the 20th century, that German and Dutch public park design came to the forefront with new ideas.

Summary

At the end of the 19th Century in Britain, two alternative approaches had evolved to deal with the problems created in cities by the industrial revolution. One of these was to build the new industrial city, as advocated by people like Robert Owen. These were intended to accommodate the influx of industry, and were laid out for the industrial workers. Parks were an integral part of these new cities and the parks' designs reflected the aesthetic and recreational needs of people. When these new cities were still in the conceptual stages some of the ideas were transferred to the Colonies by people

like William Wakefield, who, from the beginning, ensured that public parks were a major part of city design.

The other approach was the redevelopment and improvement of existing cities. In the City of London the existing royal parks and gardens were redesigned to provide open space for the population and their design was therefore historical and less flexible. Another form of open space was the creation of totally new parks which were intended for the recreational needs of the surrounding population. Victoria and Battersea Parks were the first parks in London to be designed this way.

The first response to the negative aspects of industrialization seen on the landscape, was in the north of England. The early industrial cities were becoming an intolerable environment. It was this reaction, plus the organizational skills of a few people, that resulted in Birkenhead, and the Manchester Parks - the first examples of parks originally designed for public use and the first parks that were an attempt to improve the industrial city.

By 1900 Paris had a park system, the first in the Western World. The system came out of a desire to rejuvenate the city for aesthetic as well as military purposes, not out of a reaction to unfavourable living conditions. The clear mandate that Haussmann and Alphand had, resulted in a very different process than what their many British counterparts experienced.

Finally, the Continental countries opened their royal parks, old fortifications, and public gardens in the late 1700's and early 1800's,

but did not consider new forms and alternatives for parks, until well after the British and French experience.

These are the traditions and developments from which the North Americans learned, as they seriously began to consider urban public open space in the latter half of the 19th Century.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Patrick Nuttgens, The Landscape of Ideas (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1972), p. 82.
- 2 Asa Briggs, Victorian Cities (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1963), p. 12.
- 3 Fredrick Law Olmsted, Forty Years of Landscape Architecture: Central Park (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1973), p. 8.
- 4 Ibid., p. 9.
- 5 Geoffrey Dutton, Founder of a City (Melbourne, F.W. Chesire, 1960), p. 125.
- 6 Gerald Burke, Towns in the Making (London: Edward Arnold Pub., Ltd., 1971), p. 136.
- 7 Ebenezer Howard, Garden Cities of Tomorrow (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1946), pp. 140 - 142.
- 8 George F. Chadwick, The Park and the Town: Public Landscape in the 19th and 20th Centuries (New York, Fredrick A. Praeger Pub., 1966), p.66.
- 9 Ibid., p. 68.
- 10 Ibid., p. 71.
- 11 Ibid., p. 52.
- 12 Eugene C. Black, ed, Victorian Culture and Society (New York: Walker and Co., 1974), p. 153.
- 13 Fredrick Law Olmsted, Walks and Talks of an American Farmer in England (London: 1852), pp. 78-82.
- 14 Chadwick, p. 91.

15. Ibid., p. 93.

16. Although the Crystal Palace became an institution, it steadily ran into difficulties financially. The gardens began to be unkempt and as a result parts were eventually sold on the perimeter for building. The building also suffered neglect. In 1913 it was bought for the nation, partly through the promptitude of the Earl of Plymouth and partly by public collection. It was reopened in 1920 after a wartime use for training, and featured new uses: a motor racing course; roundabouts; sports grounds; and dance halls. The building was completely destroyed in a fire in 1936. In 1966 there was a proposal to construct a national youth and sports centre to reinvigorate the park.

17. Chadwick, p. 98.

18. Ibid., p. 99.

19. Ibid., p. 101.

20. Ibid., p. 111.

21. Ibid., p. 123.

22. Ibid., p. 127.

23. Jere Stuart French, Urban Green, City Parks of the Western World (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Pub., Co., 1973), p. 18.

24. Ibid., p. 18.

25. Chadwick, p. 249.

26. Ibid., p. 250.

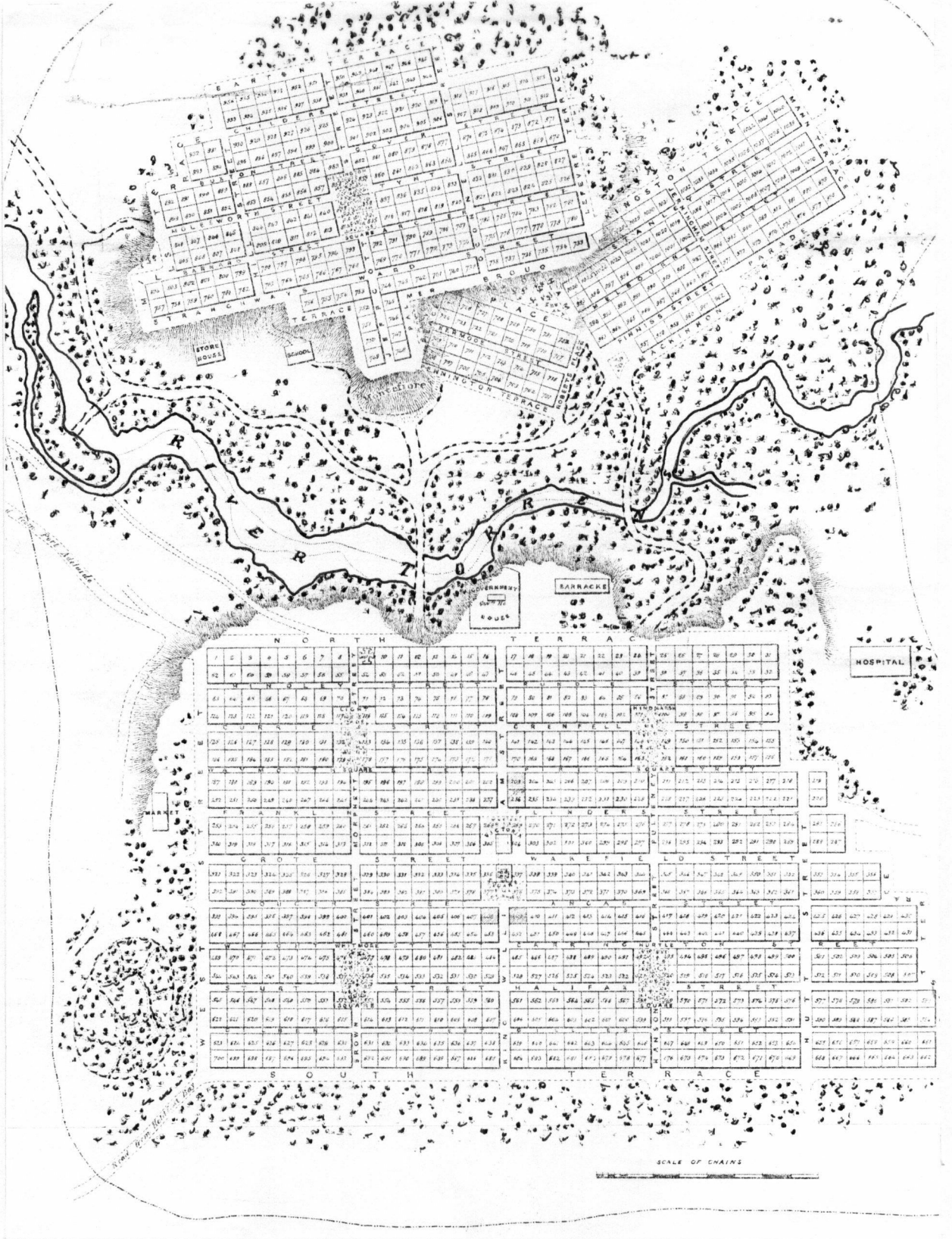


ILLUSTRATION 1 ADELAIDE PARKLAND 1830'S.
 REPORT ON THE METROPOLITAN AREA OF ADELAIDE, 1962.

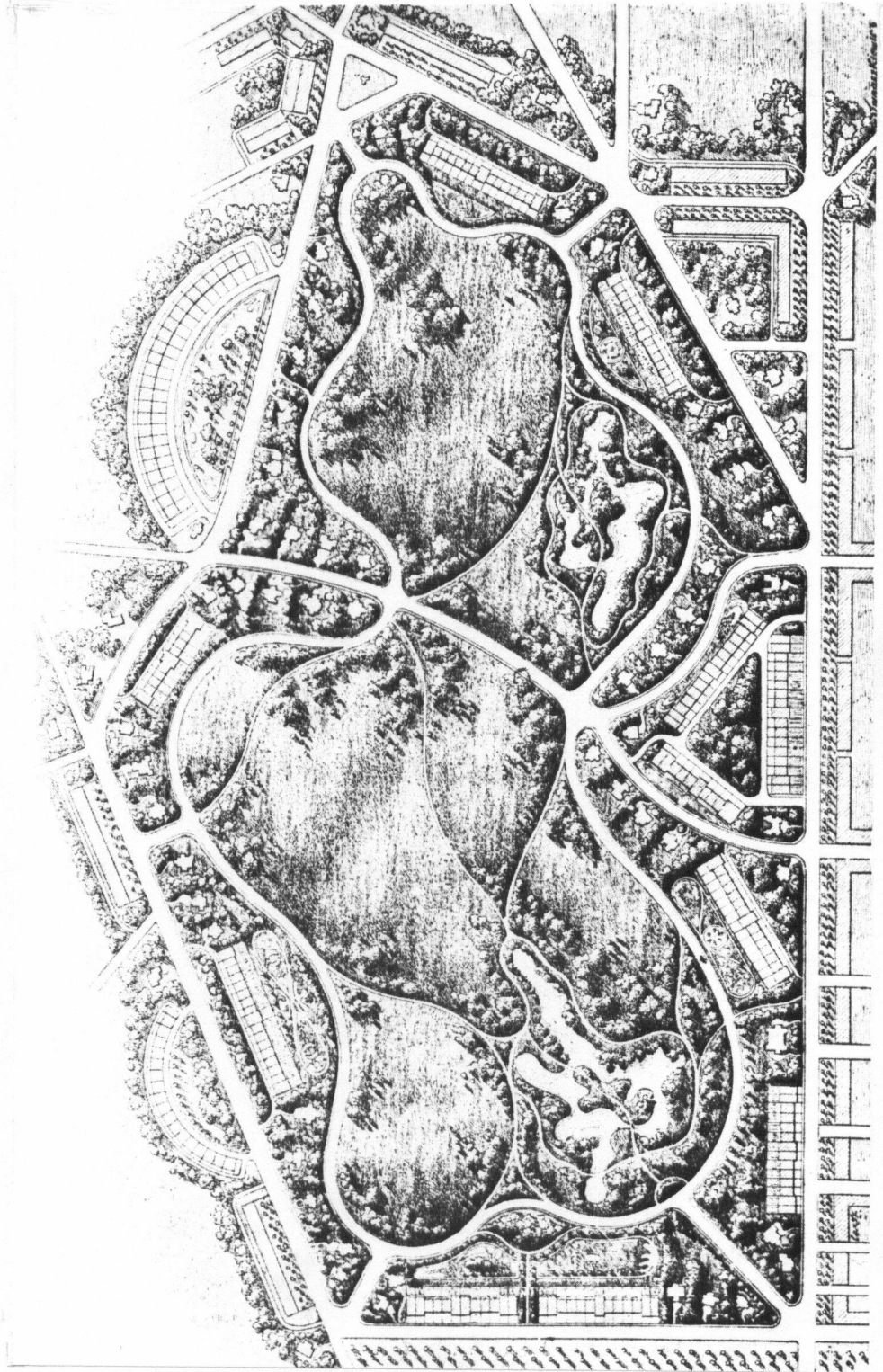


ILLUSTRATION 2 JOSEPH PAYTON'S BIRKENHEAD PARK 1847. CHADWICK P. 78.

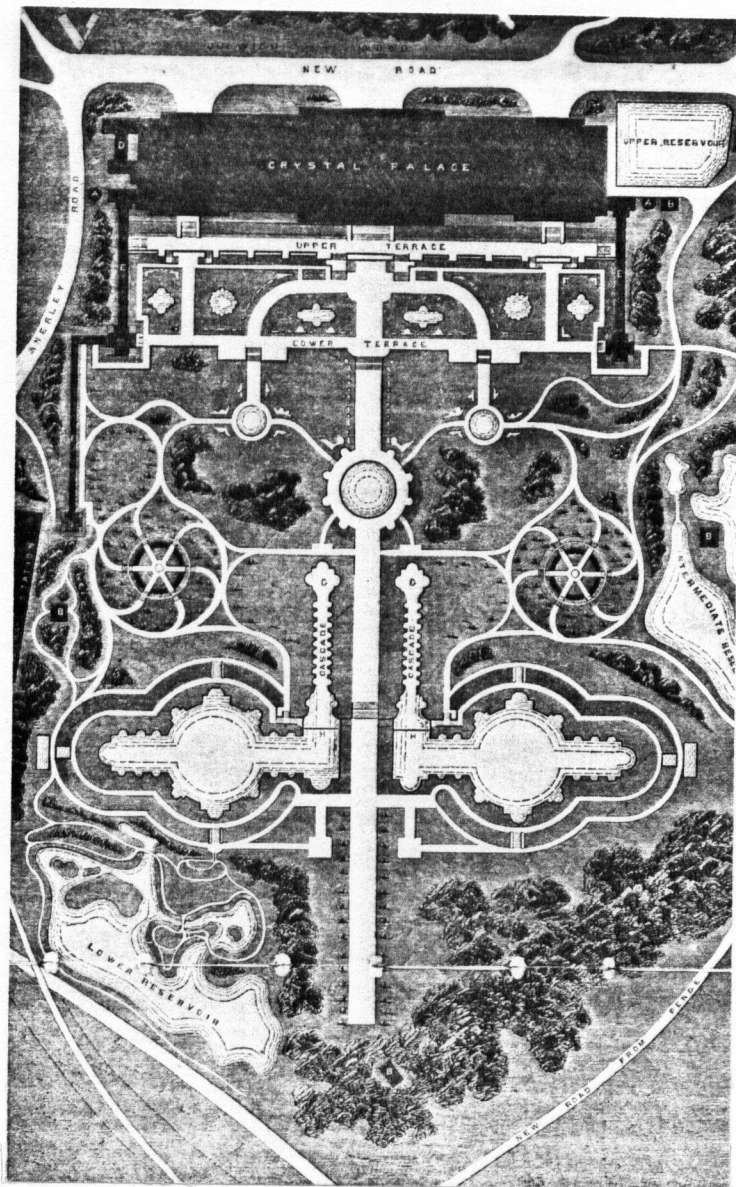


ILLUSTRATION 3 PAXTON'S CRYSTAL PALACE, 1855.
CHADWICK 83.

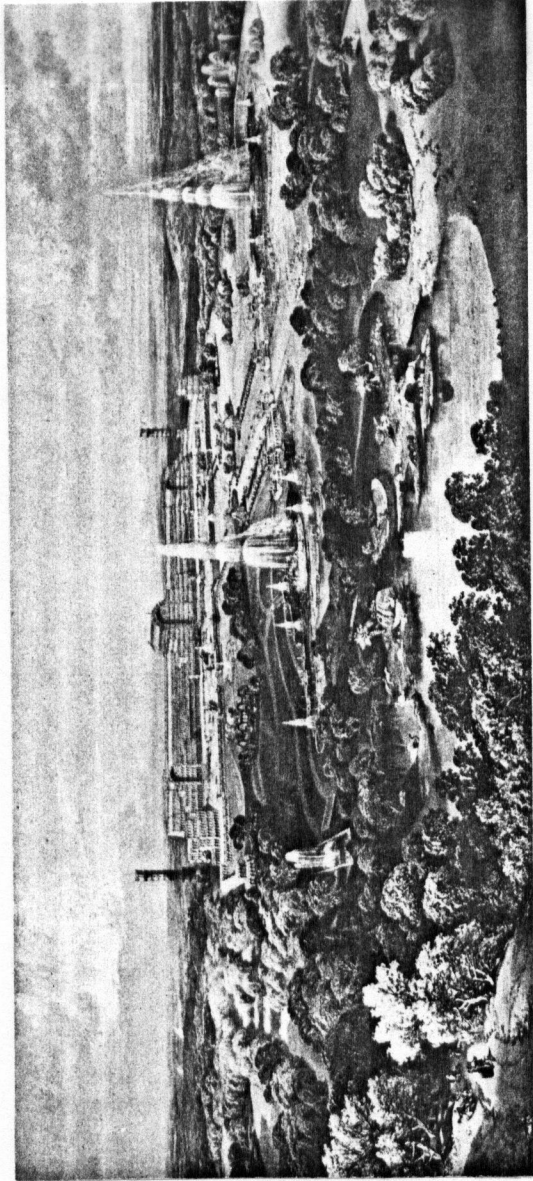


ILLUSTRATION 4 CRYSTAL PALACE CHADWICK P. 80.

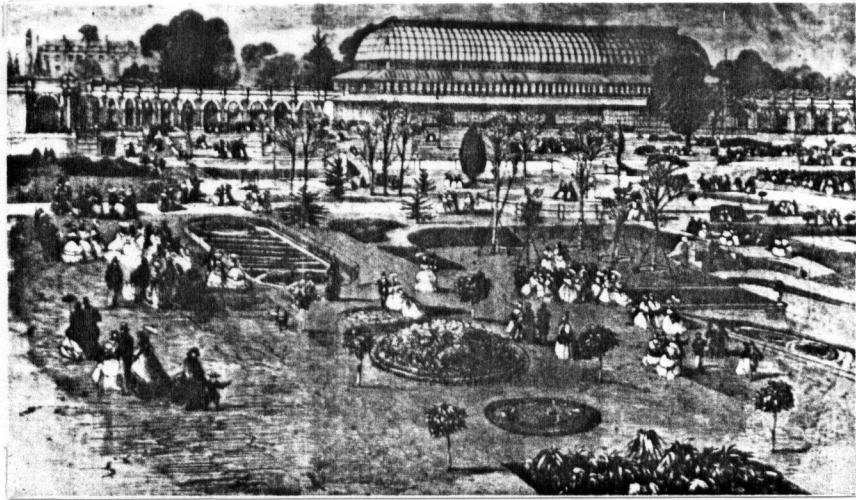


ILLUSTRATION 5

ITALIANATE LANDSCAPE
CHADWICK P. 139.

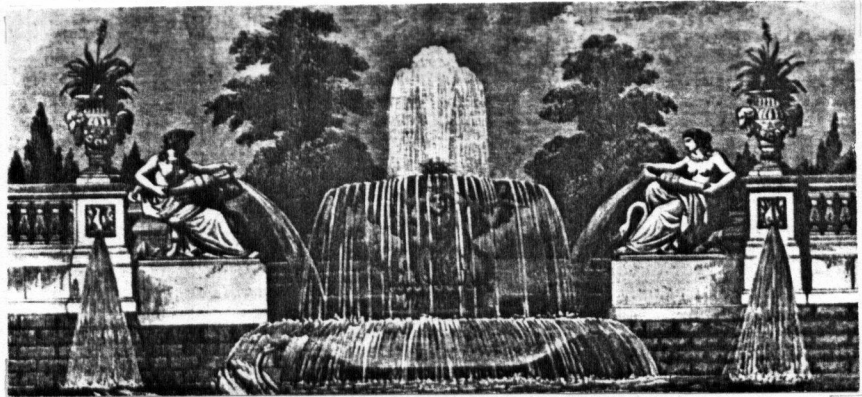


ILLUSTRATION 6 ARCHITECTURAL ACCOMPANIMENTS TO
ITALIANATE GARDENS OF THE 1860S.
CHADWICK P. 139.

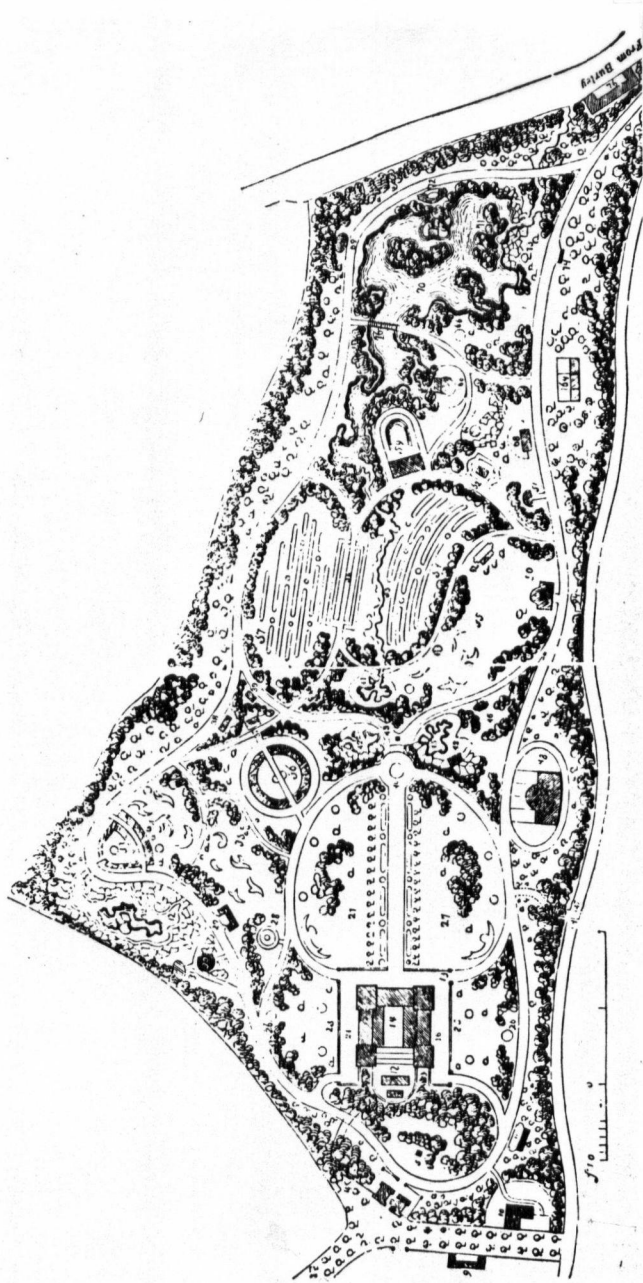


ILLUSTRATION 7 GARDENESQUE ON A PARK SCALE: JOSHUA MAJOR'S DESIGN FOR THE LEEDS BOTANICAL AND ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN, 1850'S. CHADWICK P. 86.



ILLUSTRATION 8 VICTORIA PARK BY JAMES PENNETHORNE 1846.
CHADWICK P. 114.

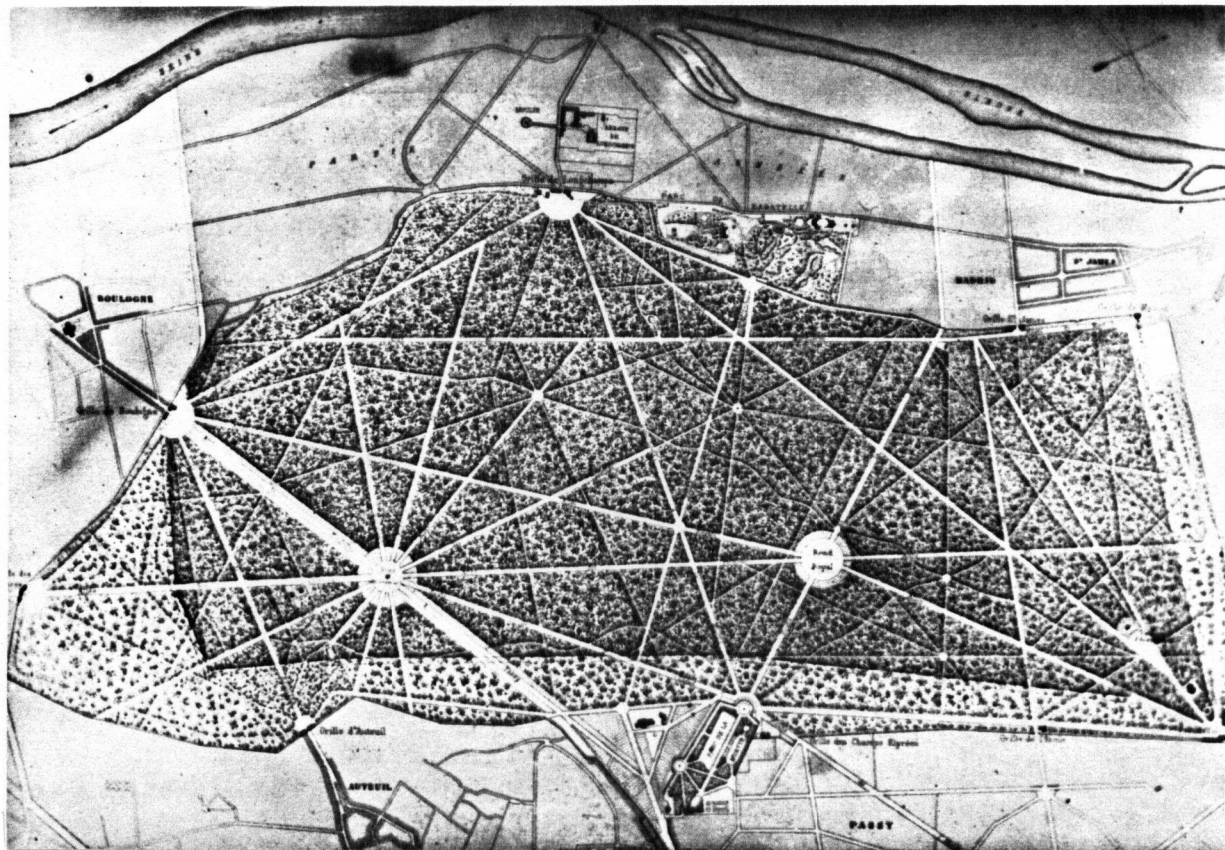


ILLUSTRATION 9 BOIS de BOULOGNE BEFORE ITS TRANSFORMATION BY ALPHAND. CHADWICK P. 140.

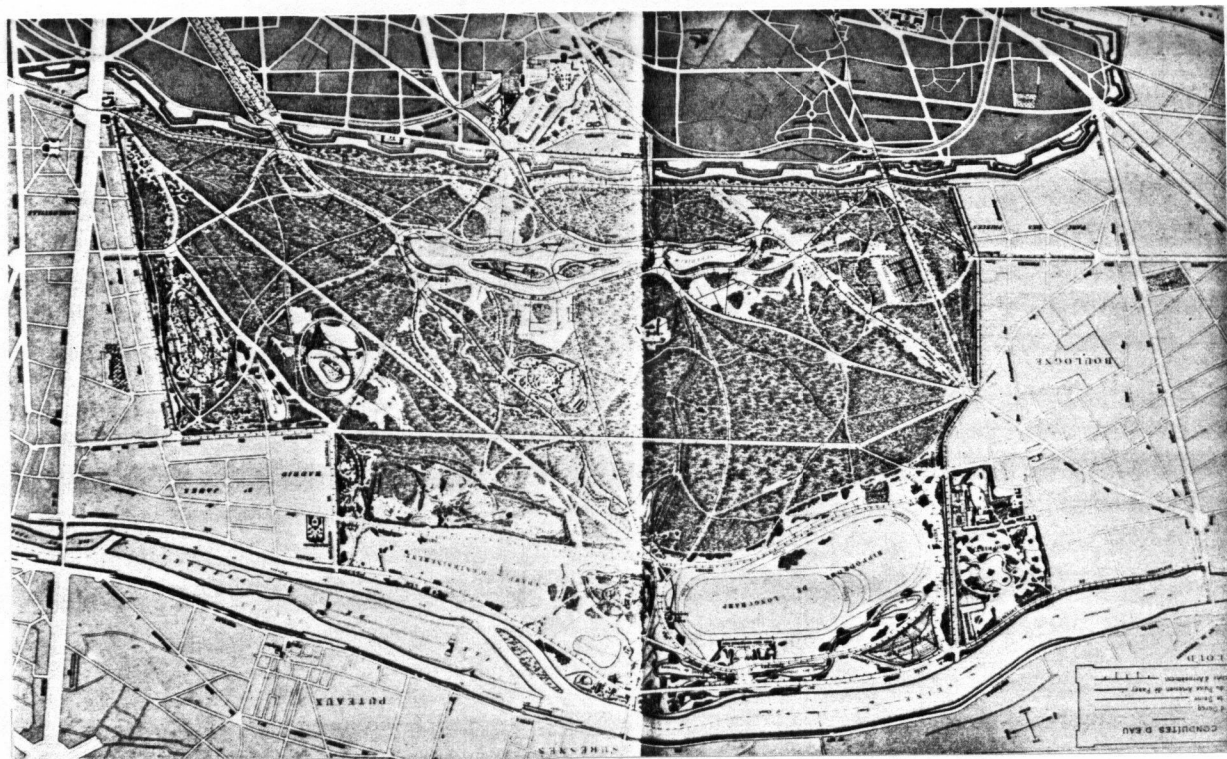


ILLUSTRATION 10 BOIS de BOULOGNE AFTER ITS
TRANSFORMATION BY ALPHAND. CHADWICK P. 165.

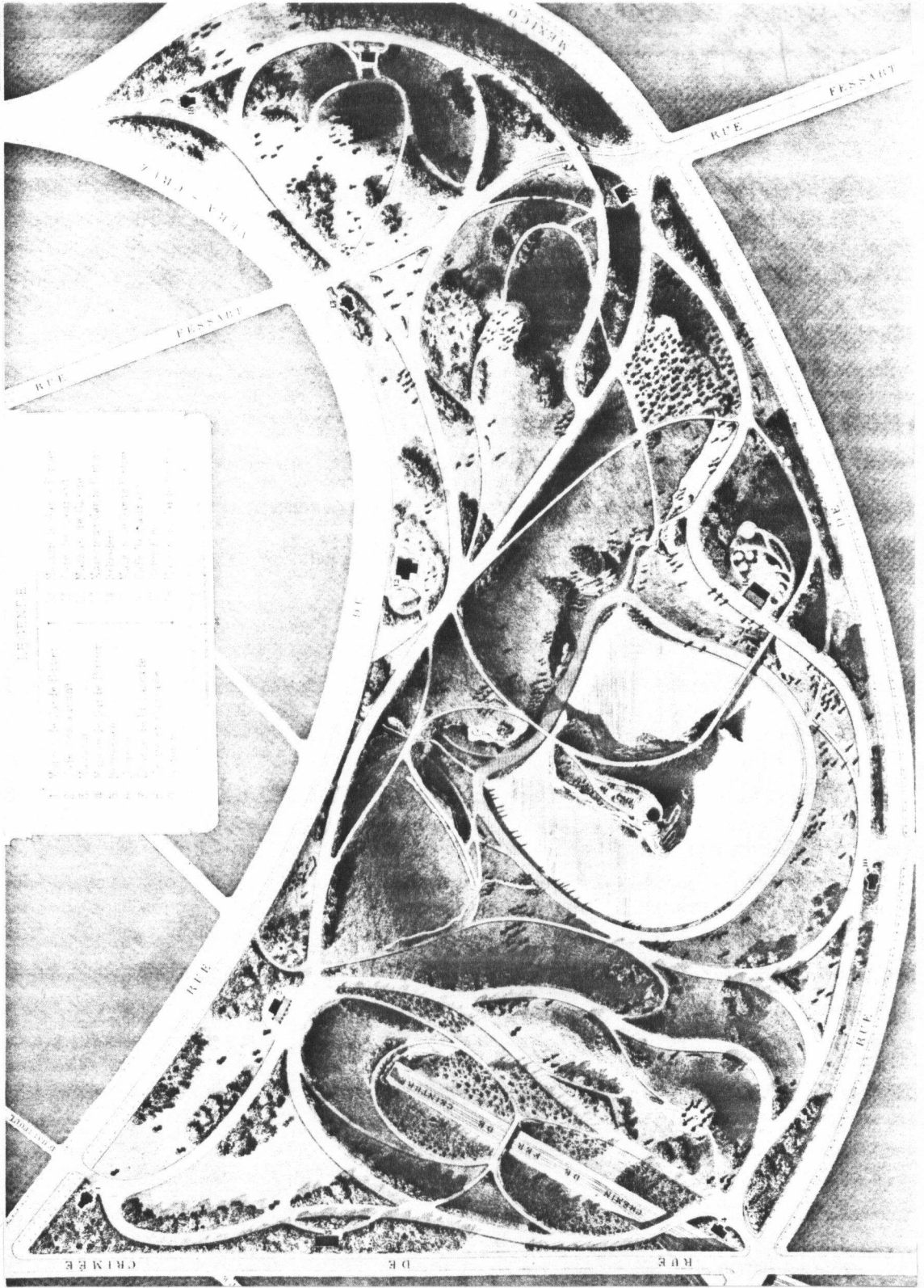


ILLUSTRATION II PARC des BUTTES - CHAUMONT. JELICOE P. 257.

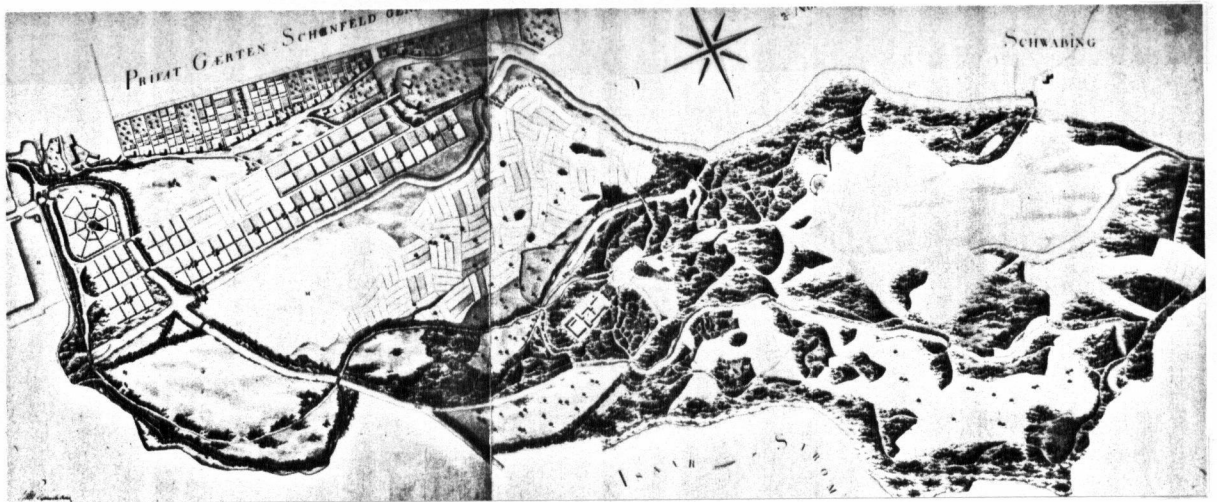


ILLUSTRATION 12 ENGLISCHER GARDEN, MUNICH 1789.
CHADWICK P. 257.

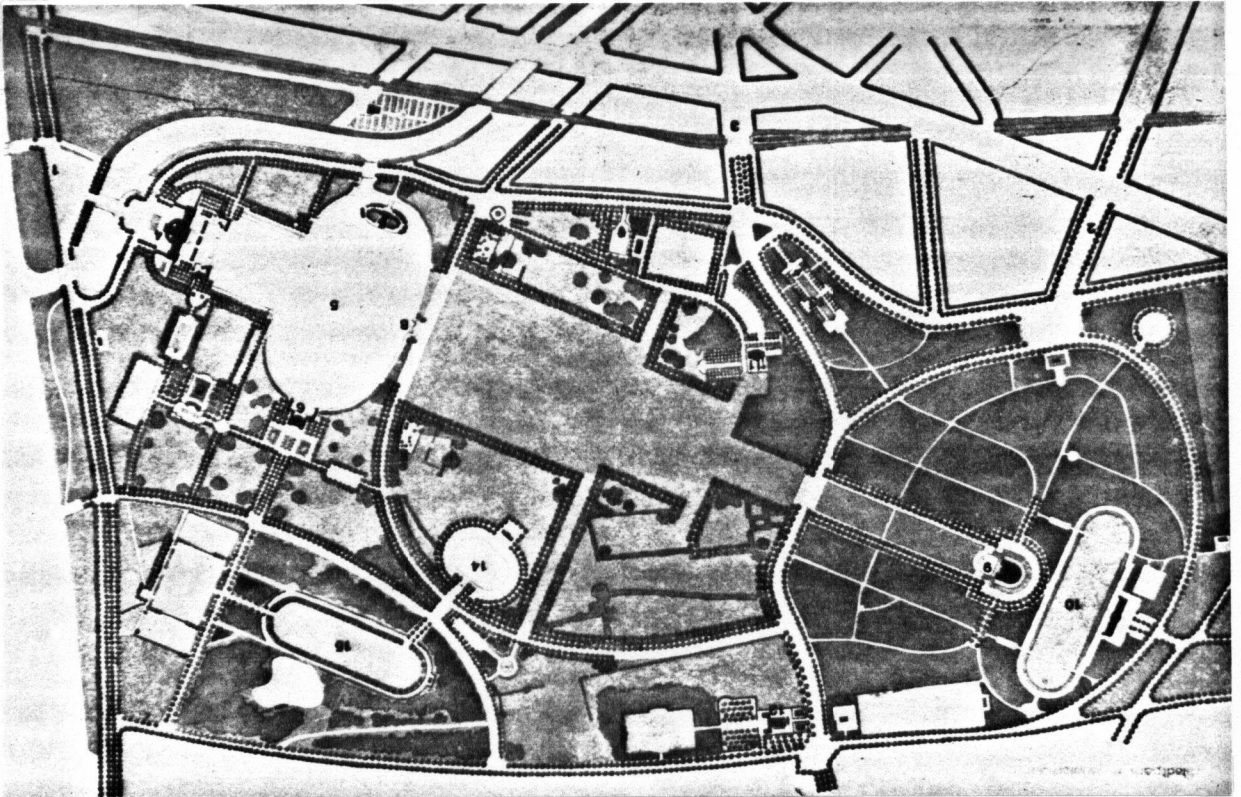


ILLUSTRATION 13 FRITZ SCHUMACHER'S STADTPARK,
HAMBURG 1909. CHADWICK P. 261.

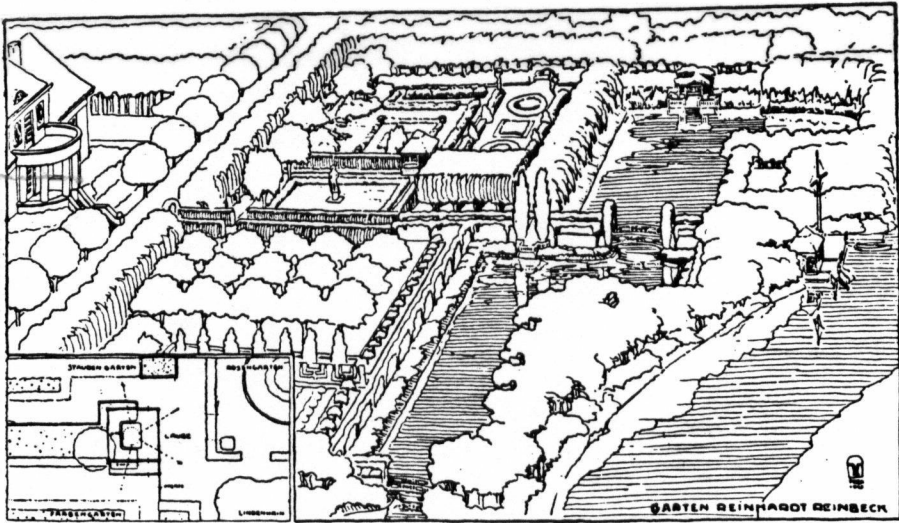


ILLUSTRATION 14 LEBERECHT MIGGE'S REINHARDT
GARDEN 1910. CHADWICK P. 333.

CHAPTER 3

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PARKS AND PARK SYSTEMS IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

Introduction

In the Americas, the first forms of public open space were the town squares and the village commons. In these New World towns the French, the Spanish, and the English tried to create a central meeting place like those in Europe. These spaces usually stood beside a church, a town hall, or the main buildings of the town. The people of Savannah for example, created one of the most interesting series of town squares. The city was originally laid out with a simple central square but with the provision that this form should be replicated as the grid was extended. By 1856, Savannah had 24 small squares and open spaces in addition to the central public garden.

The commons were usually used for pasturing stock, and as a place to hold public markets. Some of these commons have survived the transition to modern parks; the Boston Common and the Halifax Common are perhaps the most successful examples.

However most village commons and town squares have not made the transition to what we consider a "park" today, but continue to be a very important part of the urban structure particularly when they are of historical significance to that town or city. Although the original need was outgrown by the early 1800's, the idea of open space was retained and eventually expressed in a different form.

The Americans did not have the long tradition of monarchy, and

therefore did not inherit former royal parks and hunting grounds as European cities did. Nor were any great estates donated or purchased for the purpose of public parks. From the very beginning the Americans were to acquire land for the explicit purpose of creating a park, and they were to rely heavily on the British design experience.

The development of public parks in the U.S. was strongly influenced by a few individuals who modelled their work on the English landscape style, but implemented modifications to suit the American culture and climate. The genius of these men will be dealt with individually so as to outline each person's contribution to the ideas and development of public parks, as the park movement swept the country in the last half of the 19th century.

The Canadian case was somewhat different. The move for public parks occurred later than in the U.S. and was essentially a continuation of the movement across North America. There were no prominent landscape architects in Canada at that time and, subsequently, many ideas for public parks were borrowed from the U.S. and Britain, but often without the administrative structure to implement these ideas and designs.

Andrew Jackson Downing and the American Landscape

The man who first brought the English landscape tradition to the American landscape was Andrew Jackson Downing. He is perhaps, the American equivalent of John Claudius Loudon because he personified popular taste in garden design in the U.S. through his works and his writings, just as Loudon had in England. Downing's father had a nursery near the Hudson River in New York, which provided an all encompassing learning environment. As a child therefore, Downing became very sensitive and responsive to nature.

Contemporary garden design of this era was basically English garden design which resulted in a very strong influence of the philosophies of Brown, Repton and Loudon. Downing was an early follower of the English landscape school, but was able to successfully make his own modifications to the American culture and climate. He was an early advocate of public parks, drew attention to the need, and at the same time provided a basis for the study in which they were to be designed.

Downing maintained that the natural character or prevailing "expression of the place" should be preserved. He insisted on the recognition of the "genius loci", which is the understanding of the basic visual site qualities.¹ Every site had its own unique character, land form and vegetation cover. This principle constitutes Downing's major contribution to landscape design in America.

Like Loudon, Downing thought that small scale flowers should be near the house or in an enclosed flower garden removed from the general landscape. Downing used the British idea of large lawn areas a great deal and he wrote about this important element.

"Quite an area, in the rear of the house is devoted to a lawn, which must be kept close and green by frequent mowings so that it will be soft to the tread as a carpet, and its deep verdure will set off the gay colours of the flowering plants in the surrounding beds and parterre."²

He used his landscape style on many private estates throughout New England. One mid century (1850) mansion estate in New York looks very much like Stowe in Buckinghamshire after Capability Brown finished his renovations of the gardens. Downing naturally incorporated pleasure drives

instead of pleasure walks, and also created a series of open and closed vistas or a progression of landscape scenes. This element was later picked up by Calvert Vaux and Fredrick Law Olmsted in their design for Central Park.

Downing was a strong influence on improving suburban and country homes, not only in the aesthetic sense, but with a view towards inspiring other people's minds and encouraging them towards their own ideals. His writings were widely read and his "Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening Adapted to North America With a View to the Improvement of Country Residences", published in 1841, established him as the main authority in the U.S. on rural art.

In 1849 he became very interested in architecture. He travelled to England and brought back Calvert Vaux who as an architect, could provide some of the expertise that Downing lacked. The expansion into the concern for architecture was a natural reaction to some of the things being written about Young America at the time. For example, Charles Dickens, following a tour in 1842 produced American Notes which sharply criticized America for its lack of cultural refinement.³ Downing, in his work tried to counteract these European's impressions, and encourage what people could recognize as a fine American culture.

At the invitation of the President, Downing began to lay out the grounds near the Capital, the White House, and the Smithsonian Institute in Washington. Unfortunately, Downing drowned in a steam boat race in July of 1852 and his work was not completed.

He would have undoubtedly been involved in the design of the first American public parks had he survived. His first advocacy of public parks was in 1848 when he pointed to the success and heavy use of park cemeteries. Park cemeteries were forerunners of the public parks in America, and for twenty years or more, provided the only public open space that could be used by the population to walk in and attain that desired peacefulness. In 1831, Dr. L. Biglow designed a "natural" Reptonian type landscape at the Mount Auburn Cemetery in Boston. It was immediately successful as a place to go walking, and other New England cities soon established their own landscaped cemeteries. In the summer of 1848, 30,000 people came to look, admire and be emotionally stirred by the Auburn Cemetery.

As in England, there were initial difficulties due to the lack of responsible authorities to set up and maintain public parks. Downing and William Cullen Bryant, the editor of the New York Evening Post, were among the first to suggest a need for a park in New York City. In the October, 1848, issue of the Horticulturist (of which he was the editor) Downing wrote a piece called "A Talk about Public Parks and Gardens". After his visit to England in 1850, he used the London Parks as an example of the type of open space for which Americans should strive. It was to be another decade after Downing's death however, before this need was actualized.

Andrew Jackson Downing's work and writings were to provide the foundations for the opportunities and work of men like Fredrick Law Olmsted, Calvert Vaux, Charles Eliot and many others. His acceptance and advocacy of the English style of landscaping rather than the Continental style, was one of the strongest factors which has influenced park design in North America

over the last century.

Fredrick Law Olmsted and Central Park

The man who is referred to as the father of landscape architecture, and who was perhaps the person most responsible for the form of the urban park today is Fredrick Law Olmsted. He was born in 1822 in rural America and died in 1903 at the age of 81. He lived during an extremely important period of development in the United States. He was to see the disappearance of the frontier and the shift from rural to urban living. It was the era of industrialism and of the railroad. The railways had their beginnings around 1826, and by 1869, they spanned the North American continent.

These profound changes required people of that time to rethink their values and their approach to life. Fredrick Law Olmsted was a man who was able to keep abreast with the direction of American Society, maintain an openness to new ideas, and develop the ability to think about the environment of the future. It was Olmsted's quick reaction and prediction of change that produced a better environment for the people of his time, and for the people of generations to come.

Olmsted grew up in rural Connecticut and at a very early age developed a love of the countryside. After he had studied architectural science and engineering at Yale he took up farming on Staten Island, but was not successful. He travelled in Europe in 1850, and it was at this time that he saw Birkenhead Park in England. In 1852-53 Olmsted travelled on horseback through the south and southwestern States, and in 1856 he travelled throughout Italy. Before Olmsted began his career as a landscape architect then, he had seen many landscapes, both natural and designed.

Olmsted's early association and love of rural landscapes seemed to be the strongest factor in his eventual advocacy of the rural landscape in the city. He believed that the "social values" of the rural life would help to develop a democratic and cultural urban environment.⁴ For Olmsted, the ideal urban environment was to be a synthesis of landscape and cityscape.

He became familiar with the work of Andrew Jackson Downing and Calvert Vaux both of whom were advocating the garden art of England rather than the formalized gardens of the Continent. It was this type of gardening that struck a sympathetic note in Olmsted, who because of his life previous to that time, found this a most welcome confirmation of his own propensities. Thus developed Olmsted's well thought out philosophies on the art of the informal landscape and its possibilities and advantages in the city.

In the United States, the beginning of the park movement can be traced to Central Park. Prior to its creation there were no urban parks in American which had been designed specifically for the public. Olmsted believed that the decision to create such a park was not a direct influence from Europe, but was a "universal phenomena".

"It is now evident that the movement was not taken up in a country from any other, however, it may have been influenced or accelerated. It did not run like a fashion. It would seem rather to have been a common spontaneous movement of that sort which we conveniently refer to as Genius of Civilization."⁵

Although the idea of providing open space for a city's population had been realized simultaneously in many European countries for a century, and was expressed in the opening of royal states and the transformation of local fortifications, the idea of creating a landscape "de nouveaux" for

the purposes of a public park, did "run like a fashion", and that fashion began in England. When Birkenhead Park was a tremendous success other British cities created their own public parks; the French incorporated the English style public park into the overall design for the redevelopment of Paris; and the catalyst for the very rapid American park movement was also the British public parks. The two strongest advocates of a public park for New York were Andrew Jackson Downing and William Cullen Bryant, both of whom had travelled to England and pointed to the English public parks as an example to follow.

In 1811 the Commissioners of Streets and Roads submitted a plan for Manhattan Island in the familiar grid-iron fashion. Although the plan boldly provided for a city of far greater size than existed, it only provided seven squares and a parade ground as open space because "few spaces were now available and the land cost was so great."⁶ The fabulous opportunity for a riverside park was also missed. There were a number of pleasure gardens in New York City, but gradually these were replaced by buildings and by 1855 there were none left. Greenwood Cemetery was the only place where the people could enjoy the pleasure of foliage and lawns and it was estimated that 60,000 people visited the cemetery in a year at that time, many to enjoy the "rural" atmosphere. New York, like any other city of its size was also suffering from overcrowding, noise, and a totally man made visual environment. The workers of New York, like those of the northern industrial cities in England, needed a place of peace, tranquility, visual greenery, and space for physical exercise.

In the early 1850's New York City benefitted from a group of strong civic leaders who were influenced by William Cullen Bryant's editorials, and

began to acquire land for Central Park in 1853. In May of 1856, the City Council of New York gave the responsibility for its establishment and management to a Board called the "Commissioners of Central Park". Fredrick Law Olmsted was hired as the park superintendent in 1857. The commissioners advertised for plans for the park, Calvert Vaux, who had worked with Downing talked Olmsted into collaborating with him on a design, and they were awarded first prize for their "Greensward" plan which included a comprehensive report explaining their reason for every design feature. They predicted a huge population growth for New York City as the justification for a huge central parkland on Manhattan Island.

Olmsted later, wrote many books and manuscripts on his park and landscape philosophy and how it was so very important in developing a good social theory in the U.S. He recognized the fact that the farm was no longer the nucleus of American life, and that "the city would shape the modes of thought and basic values of all future Americans".⁷ He reasoned that unless the cities were enlightening and uplifting they would not be truly democratic. Because of his earlier ties with the countryside, Olmsted believed that to be able to "escape" to a rural landscape within the city, would afford peaceful recreation and would be conducive to a temperate, good natured, and healthy state of mind. A park as a place of "escape" became the primary justification for most parks in the eastern United States, and the basic design for these parks was carried all over the continent - even to places where the threat of "overwhelming urbanity" was many years down the road. This idea was partly as a result of conditions in New York at the time, but also as a result of the English northern industrial city experience. It is interesting that the "escapist theme" was so very different from what was happening in Paris at that time, where Haussmann and Alphand were creating

landscaped parks as an extension of the city. The different ideas of what is "urbanism" to the French and to the English-Americans certainly surfaces in the discussion of open spaces.

Olmsted's importance as a landscape architect and city planner rested as much on his social thought as on his technical and administrative ability. In his report on Central Park, as well as those that were to follow in different cities, he spelled out the needs of the people for the years ahead. His theory of urban design was generally acceptable to the political decision makers of his day and understood by the public as well. The result was that the ideas and influence of Fredrick Law Olmsted are today, seen on many landscapes in the United States and Canada. He was the single most important force in the development of landscape architecture as a profession and in the direction of the public park movement in the United States and Canada.

The Central Park Commissioner's design conditions for the 770 acre site were very specific. To be included were: four or more crossings of the park; a main mall; a parade ground of up to 40 acres; three playgrounds of up to ten acres; sites for an exhibition hall, a fountain and a prospect tower; and provision for a skating rink. Olmsted and Vaux were successful in unobtrusively incorporating these features into a plan which was really a rural landscape - a strong contrast with the rectilinear frame of the park and the monotonous streets around it. (Illustration 1 and 2).

The park site was extremely varied, with underlying gneiss rock outcropping in many places, and with marshy areas in others. Olmsted and Vaux in the style of Downing, used these variations in the landscape to

create a setting of romantic vistas and rural perspectives - a style that was to be followed in many cities across the U.S. In their report they mentioned the desire to provide a place for rural relaxation for the poorer people of New York while at the same time preserving the natural contours of Manhattan Island.⁸ Shaggy border trees were placed around the park to prevent a person in the park from seeing the adjacent buildings. In time of course, with the event of skyscrapers, this became impossible but in the original plan they were to provide a sense of enclosure in the woods. The border planting also acted as a sound buffer to the noises of the city. The required features such as the main mall were not the main features of the park, but subservient to the general character of the design. The architectural accompaniments to the mall were minimized at the entrance. Olmsted set aside a particular area in the park, the eastern side, which accommodated buildings such as a music hall, palm house, and a conservatory overlooking the proposed flower garden.⁹ This area, which also contained the mall, was the only area that contained "formal elements" - all else was an essay in English landscaping.

Perhaps the most innovative and ingenious feature of Central Park that was to have widespread implications on future landscape design was the circulation pattern which separated four types of movement and traffic. (See Illustration 2) Both men had seen Birkenhead Park and had undoubtedly been influenced by Paxton's solution of separating pedestrians and carriage ways, but they took this principle one step further. They provided completely separate circulation systems for carriages, horsemen, pedestrians, and ordinary street traffic crossing from one side of the park to another. All this was done at varying levels to fit the contours of the land. The value of this innovation did not only lie in greater safety to the pedestrians

and other traffic, but also in the freedom from distraction and the greater relaxation offered to the people who used the park.

Another element of the Park that should be mentioned here is the inclusion of playgrounds. Although it seems that Olmsted and Vaux both considered Central Park as a place of passive recreation and enjoyment and as a place of "escape" from the city, they did incorporate an area for organized games - an idea that was not yet popular in England. Paxton's playgrounds in Birkenhead Park must have been the influence because Olmsted and Vaux in their reports did not stress at any time, a great need of playgrounds of any kind.

Work on the Park began in the summer of 1851 and continued under their supervision until 1878, when Olmsted was dismissed. Both Olmsted and Vaux resigned a number of times because of political interference, but were persuaded to return in each case. The Park was constantly threatened by encroachments, but the presence of Olmsted, Vaux and a few powerful citizens prevented this from happening. It is understandable that many cities were not able to prevent such encroachments without a few very influential individuals with a well thought out park philosophy.

The Far Reaching Effects of Central Park

The effects of Central Park in New York were enormous, both locally, and nationally. The public - the poor as well as the rich - loved the park. This was evident from the beginning, when over four million visitors used it in 1863, seven and a half million in 1865, and eleven million in 1871. The Park also made New York attractive to visitors and therefore increased

business for the city. It was reported that the investment had raised real estate values in its vicinity sufficient to return increased taxes to the city in excess of the actual cost of the Park.

The Park is recorded as having a good effect on the public health.

One doctor maintained,

"Where I formerly ordered patients of a certain class to give up their business altogether and go out of town, I now often advise simply moderation, and prescribe a ride in the Park before going to their offices, and again in a drive with their families before dinner."¹⁰

In those years, it was perhaps difficult to determine the positive effect that Central Park had on the mental and physical well being of many of the poor people who lived in the city but it was undoubtedly tremendous.

Central Park was probably an incentive for the growing popularity of winter sports. Skating was an immediate success when the park opened. Saturday band concerts were instituted in 1859, and held weekly in the summer months. All these activities began to happen even before the park was finished in the late 1870's. When the Civil War came the Park Commissioners persuaded the municipal government to continue with the work. Olmsted was in Washington during that time working for the Red Cross and later went to California but returned regularly to New York to collaborate with Vaux.

The effect that this landscaped park had on the rest of the nation was also very significant. It was completed just after the Civil War, when many cities were going through a dramatic growth and rejuvenation. Naturally, every city wanted a central park. While Central Park in some cases influenced cities to merely acquire land somewhere in the city for a park, it also influenced some cities in developing parks according to a unified design, so

that today, these cities not only have breathing space, but a work of landscape art.

One of the earliest commissions that Olmsted and Vaux did after Central Park was Prospect Park in Brooklyn in 1866. (Illustration 3). It was one of the great urban open spaces and the drive through it seemed that the designers' dream of seeming to be completely in the country was realized. Again tall border trees were used to block the view and noise of the city and there were grand vistas down the Great Meadow in the park.

In 1871 Olmsted and Vaux did preliminary sketches for the Schuylkill River Park in Philadelphia which was to become the largest urban park in America. These 3,500 acres were later to be named Fairmount Park and became the basis of what later developed into a parkway that connected with the centre of the city. (Illustration 4)

By 1872 by mutual consent Olmsted and Vaux separated after a successful career together. Olmsted continued with his own firm and was responsible for many parks in "most of the important municipalities of the country."¹¹ The list of accomplishments accredited to Olmsted and his firm is lengthy. It includes:

In the East - Prospect Park, Brooklyn 1865 - 88
Fairmount Park, Philadelphia 1871
South Park, Albany 1868
Belle Island, Detroit 1882 - 83
Mount Royal Park, Montreal 1875 - 1881
South Park, Chicago 1871
Rockwood Park, Saint John 1889

Other cities in the East -

Boston, Hartford and numerous others in Mass.
Buffalo, Pough Keepsie and Rochester in New York
Newark, Providence, Baltimore
Capital Grounds in Washington

Niagara State Park in New York

In the South -

Montomery, Atlanta, Louisville
Kansas City, Cincinnati
Knoxville, Nashville, Richmond

In the West -

Golden Gate Park, San Francisco
Oakland Cemetary
University of California, Berkeley 1866
Stanford University
Yosemite big tree reservation

All these parks were done in Olmsted's characteristic sweeping landscape style that incorporated the natural features of the site, and all of these reflected his "escapist" theory about the function of city parks. His style became somewhat more formal in his later years and in 1892 he helped Daniel Burnham with the site selection for the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

From 1863 to 1866 Olmsted went to California to do a preliminary design for Golden Gate Park. As was the case with Central Park, Olmsted triumphed over a site that had deficiencies in soil and environment. His sensitive circulation pattern prevented frequent blasts of sand over the dunes and the barren environment. The design was completed a decade later by William Hammond Hall, a former apprentice of Olmsted's, who worked in the Olmsted tradition in many western cities. While Olmsted was there, he embarked on three other projects; the Oakland cemetery, a plan for the University of California at Berkeley, and a survey of the Yosemite big tree reservation. In the later stages of his career, he went back to California (in association with a Boston architectural firm) and prepared the design for Stanford University in Palo Alto only 35 miles from Berkeley (1886).

The plan and architecture is more formal than that at Berkeley and reflects the cultural background of the region, originally settled by Spanish missionaries. Olmsted was responsible for the master plan, and this plan respected the relationship of the campus to the community, yet gave it a dignified approach appropriate to a major university.

Another element of the American city that Fredrick Law Olmsted became involved in was the design of the suburb. The suburb was a logical extension of Olmsted's park philosophy of attempting to combine country life and city culture. In 1869 Olmsted and Vaux designed Riverside near the Des Plaines River just west of Chicago. This 10,000 person suburb was the first designed U.S. bedroom community. (Illustrations 5 and 6). George Tobey saw that Riverside, "represents the culmination of romantic idealism begun in 18th century England and transplanted into North American idiom with 19th century technological achievements superimposed."¹² The suburb provided the urban worker with a place in the country remote enough that he could raise his family in semirural surroundings. Olmsted saw the suburb as a step beyond the provision of parks, "..... the most attractive, the most refined and most soundly wholesome forms of domestic life and the best application of the arts of civilization to which mankind has yet attained."¹³

The Development of the Park System

Perhaps the greatest contribution of the United States towards the development of the 19th century park movement and the planning of towns is the concept of a park system. Traditionally a park system is a series of urban parks and recreation grounds that are linked in the city by a boulevard or a parkway. A boulevard is usually broad and straight, intended to be bordered by houses behind trees or hedges. A parkway is usually an informal

elongated park-type area varying from 200 to 500 feet in width, with planting, and when possible following the natural contours of the site. The parkways, of course, were originally designed for pedestrians and carriages and one must imagine ourselves back a century in time in order to understand how the parkways were intended to function.

As Central Park became the standard against which all other landscaped parks were to be judged, so the Boston green belts, also designed by Olmsted and Charles Eliot his associate, became the standard for judging park systems. Olmsted and Vaux in their reports for Central Park and Prospect Park expressed the point, "that the parks were only part of a mutually supplementary series of parks and recreation grounds widely dispersed throughout the metropolitan area and linked together by a system of connecting parkways of a width, capacity, and scenic quality of which there were then no examples in this country."¹⁴

In the late 1870's Boston did not have a major park except the Boston Common dating to 1634. Later, the Public Garden was acquired. In 1877 Olmsted suggested the creation of a park out of the lowland salt marshes of the Back Bay. The Boston Park Commission, which was started in 1875, approved of Olmsted's suggestions and by 1881 had made the applicable purchases.

Olmsted used as his base, the Charles and Muddy Rivers. The Muddy River was an insignificant stream that went virtually unnoticed until Olmsted made it the principle feature of his Fens Park and the spine of his related parks and parkways (Illustration 7). August Heckscher writes about Olmsted,

"Olmsted's genius can be seen in the way he handled the Fen area. The City had planned a flood control and reservoir system for the unsightly and odorous mouth of the Muddy River, which, seeping in a wide delta into the Charles had bothered the residents of the newly created Back Bay. Olmsted met the practical requirements posed by floods and sewage, and at the same time created a delightful park. Sewage was diverted; the mud flats depressed by grading to a point just below low tide, while a high rim of encircling land provided a storage area for flood waters. A tide gate permitted a normal ebb and flow."¹⁵

Other parts of the greenbelt such as Jamaica Pond, Olmsted Park, the Arboretum and Franklin Park were also designed and developed with similar imagination. Franklin Park, the largest park of the Boston green belt system was primarily designed as a natural landscape park. Years later a golf course was introduced illustrating how easily the Olmsted natural landscape could be adapted. There was one long formal promenade in the northwest section of the park called the "Greeting" which, like the Mall in Central Park, was intended as a meeting place and promenade for local citizens. (Illustration 8)

Illustration 9 shows how the Boston park system was rooted in the central city at the Boston Common, and continued in an arc anchored by Franklin Park in the southwest.

A decade after the Boston Parkway was begun by Olmsted, one of his apprentices and future partners, Charles Eliot carried out many of the designs, adding his own creative ideas. Eliot, another important eastern park pioneer was instrumental in establishing a Board of Trustees capable of acquiring and holding for the benefit of the public, beautiful and historical places in Boston and Massachusetts.

One of the first cities to follow the lead of Boston was Kansas

City which, in 1893 had the Texan George Kessler begin work on a park system for the city. Kessler was a gardener for Central Park so was well acquainted with the Olmsted landscape principles. While he appreciated the need to correct and supplement the evils of a crowded city, Kessler felt that the mid-west city of Kansas had other needs. His people wanted public squares, local parks and anything to play up the urban perspective. Kessler's success was in combining the city's natural endowments with an artificial structure to make the city more urbane and beautiful.

A larger outlying park was needed to anchor and complete the system, so in 1895, Colonel Thomas Swope, a philanthropic citizen, donated 1,134 acres of pasture and woodland nine miles from the city's centre. Within a decade the city had grown to the edge of the park. Illustrations ten and eleven show how the system has had the capacity to keep pace with the growing city, maintaining its basic outline while serving a broader area than was conceived by its originators. Today Kansas City has a very strong sense of civic adornment.

Another contemporary, and a person for whom Olmsted had a great deal of respect, was H.W.S. Cleveland, the person responsible for the Minneapolis Park System. Cleveland had worked on Chicago's South Park before he moved to the West - "the reason for his move being the fact that he was upset at the way that Western cities were being settled with the repetition of the grid."¹⁶ He felt it did not enhance the character of the land and sacrificed chances for the cities to form their own character. In the early 1880's when Cleveland was hired he was to discover that Minneapolis not only had the Mississippi River, but also a series of lakes on the city's outskirts. Cleveland

used the natural features to fashion a series of parks, and although the park system has been added to over the years, it has lost virtually none of its former character. (Illustration 12). It is interesting that in a 1971 study of the Minneapolis parkways, it was confirmed that the parkway had met the four goals Cleveland had set out in the early 1880's. It was found that: it provides a visual relief from the man made city; it defines the edges that give form to the city and gives an identity to the neighbourhoods; it serves as a drainage system; and it supplies an important recreational function.¹⁷

Both Cleveland and Kessler went on to design other public parks in the West and Mid West and were an important part of the public park movement in the United States. Yet another apprentice of Olmsted's William Hammond Hall went to the west coast of the U.S. and carried on the Olmsted tradition there.

The West Coast Experience

San Francisco is a city which has relied very heavily on the underlying topographic conditions to help form its open space system. Telegraph Hill in the centre of the city dominates the downtown area and the port. Its summit is crowned by a small park. Today, through the ingenuity of a few dedicated people, the major open spaces of the area, Presido, Lake Merced and Golden Gate Park are lined by boulevards to create a very fine open space system along the Pacific Ocean. (Illustration 13).

In the city of San Francisco, the lay of the land combined with the grid street pattern, has the effect of creating views which are independent of any formal open space. A person can look down many streets and see the

land and sea, a situation very similar to areas in the City of Vancouver. These view points have become extremely important to the people of San Francisco and in their minds, form part of an open space or "park system". Except for a small area in the city centre, building has been kept to a traditional small scale, so that one is always confronted with a view of the city and its environs. The "street ends" were threatened just before the earthquake when Daniel Burnham did a plan for San Francisco, proposing a modification of the grid, with broad avenues and with roads following the contours of the hills. After the earthquake, when the people were faced with a rebuilding process, they chose to keep the grid, largely for practical and sentimental reasons.

In 1890, the San Franciscans felt that they wanted a large park. The site that Olmsted had earlier done the preliminary plans for and advocated as the major park, was chosen. The City hired William Hammond Hall to do the design for the long narrow stretch of dunes reaching from Divisadero Street westward to the sea. Olmsted's influence continued as Hall tenaciously sought his advice and blessing on the design. Because the sands were subject to constant shifting with the strong Pacific winds, Hall designed the park with serpentine roads and planted grasses and plants that were brought down from the hills and imported from abroad. Finally, Hall had thousands of seedlings of cypress and pine planted to provide anchorage for further plantings.

In 1890, Golden Gate Park came under the control of an extraordinary park superintendent named John McClaren. He presided over his domain for more than fifty years, forcefully guiding the park through many threats of encroach-

ment and threats to his idea of an ideal park. For example, McClaren hated "stookies" - statues of would be famous figures donated to the park - and ordered his gardeners to screen them from view with natural growth. Heckscher says of McClaren, "(He) was gifted with longevity and natural authority, that great park empires seemed to require for their development."¹⁸

Although Golden Gate was the principle park, McClaren did not neglect the other green areas he was responsible for. He was aware of the benefit of acquiring a hilltop or a bit of coast. Today, although the City of San Francisco does not have any large parks downtown, it does have magnificent views and vistas, with a very large and well connected park system just a short distance away.

Los Angeles, another city determined by geography, has not been as successful in acquiring a comprehensive park system. It never experienced the influence of an Olmsted, an Eliot, or a McClaren to shape a downtown park system, and while those men were reshaping older cities, Los Angeles was absorbing thousands of settlers from all over the country.

Because of the favourable climate, the creation of downtown urban parks never received the same priority as in New York and Boston with their crowded tenements and unpleasant living conditions. When the country-wide park movement was at its height during the last half of the 19th century, Los Angeles was still a settlement with numerous uninhabited green spaces. It was L.A. County rather than the City that developed a park system in later years. The parks were located in outlying canyons and mountains, and while the distance from the population was greater than in the East, travel time was based on the automobile rather than the street car. The mountains and

canyons were therefore relatively accessible provided that each citizen had an automobile.

The City of Los Angeles however, did not use the Eastern example of creating parks within the City area, and because there was no strong park tradition, freeways have recently encroached upon open spaces such as Griffith Park, Elysian Park, Hollenbick Park, and Victory Park.

A study done by Harland Bartholemew in 1930, emphasized the City's deficiency in open and recreational space, and recommended that 74,000 acres in the Santa Monica Mountains be acquired. August Heckscher points out that the advice has not been taken seriously and there has been no concern for the natural appearance of the land in developing it, or, to the need for open space.¹⁹ (Illustration 14)

The City of Los Angeles seems to have experienced the "pioneer spirit gone rampant". The idea of the sacredness of private property and development has been very strong in Southern California due to the historical circumstance of it being the last American frontier. The indifference to the creation of downtown public space is very understandable when one looks at the development of the city. Los Angeles, as mentioned earlier, lacked the foresight or influence of people of the stature of Olmsted and his followers, who did much towards the development of a park philosophy in cities all across the U.S.

Seattle, in the Pacific Northwest, also has a natural site which has had a strong influence on the development of the city. It lies between two bodies of water, Puget Sound and Lake Washington. Within the city lies

Green Lake, Lake Union and the Duwanish River. There are ridges or elongated hills, that in general, run parallel to the shorelines, and which provide reference points to people in the city as well as visual relief. These features together, give the city a tremendous sense of openness, and offer natural views of either the hills or the water.

In 1903 the park commissioners requested a plan for a park system, from the landscape firm of the Olmsted Brothers of Boston.²⁰ The Olmsteds found that there were a number of parks at this time, but they were widely scattered in a city undergoing rapid growth. They prepared a plan that involved the expansion of existing parks, which were linked by parkways into an organized open space system that reflected the existing contours and the views of water and mountains.

In 1909 the park commissioners reported that the Olmsted plan had been adopted and that a "bond issue of one million dollars had been passed almost unanimously" and that "wonderful progress" had been made toward the development (Illustration 15).

The 1903 plan recommended a major new park and the extension of the system by means of lakeshore drives and connected parkways until it touched many of the city's natural features. Seward Park at Bailey's Peninsula formed the major park within the system, and green space connected it to the lake at the University of Washington, the Arboretum, and Washington Park. It continues along Interlaken Drive, where at the hilltop Volunteer Park, there is a marvelous view of Puget Sound. Another branch follows a proposed parkway to Ravenna Park.

Although Seattle's park system is broken by incompatible land uses and other gaps, it does represent a good example of how parks and the natural terrain can compliment each other. Like other U.S. cities in the late 1880's, Seattle is an example of a city which commissioned a plan to help direct and prioritize a park system within the rapidly growing city.

It seems from the evidence, that park development in the West was an extension of the principles of park development in the East, if there was a design plan or person to help keep sight of these principles. Because the cities in the West were not experiencing the negative effects of crowded living conditions, the existence of public parks was not a priority in cities like Los Angeles. In the cities like San Francisco and Seattle that did benefit from the foresight of some individuals, the important features of topography were handled in a very complimentary way.

Active Recreation

The Olmsted style of landscape was well suited to passive and semi-active recreation. In Central Park, playground areas were set aside at the time of its design, but these were minor features of the general plan and were designed in such a way as not to interfere with the overall concept. The landscape architects of the late 19th century and well into the 20th century, discouraged the design of recreation areas for planned exercise and competition, and, as a result, many large parks did not contain much in the way of active recreation facilities such as ball grounds or tennis courts. "It was into this environment of passive recreation that the demand for active play began to usurp certain areas of these larger landscaped parks."²¹

In the 1880's, beginning with sand courts for children and outdoor gymnasiums in the Charlesbank area of Boston, the "playground movement for children" grew into a "recreation movement" which served all age groups and which had a profound effect on the entire pioneer conception of parks and their recreation function. It changed the uses of parts or the whole of existing parks - a situation that met with some opposition from people of the Olmstedian school and from some of the governing park authorities. Some of these people lacked the breadth of understanding to accept the new trend of recreation and to incorporate these demands into suitable designs. On the other hand, the playground leaders that were often hired had no deep understanding of landscape architecture or of the art of park design. What occurred in many cities, was that between 1890 and 1920, there was a disruption of previously well designed parks by the intrusion of active recreation facilities improperly placed and improperly designed. There were also some very barren playgrounds created in some neighbourhoods.

The end of the 19th century saw the development of "recreation departments" which looked after "recreation areas", as opposed to "park departments" which looked after parks defined as naturalized passive retreats. As a result, the parks received much more design attention than the recreation areas - a situation that lasted in most parts of the country until after World War II.

George Tobey quotes from Waugh's History of Garden Art:

"In order to complete the discussion of American park design, a few observations on later work may be added. Two new conditions began to change the park problem soon after Olmsted's death. The first of these was the further growth and industrialization of American cities, requiring

'neighbourhood playgrounds' of a new type. The second was the introduction of a new means of passenger transit at the outset, the electric tram and later the much more influential automobile."²²

Because playgrounds were not seen as being compatible with the scenic park idea, they developed their own form which became a new development on the American landscape.

The trend began to dictate the creation of small playgrounds scattered throughout the residential sections of the city, with the larger peripheral parks made possible by the improvement of transport. The first fruits of this movement were seen in the Boston Park system under Charles Eliot, and within a short period, Minneapolis and Chicago also created playgrounds.

Some of the energy in the park movement was diverted into the demand for state and national parks. There developed a movement at the turn of the century to preserve considerable areas of native landscape for purposes of health, education and recreation. These parks, then, like the urban parks fifteen years previously, were a statement of the nationwide acceptance of the importance of natural scenery to the general pleasure and welfare of the people.

The Development of Public Parks in Canada

Elsie McFarland, in her thesis A Historical Analysis of the Development of Public Recreation in Canadian Communities, states that local government evolved slowly in Canada, partly due to scattered population, but primarily due to the fact that the war of independence in the colonies to the south had caused those in authority to view too much local autonomy with suspicion.²³

As a result, with the simple exception of Saint John, New Brunswick, which received its charter in 1785, the central government, through magistrates, made all local decisions well into the 19th century. In 1867 therefore, when Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick formed the Dominion of Canada, many cities had very little experience in the responsibilities of local government. Despite this fact, and probably because of the beginnings of a park movement in the U.S., there was nevertheless an early advocacy of open space for public use. Canadians learned quickly that the best way of obtaining these parks was through the Dominion government or by soliciting a private gift.

Examples of local public park acquisition prior to 1867 are few. The Halifax Common, Canada's counterpart to the Boston Common in the U.S., was granted to public officers in the town of Halifax in 1763 by the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia. It was originally used as a pasturage for the local citizens, and as an exercise ground for the militia. Today the Common has been reduced to less than one half its original size and has been developed into a major recreation area in the heart of downtown Halifax. From its beginnings, the Common, unlike many other parks of its time, was used for active recreation.

In Toronto, a committee on Public Walks and Gardens was established in 1851. One of their earliest responsibilities was the retention and development of the 287 acre Garrison reserve which was leased to the city by the military authorities in 1848. It is interesting that the lease was conditional upon the city having land "plowed, sowed with grass, enclosed with a fence, planted with trees, and laid out in pleasure grounds and an ornamental park for

the purposes of the pleasure and recreation of the inhabitants of Toronto."²⁴ Games could not be played without permission which was a very different case from the Halifax Common. In 1860, a bylaw entrusted the care of all the city's public squares, parks and grounds to the Committee on Public Walks and Gardens.

The City of Montreal had a similar attitude when in 1865, a City by-law was passed designating the boundaries of thirteen open spaces in the city and "severely regulating" their use to exclude all games, and any walking or lying on the grass."²⁵ Montreal's interest in public open space originated in 1821 when the Governor Lord Dalhousie donated a piece of land to the City for a public square. The Place d'Armes Square which was used as a public open space since the French regime, was purchased by the City in 1840. Finally by Confederation in 1867, the City was considering the purchase of Mount Royal for development into a major park.

It is probably safe to assume that in the case of Montreal, the tradition of not playing games and not walking on the grass in a public open space is of French origin. The majority of Torontonians, on the other hand, came from a British background and were familiar with the practice of walking on grass. There is evidence from the letters of George Laing, a landscape gardener working in the Hamilton region from 1856 to 1867, that there had been landscape gardening in Ontario and that it was of the "English landscape style" of Brown and Repton. Later, Laing was to use the "Gardenesque" style of Pennethorne and Paxton, his contemporaries in England.²⁶ Laing himself worked for wealthy British immigrants in and around Hamilton and Ancaster, so it was likely that the British landscape tradition was also evident around Toronto. Since at this time in England, games were not encouraged in parks

and in the pre-Central Park America, games were unheard of in parks, it is logical that game playing in public parks was not encouraged in Toronto either.

There are numerous parks in Canada that were acquired by grant or lease after 1867. In many cases, the senior government leased or granted the use of parks to the local governments. Much of the land had originally been retained for defence purposes and it is likely that the lessening friction with the U.S. was a major reason for its transfer to peaceful purposes.

The City of Halifax was founded in 1749 as a defence outpost to guard the British Empire's northern colonial interests.²⁷ Shortly after the settlers arrived, they applied to the Governor of Nova Scotia for 235 acres on the peninsula of Halifax to serve as a common. Because this public open space was first conceived as a common or "land established for communal use by the peasants." and not as a public park, it has experienced many encroachments over the years - all in the name of "worthy causes".

In 1837, the Nova Scotia Horticultural Society was granted acreage to "improve the culture of the best kinds of fruit, the most useful vegetable, shrubs, trees, and choice flowers."²⁸ This section of the Common was later called the Public Garden. The Common's first superintendent, Richard Power, had experience in estate gardening in England and in the U.S. He designed gardens that today bear the influence of British landscape design in that they represent the idea of passive recreation.

Active recreation pursuits appeared in 1863 when Canada's first covered ice rink opened in the Common and again in 1876 when the first public

tennis courts were established in the Public Garden. In 1879 the Exhibition Building was built which not only served as a place to hold exhibitions, but also as a facility for ice skating in the winter and as a small art gallery. In 1886 the Wanderers' Amateur Athletic Association became established on what is now the Wanderer's Ground on the Common. The members participated in activities like football, hockey, cricket, baseball, track and field, curling, snowshoeing and bicycling.²⁹ Horse racing appeared in the North Common in the mid 1850's.

Despite the activities of groups such as the Society for the Preservation of the Common, encroachments have reduced the area of the Common from the original 235 acres to less than 63 acres. These encroachments have been in the form of: a cemetery established in 1833; the City Hospital in 1859; the Poor Asylum for the Blind in 1868; the Convent of the Sacred Heart in 1886; Dalhousie College in 1887; and an assortment of schools, a broadcasting studio, and other hospitals.

Today the Common is sectioned into five parts: the North Common, the Central Common and the Wanderer's ground which provide space for the major sporting facilities and which promote active recreation; and the Public Gardens and Victoria Park, which remain as passive park areas catering to leisure pursuits of strolling, listening to concerts and viewing floral displays. The historical development of the Common also illustrates several distinctly different park designs.

The Common experienced a blending of uses and ideas over the years and this is probably due to the fact that it was not termed a "public park" from the beginning. It was not designed at one time by a landscape architect,

but evolved naturally, creating a multi-functional landscape. The easy introduction of active recreation into the Common is also probably due to the fact that a Common was originally perceived as an acreage for the "general needs" of the inhabitants of Halifax.

In the city of London, Ontario, Victoria Park was formerly a drill ground for a British garrison. The 1,429 acre area was deeded to the city by the Federal Government in 1869 for the purpose of a public park.

Stanley Park in Vancouver was also a military reserve prior to 1886, when the Dominion Government leased the "Coal Penninsula" to the City, which had just incorporated. The fact that the city founders in a city of 10,000, gave the matter of acquiring a public park priority at their first council meeting, was quite incredible.

Although the city of Saint John which was the first city in Canada to receive its charter (1785), it was not given responsibility for its first public park. Rockwood Park, a 1,700 acre site in downtown Saint John, had its beginnings when the Canadian Government authorized the Saint John Horticultural Society to establish gardens, a park and a pleasure resort, and to acquire the necessary land by gift, purchase or lease. The Society was even given the right to expropriate lands not acquired by agreement.³⁰ Calvert Vaux had earlier prepared the original plans for the development of Rockwood Park and submitted them in 1889. The original Vaux plan was laid out for 320 acres, but by 1914 the park had become 500 acres and in 1936 a large grant increased it to its present size. The plan included walks and drives, horticulture gardens, zoological gardens, and a children's playground. Much of the plan was developed and the Olmsted style landscape is evident in part of

Rockwood Park today.

St. Helen's Island at the entrance of Montreal was well situated for fortification against attack, and was the site of military installations during the French regime and later after the British Conquest. It was sold to the British Government in 1818 from the Longueil family, and was then intensely fortified as a military base. Following Confederation, St. Helen's Island was ceded to the Dominion and taken over by the militia. The government granted the city use of the site as a public park from 1874 and in 1905 the city purchased the island for \$200,000. St. Helen's was eventually to become the site for Expo 67.

Mount Royal Park in Montreal was the first Canadian park to be designed by a landscape architect - and it received the best, Fredrick Law Olmsted. In the 1860's the mountain top was removed from what was then the city and therefore some doubted the value of the mountain as a park. In 1860, Mr. John Redpath had offered to donate twelve acres of his land on top of the mountain to the city for a public park, but the offer was not accepted by the Council. When Captain A.A. Stevenson became an alderman in 1861, he managed to change the attitude of the other council members. John Redpath's property was finally purchased in 1875 at a cost to the city of more than \$83,000; Redpath's initial offer was withdrawn after being hurt by the Council's original "snub".³¹

In 1874 a board of Commissioners who were appointed from within the Council, took responsibility for the management and supervision of the park and approached Olmsted to prepare a plan. Olmsted was reluctant to do the design because he was not sure he could do justice to the site without having

lived in the area.³² He was constantly frustrated by the lack of stable policy on the part of the Council and the Commission, and when his plans were finally submitted in 1877 he felt that his work had been futile. He was very concerned about future encroachments in the park.

Olmsted urged the Council to retain the wilderness and seclusion of the park that had first made it attractive, and urged its development and management as a work of art. This vision would preclude locating roads, walks, buildings and other man-made structures solely on economic considerations and would require a policy of development that would benefit the property as a whole. He begged the City to resist the temptation of putting in flower beds, flowering shrubs and "floral embroidery" that would ruin the totally natural environment.

Some people in Montreal did listen to Olmsted's message. A group of women led by Lady Hingston, wife of a former mayor, formed the Parks Protection Association in 1896 to prevent the Montreal Street Railway from laying two miles of double track across Mount Royal Park. The ladies obtained the signatures of 20,000 women on a petition to City Council and on the day the petition was presented, the company gracefully withdrew its request. This was the first citizen's group in Canada to become involved in the preservation of parkland. The Association in years to come was to act many times for the park and was instrumental in preventing encroachments such as the erection of a lookout restaurant. In 1902 the association became the Parks and Playground Association of Montreal. Despite eventual encroachments like the unsightly television towers, the "present Mount Royal Park is a tribute to more than seventy years of efforts by a citizens' group

that insisted on a stake in the future of Montreal. The Park stands as evidence, too, of those City Councils that sought, but seldom heeded, expert advice."³³

Apart from the Dominion Government granting leases on land for public parks there was a need for legislation enabling the general development of municipal parks. In 1883 the Province of Ontario passed the first Canadian legislation which empowered local governments to appoint boards of park management to be composed of the mayor and six other non-members of Council. These parks Boards were permitted to purchase land for park purposes not to exceed 1,000 acres in the case of cities, and 500 acres in the case of towns. The City of Toronto did not adopt the Parks Act when it became law in 1883 because the Council did not want to share its power with another authority. Some of the first cities to adopt the Public Parks Act and establish a Board of Parks Management were; Port Arthur in 1888, Ottawa in 1893, Kitchener in 1894, Hamilton in 1900 and Brantford in 1901.

Manitoba passed similar legislation in 1892. Calgary obtained an amendment to its charter in 1910, which provided for the establishment of a Parks Board "consisting of a mayor, the city commissioners and six other members to be appointed by Council."³⁴ The Parks Board in Calgary was short lived however! In 1913 a further amendment to the Calgary City Charter repealed the power of the Parks Board and reinstated it with the Council and City Commissioners.

The City of Vancouver operated its parks with a Park Committee made up of three members of Council with three citizens, from 1888 until 1890, when a change in the City Charter permitted an elected Board of Park Commissioners. Vancouver was the first city in Canada to have an elected board.

At the end of the 19th Century several cities in Canada had established Parks Boards while many others continued with committees of council. These two principles of operation demonstrate the essential difference between the British principle of municipal government which vests all power within an elected council, and the U.S. principle of the separation of power, which permits removal from the jurisdiction of council certain functions of government.³⁵ In the case of Toronto, the City Council jealously guarded its power against the efforts of various groups to obtain a separate parks commission. Vancouver, on the other hand, went a step further than placing parks in the hands of an appointed board, by placing it in the hands of an elected one. This was one of numerous U.S. influences that Vancouver was experiencing at the time because of its geographical location and ties to the West Coast.

Summary

At the end of the 19th century one could look back and see that out of Central Park and the beginnings of Park Systems came four related phenomena: 1) the precedent design style for the U.S. was based on nature-oriented parks; 2) the landscape architecture school provided many park authority leaders; 3) there occurred a split in recreation authorities into passive recreation enthusiasts and active recreation advocates; and finally, 4) the development of park systems constituted the first comprehensive design plans in city planning and caused civic leaders to begin thinking about their city comprehensively. From the preceding chapter, it is evident that an argument can be made that these traditions are actually rooted in a revolution that occurred in Britain before the development of Central Park. The park designs and ideas that were being practiced in the last half of the 19th Century in the U.S. were unquestionably influenced by the chain of events that

occurred in Britain during the first half of the 19th century. Fortunately, there were Americans such as Downing and Olmsted, who accepted these traditions, but who modified some of the principles to accommodate the American culture, climate, and needs of the people.

In the West, because there wasn't the urgent need to designate park area to alleviate the evils of the large city, the creation of park space was not a top priority with some cities. Those which experienced the early presence of a landscape architect and a committed park superintendent seemed to have acquired better preserved, and better integrated park systems. The incremental park acquisition approach that Los Angeles took for example, has resulted in a poorly defined park system that is sadly deficient in open space.

In Canada, there were very few landscape architect-designed parks. Most early parks were a grant or lease from the Dominion government, and in local councils, in a few cases, a parks board would determine the requirements for the park. Design influences were largely American, and in the case of Vancouver the influence tended to be West Coast American.

The fact that Canada lagged behind the U.S. in park design produced an interesting situation when the City Beautiful and Civic Art movements developed in the U.S. and Britain. Canada's tardy involvement resulted in the shelving of numerous "grandiose" civic and park plans because of the commencement of World War I and the shifting of energies elsewhere. The result was the absence of very formal park landscapes, particularly in Western Canada and specifically, in Vancouver.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 George Tobey, A History of Landscape Architecture: the Relationship of People to Environment (New York: American Elsevier Pub., Co., Inc., 1973), p. 154.
- 2 Ibid., p. 158.
- 3 Ibid., p. 156.
- 4 Fredrick Law Olmsted, Landscape into Cityscape: Fredrick Law Olmsted's Plans for a Greater New York City (New York: Cornell University Press, 1968), p. 30.
- 5 Fredrick Law Olmsted, Forty Years of Landscape Architecture: Central Park (Cambridge Mass: The MIT Press, 1973), p. 14.
- 6 Charles E. Doell and Gerald B. Fitzgerald, A Brief History of Parks and Recreation in the United States (Chicago: Athletic Institute, 1954), p. 26.
- 7 Olmsted, Landscape into Cityscape, p. 28.
- 8 George F. Chadwick, The Park and the Town (New York: Fredrick A. Praeger Pub., 1966), p. 184.
- 9 In actuality, the conservatory was not built and the flower garden was replaced by a basin for a fountain, later used for model boats.
- 10 Olmsted, Forty Years, p. 172.
- 11 Doell and Fitzgerald, p. 32.
- 12 Tobey, p. 165.
- 13 Olmsted, Landscape into Cityscape, p. 42.
- 14 Chadwick, p. 191.

- 15 August Heckscher, Open Space: The Life of American Cities (New York: Harper and Row Pub., 1977), pp. 196 - 197.
- 16 Ibid., p. 126.
- 17 Ibid., p. 208.
- 18 Ibid., p. 83.
- 19 Heckscher, p. 87.
- 20 The Olmsted brothers of Boston were Fredrick Law's sons John and Fredrick Jr. The Olmsted brothers report is printed in "Parks, Playgrounds, and Boulevards of Seattle, Washington" issued by the Board of Park Commissioners in 1902.

Heckscher, Open Space, p. 76.
- 21 Doell and Fitzgerald, p. 36.
- 22 Ibid., p. 38.
- 23 Elsie Marie McFarland, "A Historical Analysis of the Development of Public Recreation in Canadian Communities" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1969), p. 16.
- 24 Ibid., p. 18.
- 25 Ibid., p. 18, citing Montreal, Bylaws of the City of Montreal Compiled to date February, 1902 (Montreal: Eusebe Sencal and Co., 1902), pp. 23 - 24, Chapter XXIV.
- 26 Paul Grimwood, Owen Scott, and Marilyn Warson, "Roots 5, George Laing -- Landscape Gardener, Hamilton, Canada West", Landscape Architecture in Canada 4 No. 1 (April 1978), 78): 3.
- 27 S. Markam and C. Edginton, "The Common of Halifax: Canada's first Park" Recreation Canada (February 1979), 79): 12.
- 28 Ibid., p. 13.

29. Ibid., p. 14.
30. McFarland, p. 22.
31. Ibid., p. 24.
32. Ibid., p. 25, citing Fredrick Law Olmsted, Mount Royal (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1881), p. 8.
33. Ibid., p. 28.
34. Ibid., p. 31.
35. Ibid., p. 37.

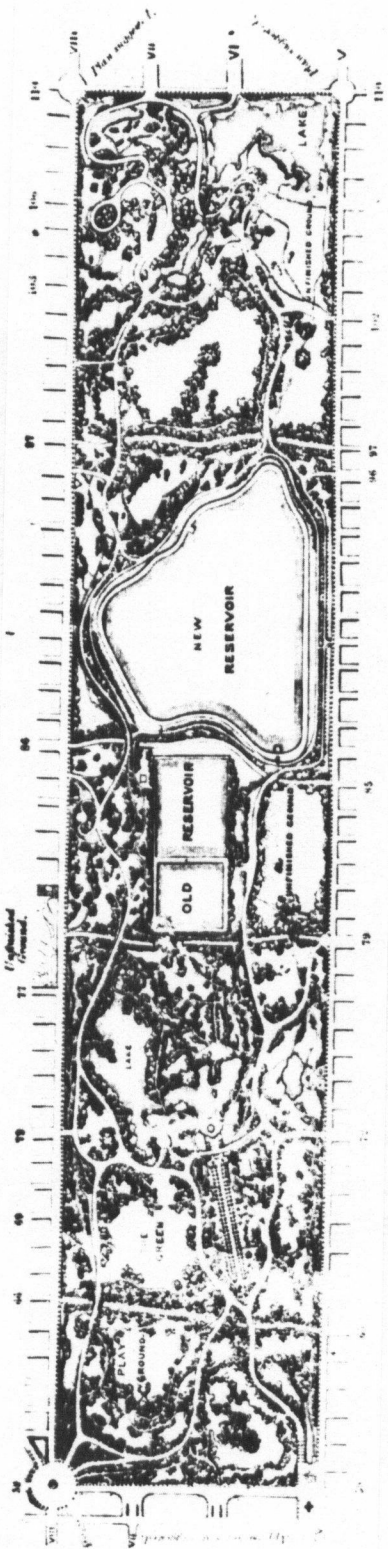


ILLUSTRATION I CENTRAL PARK 1857. JELlicoe P. 288.

ILLUSTRATION 2

ILLUSTRATION 1

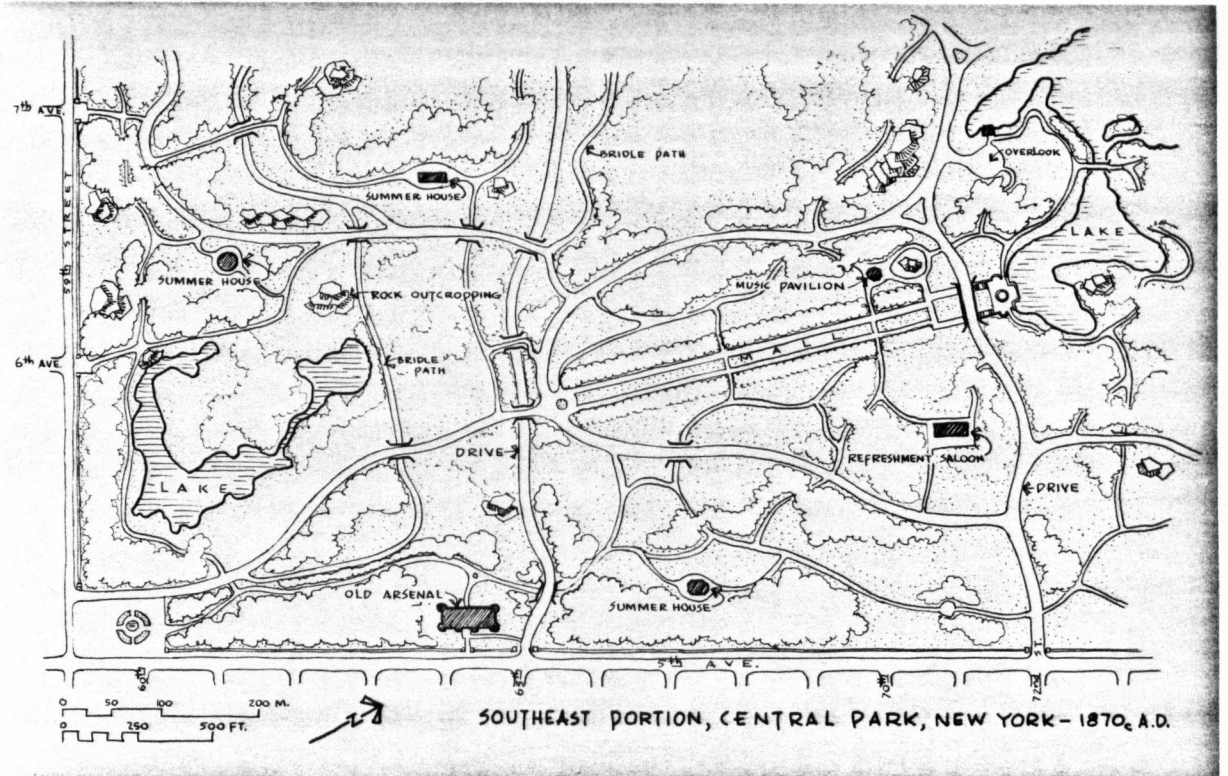


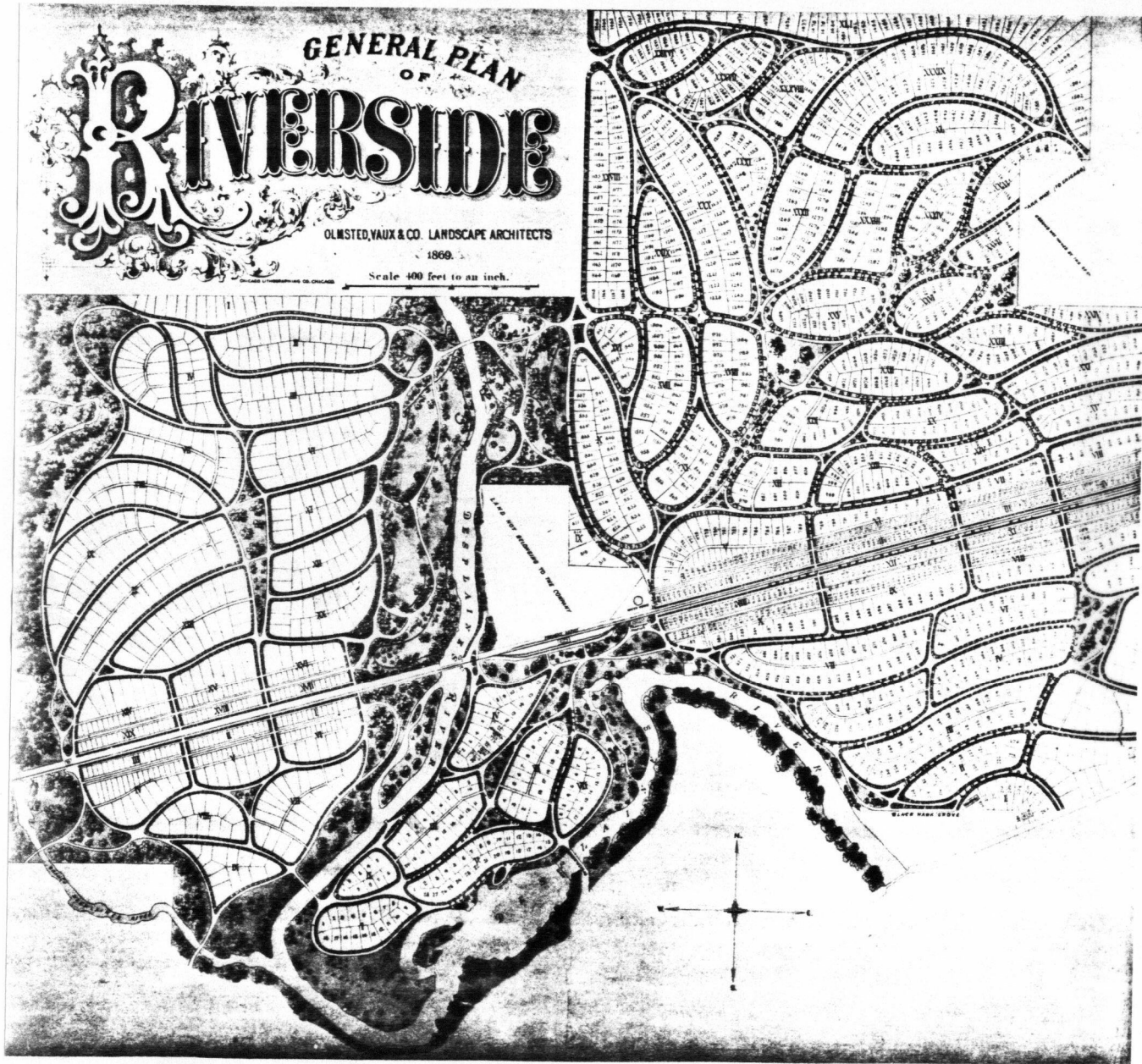
ILLUSTRATION 2 CENTRAL PARK, SOUTHEAST PORTION
1870. TOBEY P. 164.

DESIGN FOR
PROSPECT PARK
 AS PROPOSED TO BE LAID OUT FOR
 THE CITY OF BROOKLYN,
 OLIMTED VAUX & CO.
 LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS.
 1866-1867.



ILLUSTRATION 3 PROSPECT PARK, NEW YORK 1887. JELICOE P. 280.

ILLUSTRATION 5 GENERAL PLAN OF RIVERSIDE, CHICAGO BY OLNSTED AND VAUX 1869. JELlicoe P.281.



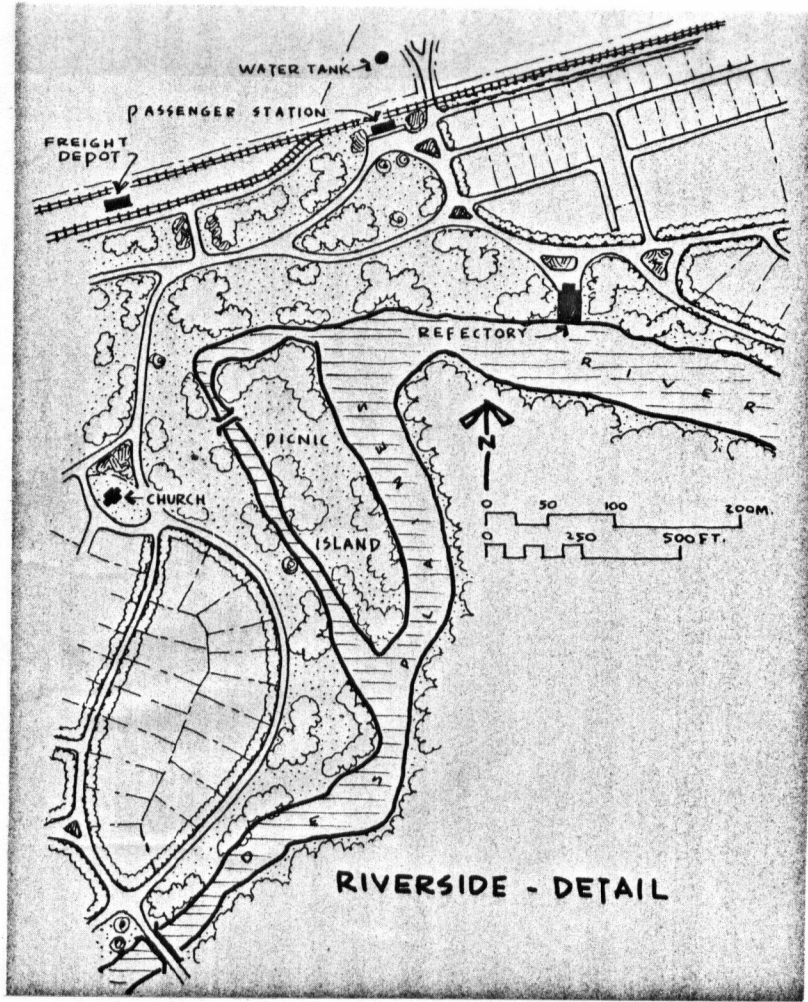


ILLUSTRATION 6 DETAIL OF PLAN OF RIVERSIDE BY
OLMSTED AND VAUX, 1869. TOBEY P. 167.

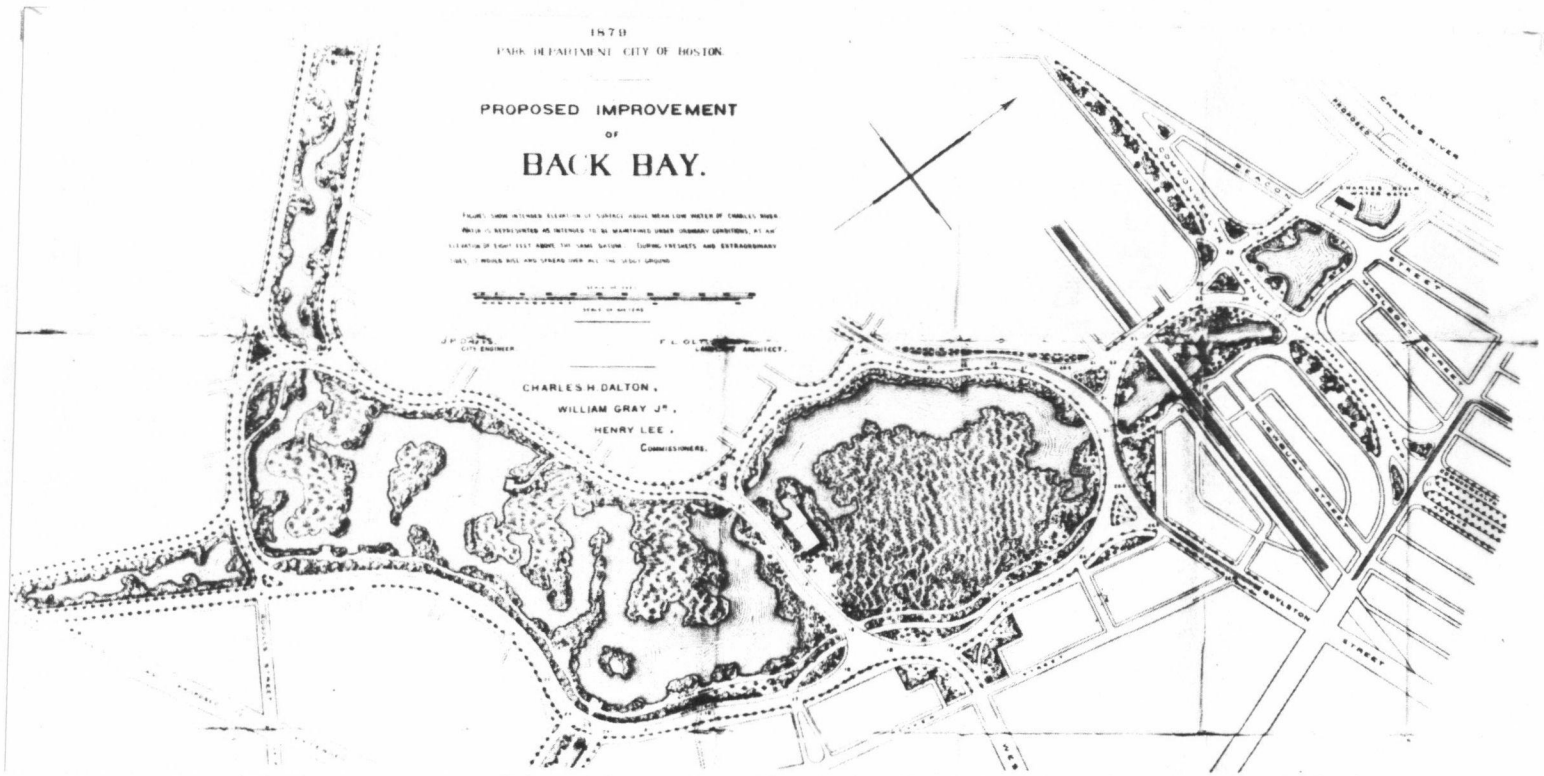


ILLUSTRATION 7

BACK BAY, BOSTON, 1893.

JELlicoe P. 282.

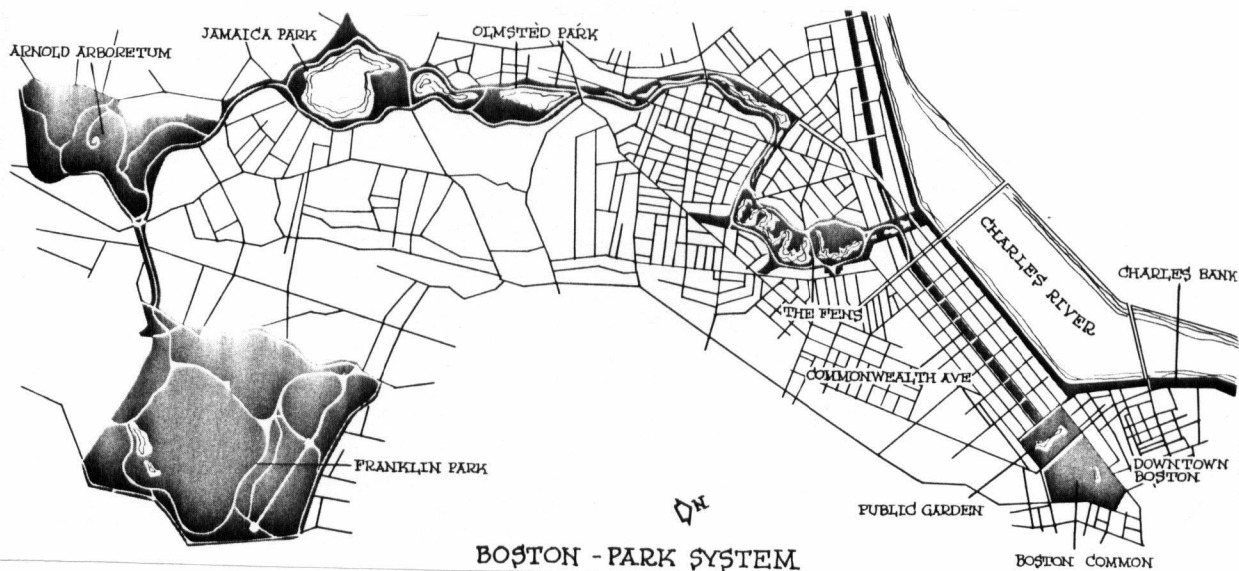


ILLUSTRATION 9

BOSTON PARK SYSTEM 1887.
HECKSCHER P. 196.

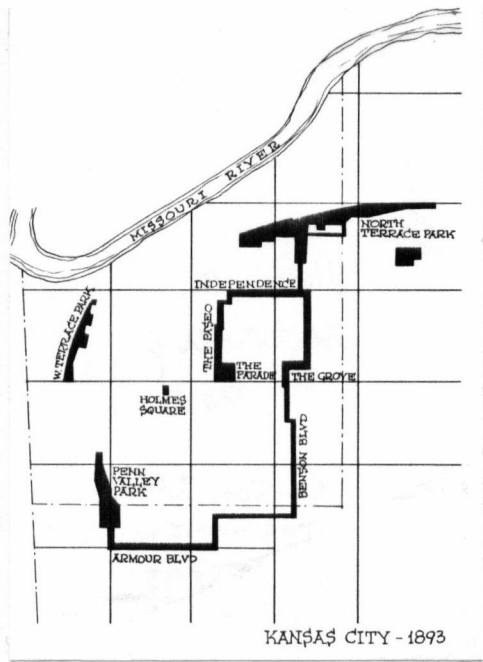


ILLUSTRATION 10 KANSAS CITY PARK SYSTEM
1893.
HECKSCHER P. 201.

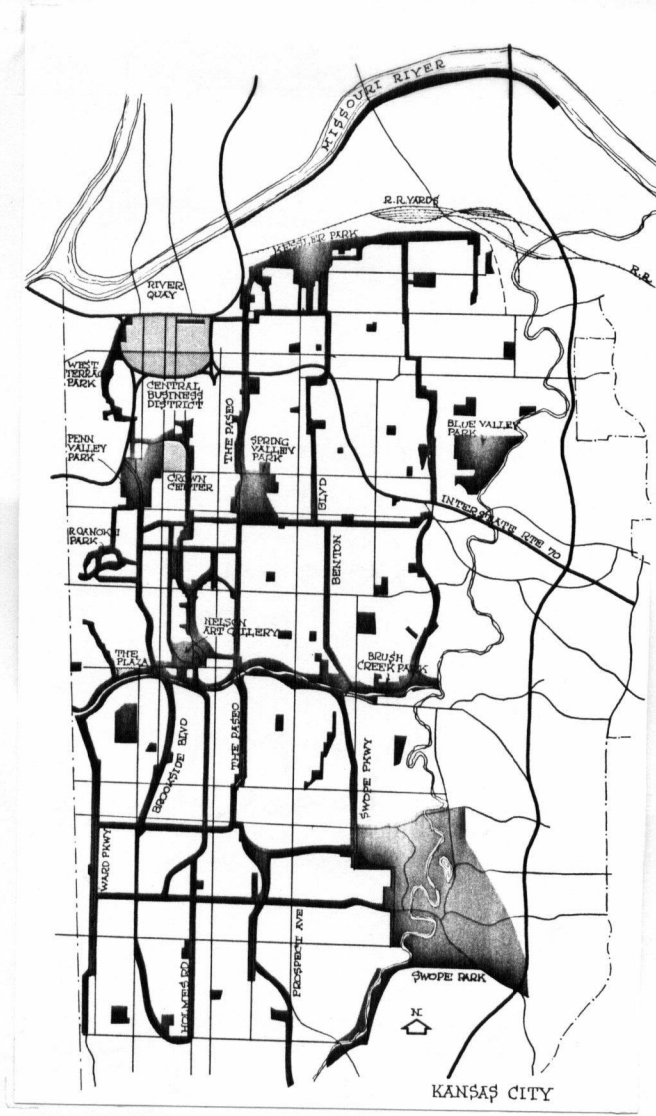


ILLUSTRATION 11 CONTEMPORARY KANSAS CITY PARK SYSTEM. HECKSCHER P. 201.

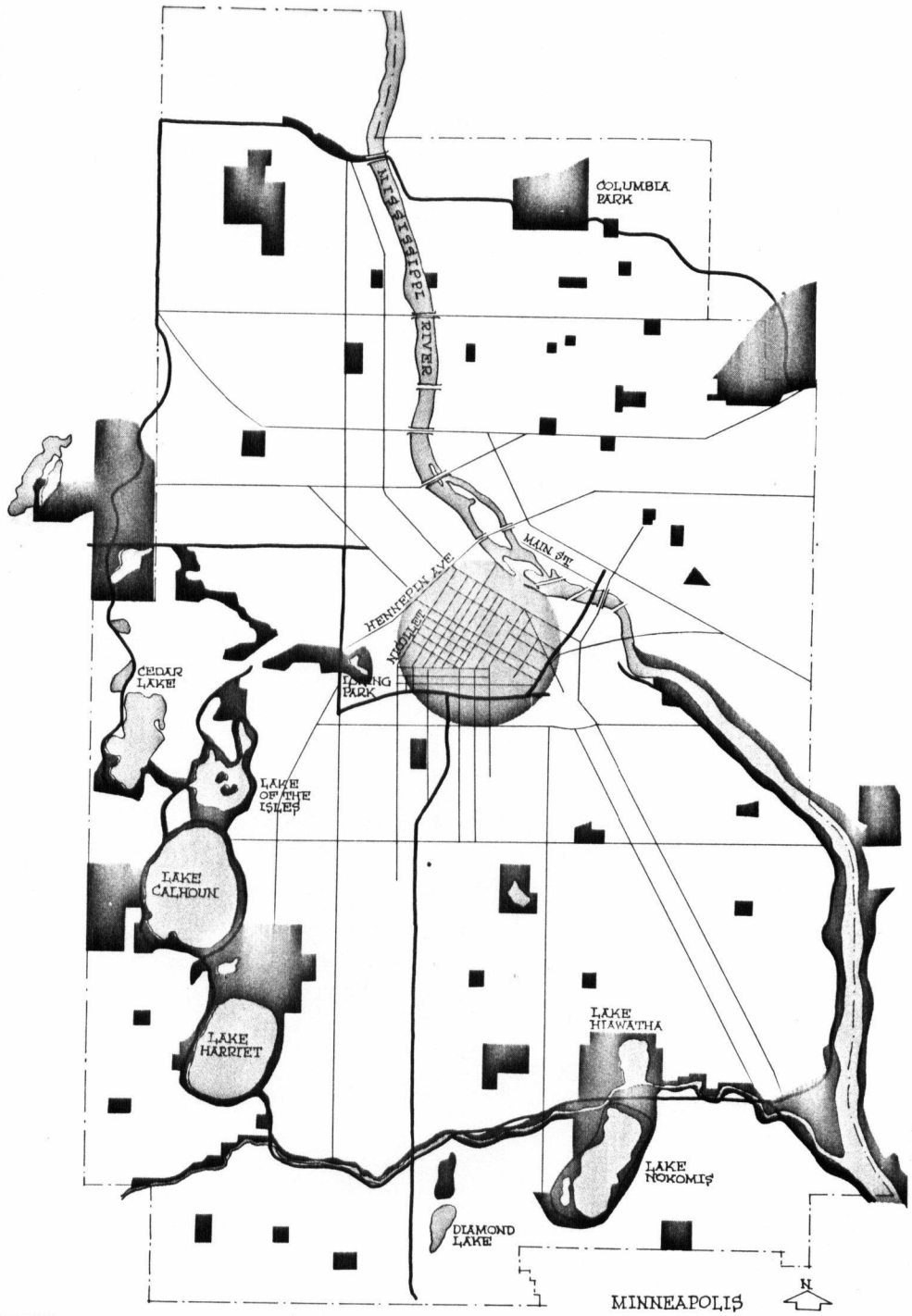


ILLUSTRATION 12 MINNEAPOLIS PARK SYSTEM
HECKSCHER P. 207.

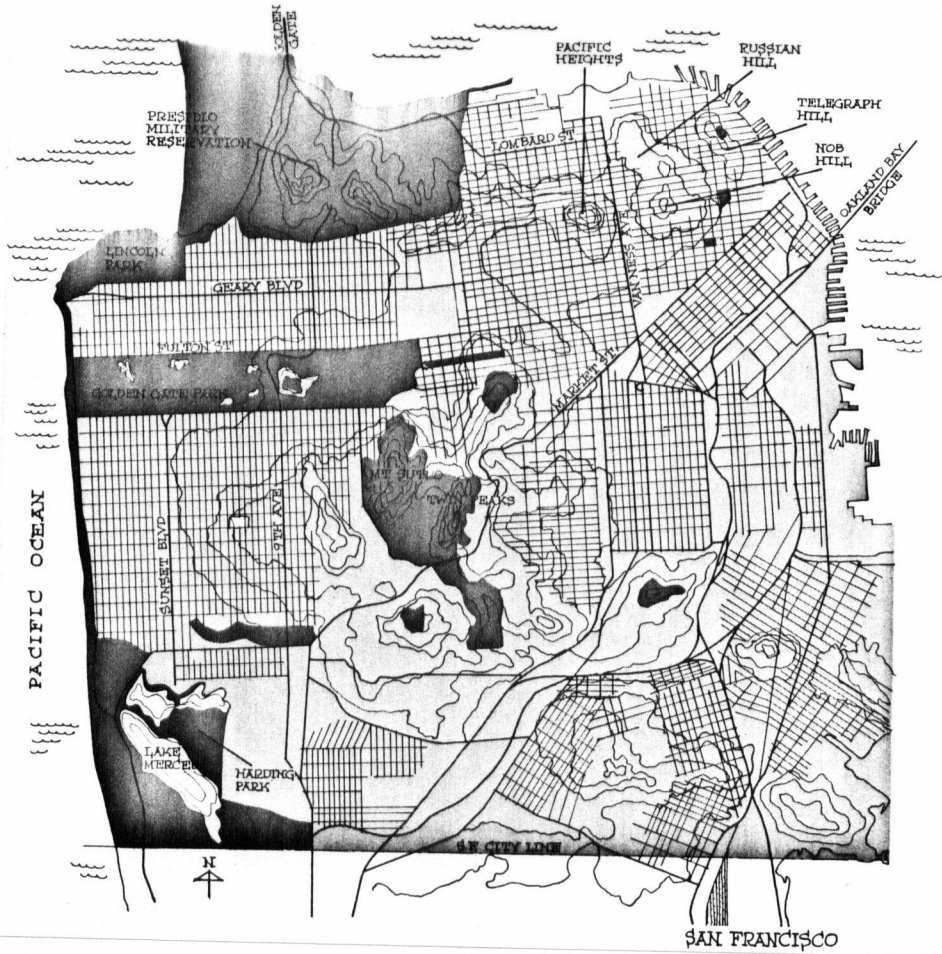


ILLUSTRATION 13

SAN FRANCISCO PARK SYSTEM,
HECKSCHER P. 83.

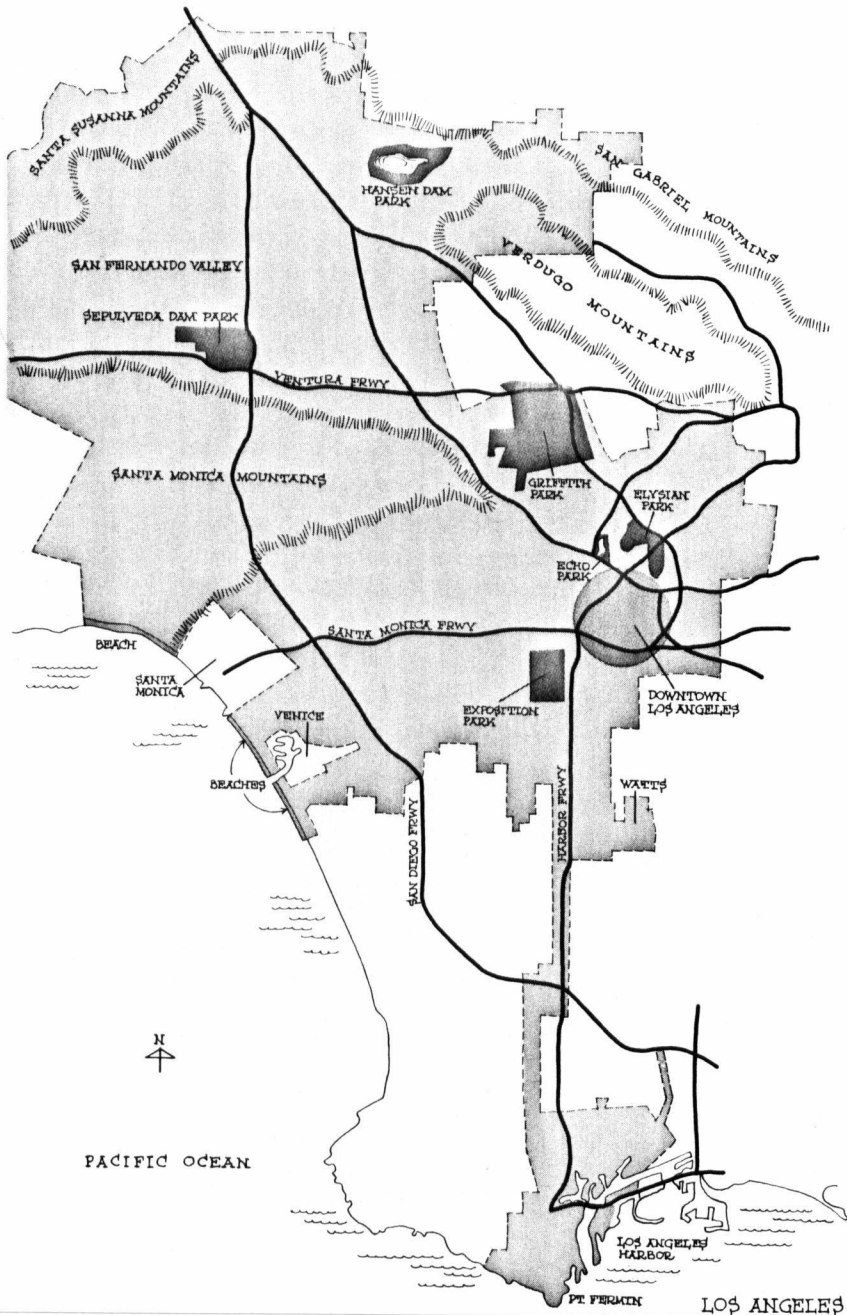


ILLUSTRATION 14 LOS ANGELES PARK SYSTEM.
HECKSCHER P. 85.

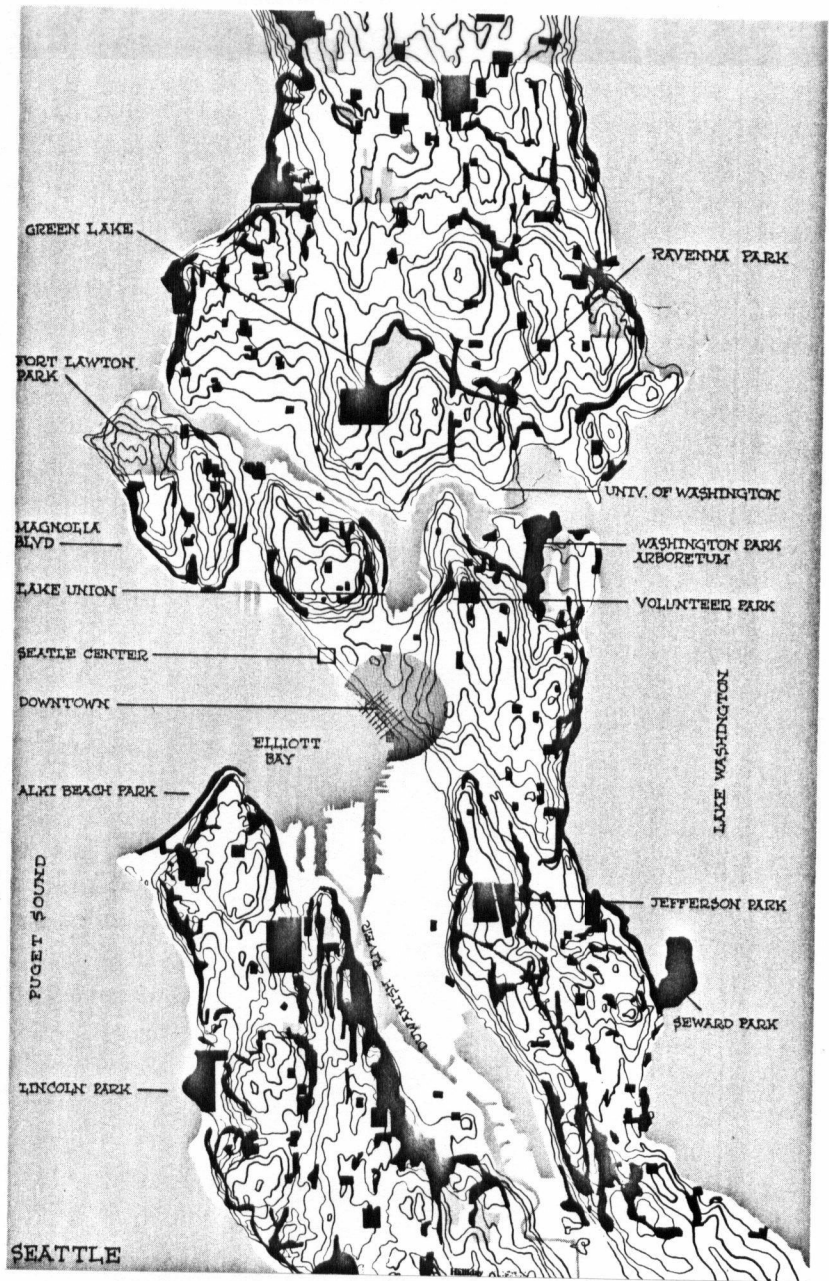


ILLUSTRATION 15 SEATTLE PARK SYSTEM
HECKSCHER P. 27.

CHAPTER IV

THE CITY BEAUTIFUL MOVEMENT

Introduction

The City Beautiful Movement which occurred in the U.S. between about 1893 and 1910 sprang from the World's Columbia Exposition in Chicago in 1893. The Exposition, was itself largely influenced by the park and park system movement that was at that time, sweeping the country. The idea of "complete schemes of beautification" was being implemented in the form of park systems, that were in some way an extension of the particular city. Parks and park systems were therefore to assume an important role in the City Beautiful movement, and it is of importance here, to see what form those parks took, and how they were developed during the "City Beautiful" years.

The City Beautiful Movement in the United States

As noted earlier, parks in the late 18th Century were seen as the "lungs" of the city, and many people believe that the success of the park movement in the U.S. rested on an enthusiasm for a rural way of life."¹ The urban park offered the city dweller a bit of the country. Until the Chicago World's Columbia Exposition, there were few formal elements in parks. Olmsted's promenade in Central Park was the closest thing to formality. Margaret Meek, in her thesis "City Beautiful in Canada" very accurately observes, "support for the establishment of parks was not based so much on a desire for civic beautification as on the belief that they would contribute to public health."² This attitude was to change following the Exposition.

The World's Columbia Exposition was a celebration of the 400th anniversary of Columbus' discover of North America. It was a turning point

in American history in that it led to a greater interest in the planning of cities.

A consultant steering committee was established which consisted of Daniel Burnham, John Root, Henry Codman, Fredrick Law Olmsted and others. The Committee decided on a neoclassical theme and complimentary ground plan. Olmsted was involved in the site selection which was eventually a waterway site called Jackson Park. The only natural element in all of the Fair was the Wooded Island which was created at Olmsted's insistence. Everything else was extremely formal - a completely new concept in America which had undoubtedly been borrowed from Renaissance France.

The pseudo-classic buildings for the Fair including the Court of Honour, were coloured white presenting a contrast to the greyness of the industrial city. The buildings were set off by fountains, sculpture, flags, and water bodies. The Fair was held from May to October 1893 and was a complete success. It had twenty million visitors and received excellent press. Afterwards every large city with any aspirations began to plan its own City Beautiful.

Because of the improvements in travel in Victorian times many Americans visited Paris, a city they looked on with much admiration, and even attended the École des Beaux Arts. The École commanded a very important influence on the American mind when the Exposition opened because many of the elements of design that it emphasized could be seen there. "The École stressed unity of composition and taught its students to view a building in terms of a series of relationships. Buildings were generally characterized by two axes suggesting movement and a symmetrical layout of clearly defined

geometric spaces."³

The term City Beautiful has never been well defined and architectural and planning historians have never agreed precisely on its principles. It was a movement that was primarily concerned with formalized beautification schemes that were to reflect a new national pride of wealth, power and culture. The City Beautiful thinkers seemed to be most concerned with three elements; streets, civic centres and parks and boulevards. They claimed to be concerned with the utility of their plans, but it was the aesthetic aspect that they were clearly interested in, and wrote about. Parks and greenery were to play an important part in city beautification.

The effects of the World's Exposition were immediate and far reaching. It assured that the idea of City Beautiful was accepted and many Americans began to think about their cities according to pre-established plans. It provided a concrete model which many cities followed. Finally, it brought Daniel Burnham, a future influential architect and planner, to the fore.

One of Burnham's colleagues, Charles M. Robinson, a writer and educator, was also very influential in the City Beautiful movement. People often looked to Robinson's writings, (Modern Civic Art), and Burnham's plans to uncover the movement's design principles.⁴ Between 1902 - 1917 they acted as planning advisors to 30 cities producing improvement reports, for Buffalo, Detroit, Denver, Oakland, Los Angeles and Honolulu. Robinson, like most designers of the period, believed that the street system and circulation pattern was the most important element. His reasons: they facilitate communication; they open vistas; and they present opportunities

to create streets and public open spaces. He also preferred streets to converge on a focal point such as public buildings, a church, a railway station, or a monument. Robinson was also one of the first people to advocate design standards for pavement, control of advertisements, lighting, lettering and underground wiring.

The civic centre, was seen as an important centre of civic power, public life, and cooperation between levels of government. As at the Exposition, white was the colour advocated because its pureness stood in contrast to the grundginess of the big American cities. Finally, Robinson maintained that the location of a civic centre was important, preferably on a hill, near water, a park or square, and if at all possible next to a railway station - the gateway to the city!

With regard to parks, Robinson preferred the natural landscape park with connecting parkways; a natural treatment for an entrance to a natural park, and a formal treatment in the case of a formal park. He emphasized the importance of small parks in the city either in the form of a public square, a garden, or a playground. He saw the playground as a very important element of the city for public health and in this case, beauty was to take a secondary role to utility.

The World's Exposition was a turning point in Daniel Burnham's career and changed the direction of American architecture. He went on to develop plans for Washington, San Francisco, Chicago and Manilla. (Illustration 1). Pierre Charles L'Enfant's 1791 Baroque plan for Washington, D.C. was to be reviewed and updated by the McMillan Commission in 1902 of which Burnham was a member. The Commission looked to Europe for architectural models,

particularly Rome and Paris. Continental precedents were again to be reflected on the American architectural landscape.

Burnham also gave street patterns priority in his plans. He used diagonal streets, circumferal streets to avoid the business district, as well as boulevarded pleasure drives. His first plans for civic centres were conceptualized like the Court of Honour for the Fair, and later he adapted these to the needs of traffic. His centres usually included an axis and cross axis, as in Washington. Burnham's buildings were monumental in scale, classical in design and of similar height, mass and treatment. He felt that gateways were particularly important in the city.

Burnham thought that park systems were second only to streets, and included them in all of his plans. He talked about a range of parks; the forest park, the large urban park, and small parks and playgrounds. Forest parks he saw as reserves conserving natural resources, providing relief from the city, attracting tourists and increasing land values. These parks were to be natural with only country roads. The large urban parks were to be the city's lungs: to open up space and air and provide healthy recreational opportunities for urban residents. Finally, small parks and playgrounds were to be distributed according to population density and were to contain recreation facilities for the local community.

Burnham also had a very innovative idea to replace backyards with a linear park system. A park such as this would be safe for children and would encourage walking.⁵ He wanted his boulevards to be lined with fine houses, with a park-like quality including grass, trees, shrubs, statues and fountains.

Both contemporary and modern writers have charged that City Beautiful plans were deficient in several areas, specifically in housing and social concerns. Evidence shows that the City Beautiful planners were concerned with the city's practical needs, but they did not tend to develop these concepts in their plans as they did the aesthetic concepts. It may have been assumed that the engineers possessed the expertise to carry out these requirements.⁶

After 1910 in the U.S. an interest developed in what was then called the City Efficient. The new keywords were "efficiency" and "economy". In City Efficient thought, the core elements of the City Beautiful Movement, streets, civic centres and parks, remained, but the practical considerations took on a much greater importance. Parks for example, began to be justified solely on the grounds of recreation, refreshment and increase in property values. It was still desirable to have a monumental civic centre, but its location was to depend on accessibility, the possible need for future expansion, and the assurance that business would not be hindered. The ideals of the City Beautiful Movement were still expressed after 1910, particularly in journals, but the creation of beauty after that time was often a matter of seizing an opportunity.

While the ideas of park systems, parkways and boulevards were advocated during the City Beautiful movement, the form of the American landscape park was not changed to any great degree. People became more concerned about where the parks were located and how they blended into the rest of the city rather than their specific design. The renewal of very formal architecture did not cause a return to Versailles-type landscapes, but concentrated on linking the naturalistic parks by formal parkways and boulevards.

Civic Art in Britain

In Britain during the 1890's, the trend in garden design began to swing more towards an architectural emphasis rather than a horticultural emphasis. Elements such as a terrace or a geometrical garden in a public park, gradually, were reinforced by garden organization on formal lines.

This trend was undoubtedly influenced by the Chicago World's Fair and Burnham's work in America, the ideas of Camillo Sitte in Germany, and Haussmann's sweeping scale in Paris. The English Park never became completely formal, but at the turn of the century there did develop a tendency towards a more axial and geometric organization. Abbey Park in Leicester which was designed by the firm of Barron and Son, is an excellent example of the combination of a strong formal element with the naturalistic style deriving from Repton. (Illustration 2)

This formalist tendency is very evident in the work of Thomas H. Mawson, a British landscape architect working in England at the turn of the century. Mawson accepted the formal and informal in the same design, and had no qualms about installing some very formal elements into a naturalistic environment. He was part of a group that began to work in the British "Civic Art" style that flourished during the first two decades of the 20th century.

Mawson defines Civic Art as a revival of the Greek interest in the "city-state" and an interest in the collective view of civic design rather than an individual one. He condemns the "levelled formalism of the École des Beaux Arts of France which will never find a welcome on this side of the channel" stating the importance of the "elasticity and special provisions for each instance" in a city.⁷ The most important element in civic design

to him, was the centralization and convenient grouping of the town's municipal and commercial activities. In other words, Mawson did not believe in superimposing an inflexible formal design on a city, but in creating a centralized core in a city where the design elements "complimented" the established character of the city. Parks were to play a supporting role in the civic centre and were not an end in themselves.

The forte of Mawson's firm was park design. They began designing individual parks and later branched out to the replanning of whole towns and doing detailed proposals for the redevelopment of city centres -- all in the Civic Art style. East Park at Wolverhampton was one of his early successes. In 1896 Mawson created a geometrical style park out of very derelict land, largely cinder heaps and a flooded depression. He re-introduced the pavilion, fountains and the terrace in his parks which Paxton had previously used as a social centre at the Crystal Palace.

One of the most representative works of Mawson's firm's mature style is Stanley Park in Blackpool. It is a good example of the "composite or informal-formal style." (Illustration 3). The 288 acre site was chosen "for the purposes of a park and recreational centre as an additional attraction for the resort and also as a shrewd piece of planning for the peripheral extension of the town."⁸ The earlier principle of recouping the outlay on the park from the building land on the perimeter was used, and the outcome was that the entire cost of the land and the laying out of the park was recovered from the sale of the building plots. Mawson's objective was to create a design that was "the convenient and economic development of a large number of recreation spaces that provided attractive playing fields set in a great natural reserve."⁹

Blackpool's Stanley Park, designed in 1922, showed a new function for a park. The park as a promenade had become a space almost entirely catering for active games and organized leisure. Passive recreation was still accommodated but the park had ceased to be thought of first as an expressive landscape according to one designer's style. It became a park whose landscape was created for particular uses to which any "style" was applied afterwards.

Mawson was extremely influential in England during this time just before the first World War, arousing interest in the neglected spheres of landscape and civic design. Chadwick states that the establishment of the "first Chair of Civic Design at Liverpool University by Lord Leverhulme was no doubt largely due to the interest aroused in him by Mawson's work and also by Mawson's direct influence."¹⁰ Mawson regularly wrote articles in The Town Planning Review published in Liverpool, when Patrick Abercrombie was editor. In his book, Civic Art: Studies in Town Planning, Parks, Boulevards and Open Space published in 1911, Mawson outlined his theory of Civic Art, and his practice of Civic Art with examples of public parks and town gardens. As Burnham was the most sought after City Beautiful planner in the U.S. between 1893 - 1910, Mawson represented the English equivalent in Civic Art, although his influence lasted a good deal longer - well into the 1920's. In 1910 Mawson made a trip to the "colonies" picking up numerous jobs across Canada, and returning to England to work on these civic art schemes. He was engaged by the Vancouver Park Board in 1910 and produced a plan for Coal Harbour in Stanley Park. His solution was unacceptable to many people in the city at that time, and that chain of events will be discussed in the next chapter.

Although Mawson was one of the most successful park and civic designers in England during the first quarter of the 20th century he was by no means the only "planning thinker". The Carnegie Dunfermline Trust was founded in 1903 by Andrew Carnegie who put up half a million pounds and the gift of Pittencrieff Park and Glen in his native town of Dunfermline, to bring "the monotonous lives of the toiling masses of Dunfermline more sweetness and light."¹¹ The Trust requested Mawson and Patrick Geddes, the pioneer botanist, ecologist, sociologist and planner, to prepare plans for Pittencrieff Park. The two plans prepared by these two men were strikingly different.

Mawson's plan was very formal and architectural, resulting in the scale and monumentality of the buildings being too grandiose for a provincial industrial town and even large for a capital city. (Illustration 4)

In many ways his plan had affinities to the City Beautiful Movement and the Chicago Fair. Geddes spent months wandering through Dunfermline trying to get a feel for the town. He published his proposals in a report called "City Development: a study of Parks, Gardens and Culture - Institutes." The titles reflect Geddes belief that parks and gardens are an essential factor in the regeneration of the city. His innovative ideas on the function of a park in a town is what makes Geddes' contribution remarkable. He proposed to link Pittencrieff Park to a system of gardens and enclosed spaces, and cultural buildings, to the centre of town itself, and then beyond, via parkways to other parts of the city. His park design was full of ideas that included a zoological garden, botanic garden, recreation ground, and an open air museum. (Illustration 5) One of the most interesting details was the complex of recreation grounds arranged geometrically with formal gardens and a long

formal fountain basin to the south of the park. This was juxtaposed with a large irregular rockery. Geddes' ideas were not expressed well in terms of a slick set of plans, and he himself saw them as a general statement of ideas rather than a precise set of proposals to be carried out in a particular way. Geddes' contribution to the park as an element of the city was in his ideas on the part that a park can play in a town, and how it can make it a better physical and social environment.

Unfortunately, Mawson's rather than Geddes' ideas were transmitted to Canada in the early part of the 20th century, resulting in some City Councils expressing the desire to involve their city in the principles of Civic Art.

City Beautiful Movement in Canada

While the time between 1893 and 1910, is the traditional City Beautiful period in the United States, the movement was somewhat slower coming to Canada. It occurred between 1910 and 1913 when aesthetics first played a major role in Canadian planning. These dates were crucial because by the time many of these City Beautiful plans were implementable, the first World War was upon the nation, and many plans were not carried out.

The public park movement was already well grounded in Canada between 1893 and 1910 - providing a basis upon which City Beautiful thinkers were able to build in later years. The preference in the way of park design during this period was toward the traditional "restful, passive" park, with the ultimate functional concern being that of public health. Several Canadian journals express thoughts about the future. Before 1900, the Canadian Architect and Builder emphasized smaller parks, central squares and playgrounds. Between 1888 and 1901 there were several articles on parks in the Canadian Architect

and Builder, and from the variety of parks described, it is evident that local authorities were aware of the concept of a park system and its range of open space. This journal advocated an even distribution of parks and playgrounds which were to have "lawn areas, flower beds and large shade trees."¹² Most Canadian cities had not yet hired landscape architects or designers to lay out their park systems, so the development of the local park and a park system was incremental - relying on American, and a few Canadian precedents.

Although civic centres did not receive much attention during this period, there were "White City" type designs being done for exhibitions and universities in Canada.¹³ These designs relied very heavily on the principles of formal park design and particularly, boulevard systems.

In 1899, Wilfred Laurier wanted to see Ottawa transformed into a Washington of the North. The City received an annual grant of \$60,000 to be used in the development of a park and boulevard system. In 1903 Fredrick Todd was commissioned to prepare a plan for Ottawa and he recommended: a park system comprised of forest reserves, suburban parks, connecting boulevards, waterway parks, and playgrounds; "picturesque" forest reserves with a diversified scenery" to enjoy nature; and he encouraged the development of Rockcliffe Park in the east with its rugged animated scenes; and Chaudiere Park in the west with its restful views.¹⁴ Ottawa was recognized as a precedent in Canada, for other cities to emulate.

Some Torontonians were sharply aware of its special natural features, and these were the focus of an improvement plan done in 1906. A group that was to play a major role in advocating civic issues in Toronto, called the Toronto Guild of Civic Art, financed the plan, which proposed a large addition

to the parkland in the city. Besides the 1600 acres already in parkland, it proposed an additional 13 major parks and 250 acres in small parks and playgrounds. The stress was on major parks to preserve Toronto's natural features -- rivers, ravines, the waterfront, the escarpment, and vistas. Finally, the plan suggested that the entire system, including the cemeteries be connected with pleasure drives.

Although the traditional City Beautiful elements were not present in these early designs, the awareness of the visual quality of the city began to be evident.

The period between 1910 and 1913 saw the beginning of a real interest in planning in Canada. Several Canadian journals began publishing articles on planning as well as on parks. The interest was undoubtedly influenced by events that were happening elsewhere in the U.S., Britain and Europe; specifically, the publishing of Burnham's Chicago Plan in 1909, the first National Conference on City Planning in Canada, and the passing of the Housing and Town Planning Act in Great Britain. For the first time, various bodies tried to discuss the role of beauty in planning and the "true" meaning of City Beautiful.

Margaret Meek, in her thesis maintains that the articles written in this period seemed to have three repeated characteristics:

1. utility was specified as a planner's first consideration.
2. planners had a vision of the ideal city characterized by health, convenience and beauty.
3. financial considerations were rarely mentioned.

Thomas Mawson, speaking at the University of Toronto in 1912 on the "main principles of street planning" argued that a gridiron pattern forced people

to take a zig-zag route which was monotonous. In the name of convenience and aesthetic preference, he advocated the City Beautiful concept of diagonal roads, where the diagonals would converge on the city at a visual focus, such as a plaza.

In a speaking engagement in Saskatoon, Christopher J. Yorath, the City Commissioner in Regina presented his view that parks should follow the traditional "preservation of natural beauty" within easy reach of everyone. Having had planning experience in Britain, he was likely influenced by the garden city philosophy which wanted to introduce to the home life of the worker, the conditions common in the country.¹⁵

Even though the articles and speaking engagements of the time stressed the utilitarian ideals, there was still a continual focus on the aesthetic perspective. Although a man like Mawson stated his concern for utility and practicality, history has shown that he was totally unable to approach these problems or deal with a city's practical needs.¹⁶

Between 1910 and 1914 the Cities of Ottawa, Winnipeg, Regina and Calgary had undertaken city plans, but the Canadian architecture and engineering journals published in Ontario, paid little attention to them. The communication between Central and Western Canada was poor, so the western cities looked to the United States and Britain for ideas. Edmonton, Calgary and Regina all had plans done in the Daniel Burnham, or formal style. Edmonton hired an American, A.U. Morell in 1912 to do its civic plan; and both Calgary and Regina hired Thomas Mawson in October 1912 and June 1913 respectively. Only the Winnipeg plan lacked City Beautiful characteristics, as it was prepared in 1911 by members of the Winnipeg City Planning Commission and other

people in the city. The preliminary plan was aimed at specific problems such as implementing zoning, rapid transit and housing, and these aims were dealt with within the scope of existing legislation. However, the Commission hoped to turn its findings and ideas over to a landscape architect in order that a final design be prepared. If this had happened, the plans for Winnipeg would have been very much like those of the other cities.

During this period the Toronto water front plan received a lot of attention in Canadian Journals. The plan was presented in the grand manner of Burnham's plan in that 900 acres of parkland was recommended, including a lakeshore drive. Other elements that were featured were a park and lagoon system, bridlepaths, foot paths, a protected waterway for small craft as well as future ideas for a terrace promenade, playground and a bathing beach.

Vancouver was also introduced to City Beautiful ideas. Mawson's "colonies pilgrimage" included Vancouver where he was hired to do a scheme for Coal Harbour at the entrance to Vancouver's Stanley Park. Mawson did three schemes, the most formal of the three being chosen by the Park Board. The scheme featured a circular pond with a 180 foot high obelisk, a football stadium, a Baroque museum and an adjacent restaurant. He also intended to link this formal "cultural centre" to the downtown area by a formal boulevard system up Georgia Street. These plans will be looked at in greater detail in the next chapter.

The City Beautiful plans that were done for cities across Canada had several characteristics in common. Although verbally stressing economy and utility, the plans, in fact did not do so; most of the plans expressed the traditional City Beautiful elements. They were presented in this formal

style, and little or no attention was paid to problem solving, the implementation, or financial considerations.

The years 1910 to 1914 saw the emergence of city planning in Canada and many councils saw the civic improvements as a form of publicity for the city. The usual result was that expenditures were authorized without too much thought and that many of the problems arising with rapid growth, were not dealt with. Even in those days however, the City Beautiful mentality did have its critics. Harry Bragg, the editor of the Canadian Municipal Journal was interested in housing and he argued that, Washington, D.C. "had one of the finest plans, and some of the worst slums on the continent."¹⁶ On the whole, Bragg and other similar voices were not heard.

The idea of hiring an "expert" became exceedingly popular and in the case of most western cities, it was the first time they had hired a landscape architect. Because landscape architects had originally been involved in the planning of park systems in the U.S., Britain and Eastern Canada, when new forms to beautify the city came along, such as civic centres, the landscape architects simply did these jobs as well.

As in the U.S. the role that the park was to play in the era of the City Beautiful was usually that of preserving the natural features of the city, and as part of the development of a park and boulevard system. The traditional "natural designs" continued to be used in Canadian parks with the emphasis on connecting these with other city focal points. There were a few exceptions however, and the Mawson plan for Stanley Park was one of them. His prestige somehow influenced the Park Board in Vancouver at that time to accept a complete change in direction and function for Stanley

Park. Had this City Beautiful plan been carried out, the park would be very different today.

None of the plans for the Western cities were carried out. They were all commissioned when times were good, but were submitted to the local governments after the boom had peaked and when there was a war being fought. In later years when times were once again more prosperous, some of the schemes were revived. Edmonton, for example, finally built a civic centre scheme in the 1960's on the same location as the 1913 scheme had specified.

After 1914 Canadian planning entered a new era, and most planning thought was dominated by the Commission of Conservation, an organization that was appointed by the federal government in 1909. The hiring of Englishman, Thomas Adams, gave planning thought in Canada a new focus. Although the ideals involved with civic beauty were not entirely absent, they played a minor role from then on. Adams was critical of the City Beautiful principles, but stated that natural beauty did have a rightful place in city planning. He simply felt that in a time of economic restraint, that other needs in the city were more important. The idea of natural touches continued to be supported in journals and by planners, but there was no more talk of park and boulevard systems. Tree planting and smaller scale urban design was advocated. The parks that were advocated were usually neighbourhood playground areas for children.

In 1921 the Commission of Conservation was abolished and planning thought became dominated by the Town Planning Institute of Canada, which had been founded in 1919 by Adams and other planning professionals. By 1919 Canadian planning had entered, what many called the City Efficient. This was

an era when economic efficiency and an ordering of the environment was stressed and popular topics such as zoning, transportation, housing, regional planning, decentralization of industry, suburban development, and garden cities, were discussed. This Association made it very clear that the modern Canadian view of planning had nothing to do with the costly beautification schemes of the early part of the century.

After 1925 there was a slight renewal of interest in civic beauty although the primary concerns were still for economic efficiency. For the first time there was a new light shed on the relationship of civic beauty and cost. Planners suddenly began writing about the "social costs" of ugliness and the indirect material value of beauty. At a meeting of the Town Planning Institute of Canada, G. Gordon Whitnall, the Director of Planning for Los Angeles put it well,

"(beauty) means more to the average community than probably any other single thing."¹⁷

Summary

The City Beautiful Movement in the United States did not substantially change the design of the public park. The new and older park landscapes still bore the design influence of men like Olmsted, Loudon, Repton, and even Capability Brown. What did change was the way in which some of these parks were presented. They were designed to become an integral part of the city rather than just a link in a park system or as a landscape on its own. The increased concern for the physical and aesthetic function of parks signalled the end of an era when the park was simply a pleasant place to "escape" to.

In the British Civic Art school, and particularly in the work of Thomas Mawson, who was responsible for many design schemes in Canada, the

park began to display more of an architectural emphasis than it had in the past. As in the American City Beautiful case, a park was to compliment the whole city, but this was sometimes done at the expense of naturalistic characteristics. If all of Mawson's designs had been completely implemented, the design of many parks in Western Canada would be considerably more formal today.

The development of public park design came a long way between Paxton's Birkenhead Park and the parks of the 1920's. Gone were the days when one or two famous landscape architects did a complete design for a park and their ideas were then unmistakably evident on that landscape. There are very few parks like that today. Park design gradually became a conglomeration of many peoples ideas, of a community's particular requirements, and a reflection of the local authority's budget. There is one element however, that survived the different emphasis of design through the years - that is the "natural landscape" element. This desire for a park to somehow display the natural environment of the city's environs, is an idea that can be traced directly to Britain and the early works of Brown and Repton. The fact that the British precedent was used by American, and later Canadian park designers rather than the more formal park designs of Renaissance France and the Continent, has produced the park traditions that we live with today, and will very likely live with tomorrow.

FOOTNOTES

1 There are many references in the literature to a park being the "lungs" of the city. Brenda Colvin, in her book Land and Landscape makes a good stab at the definition. She referred to parks as a way of bringing fresh air and beauty within reach of the whole population -- serving literally, as the lungs of an organism.

2 Margaret Meek, "City Beautiful in Canada" (Draft, Master's Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1979)

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Thomas Mawson, Civic Art: Studies in Town Planning, Parks, Boulevards and Open Space (London: B.T. Batsford, 1911), pp. 9 - 13.

8 George Chadwick, The Park and the Town; Public Landscape in the 19th and 20th Centuries (New York: Fredrick A. Praeger, Pub., 1966), p. 223.

9 Ibid., p. 223.

10 Ibid., p. 224.

11 Ibid., p. 224.

12 Meek, "City Beautiful in Canada".

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

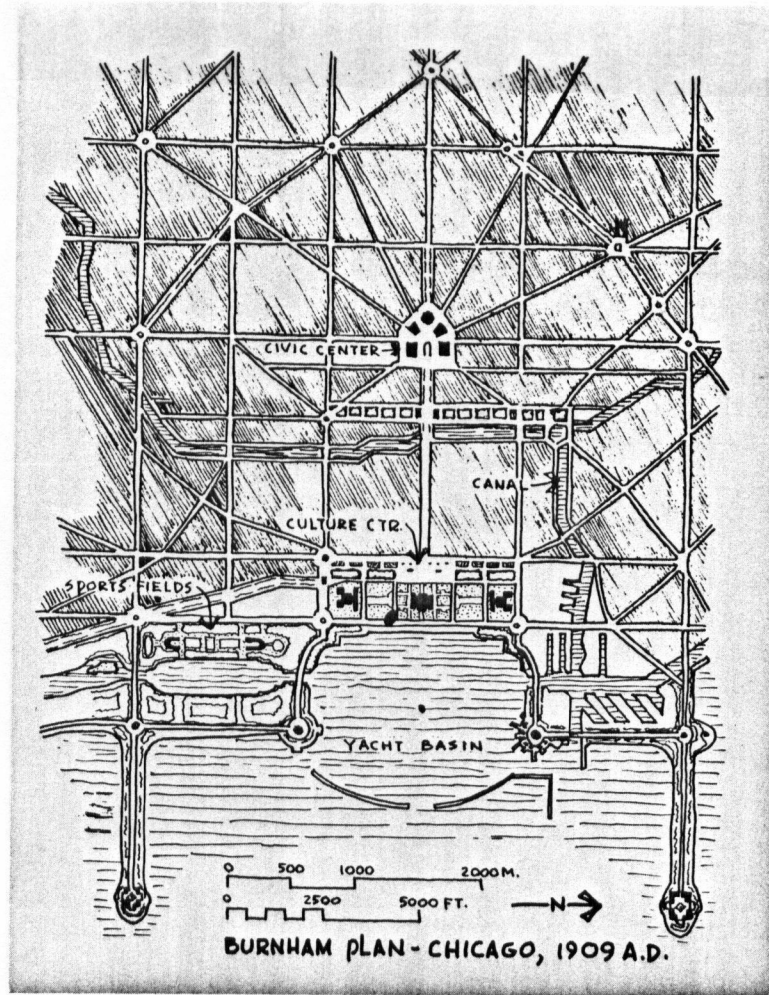


ILLUSTRATION 1 BURNHAM PLAN, CHICAGO
1909. TOBEY P. 183.



ILLUSTRATION 2 ABBEY PARK, LEICESTER 1877-82.
CHADWICK P. 229.

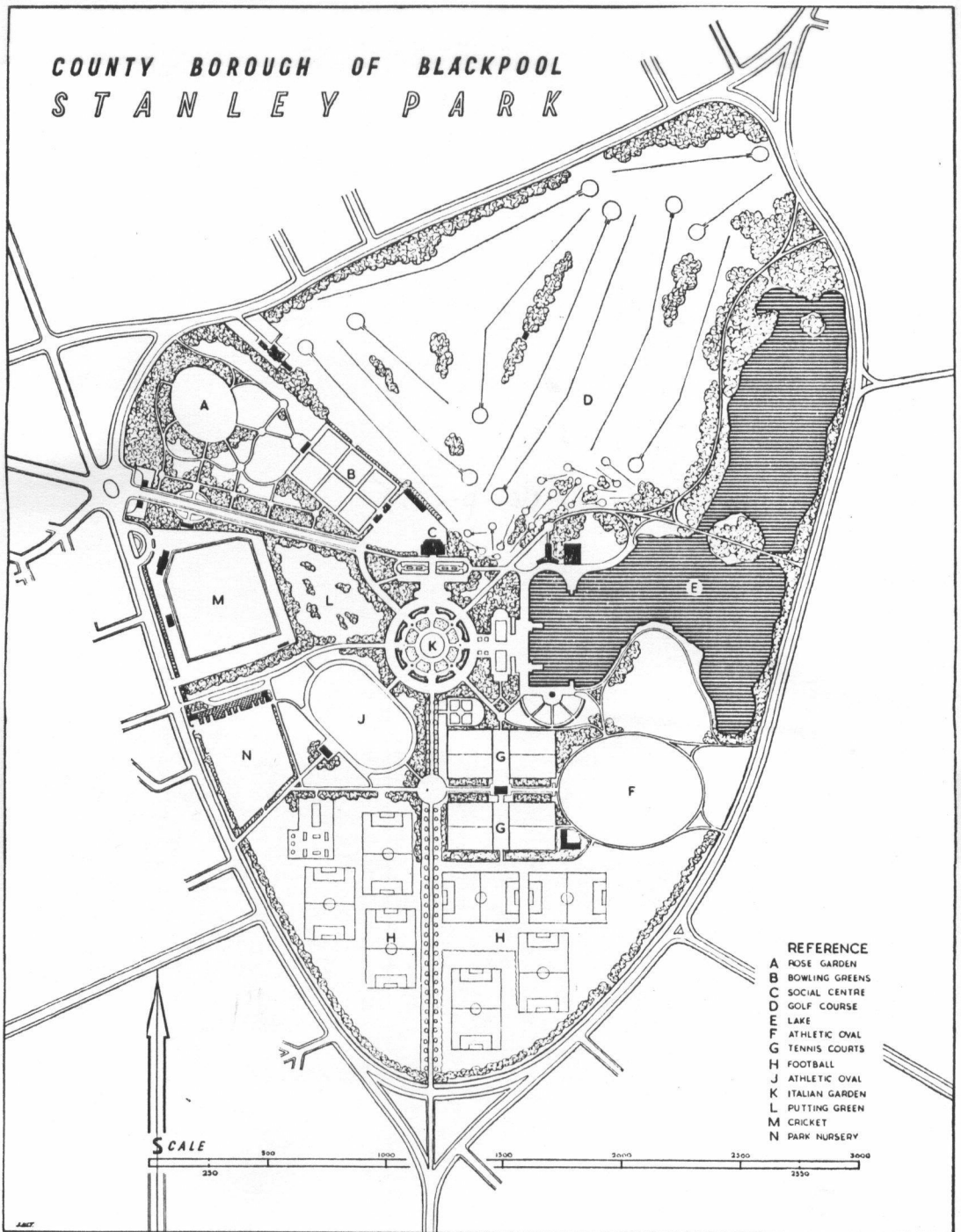


ILLUSTRATION 3 STANLEY PARK, BLACKPOOL 1922.
CHADWICK P. 235.

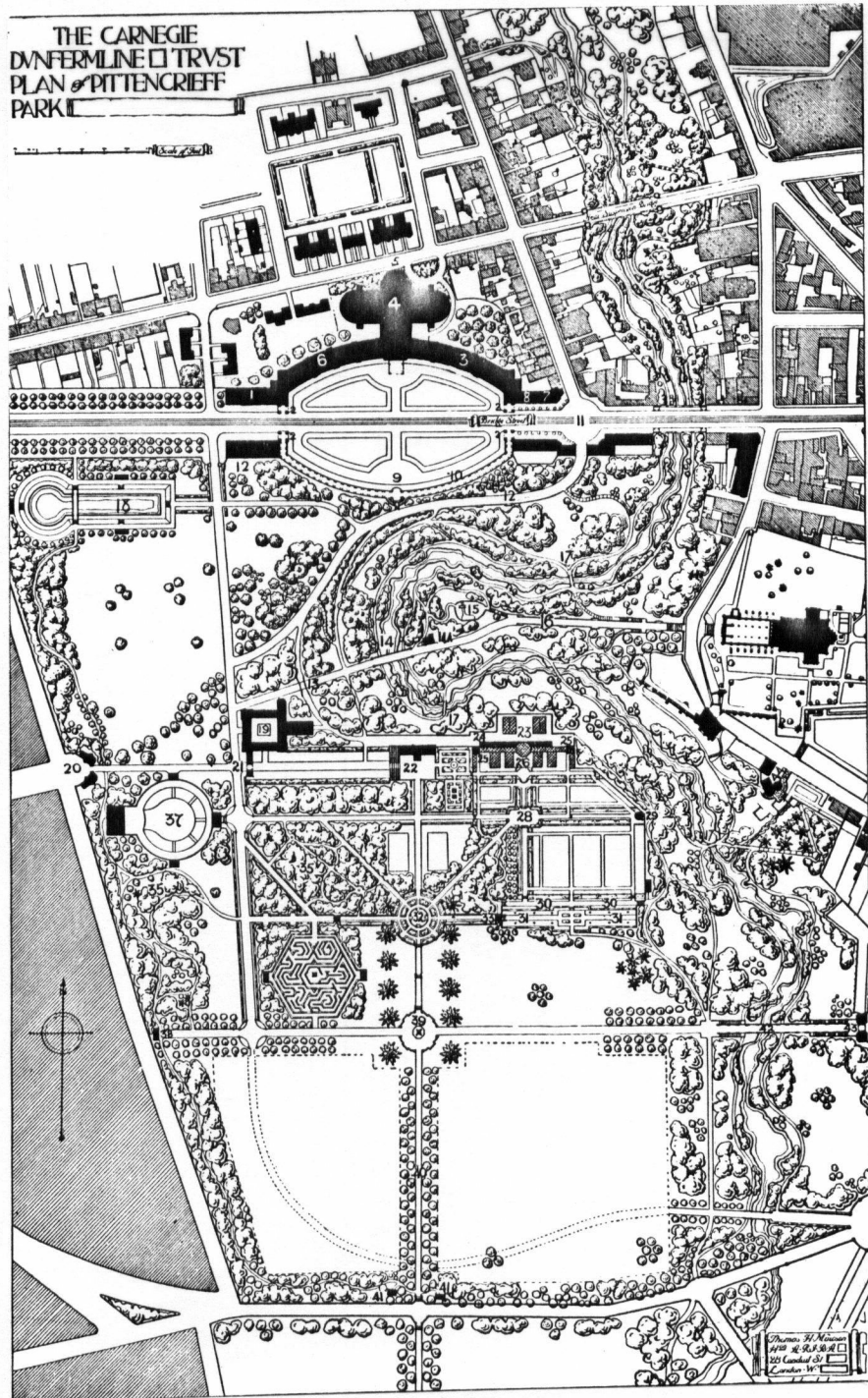


ILLUSTRATION 4 MAWSON'S PLAN FOR PITTENCRIEFF PARK , DUNFERMLINE 1903. CHADWICK P.231.

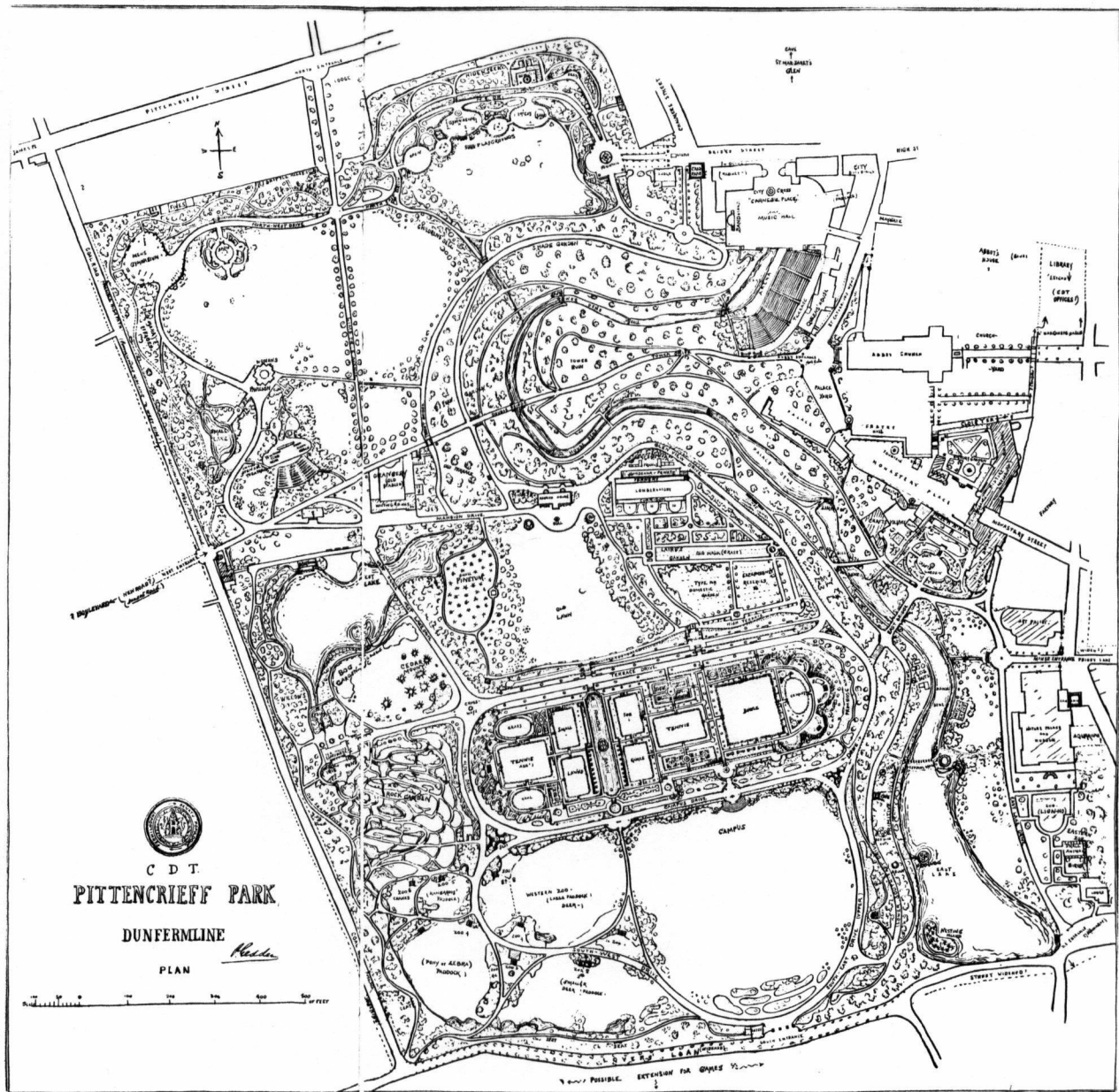


ILLUSTRATION 5 GEDDES' PLAN FOR PITTCRIEFF PARK, DUNFERMLINE 1903. CHADWICK P. 233.

CHAPTER V

THE VANCOUVER PARK SYSTEM: 1886 - 1914

Now that the ideas, design and development of public parks have been traced through the 18th and 19th centuries, it is of interest to look at the local landscape and attempt to determine the origins of the Vancouver park system. Were there direct design influences from Britain, Europe, the U.S.? As a young city, was Vancouver concerned about a "public park" open-space for its citizens? Did the origins of the people living in Vancouver during that time influence the design and function of the early parks? Did the proximity to Seattle and the American West Coast produce difference concerns than those of Eastern Canadian cities? All the questions are important when looking at the development of a landscape in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. There were no journals discussing the "latest thing in public parks". The ideas were brought, very subtly, from elsewhere, and it is the subject of this chapter to explore these links in an attempt to account for the initial design and function of Vancouver's early parks.

For the purpose of providing a manageable scope, the time period considered will include the year of Vancouver's incorporation, 1886, until the First World War. These were the initial years of Vancouver's park development, and the ideas and preferences expressed during this time, probably formed the direction that the Park Board would take for years to come.

Stanley Park

Stanley Park is often touted as being one of the greatest public parks in the world. It is most certainly the jewel in Vancouver's park system. It was Vancouver's first park, and until the 1920's, was the Park Board's

primary concern. Understandably, it is the first landscape which one would look to, to determine the design ideas that were prevalent at that time.

The Beginnings of Stanley Park

Before the first train of the Canadian Pacific Railway arrived in 1887, Vancouver was a very small town catering to the needs of lumber mills and logging camps. In 1885, the white population in the Burrard Inlet area was only 900. By 1891, with growth spurred by the CPR, Vancouver had a population of 13,709 persons. These migrants were largely from Ontario and the Maritimes, while people from the British Isles constituted only approximately 18%. It was men of this stock that formed the first City Council when Vancouver incorporated in 1886.¹

The first resolution of the first meeting of City Council on May 12, 1886, was to petition the Dominion government to grant a whole or part of the then military reserve, as a public park. In 1887 the Dominion government issued a grant for the reserve, with the stipulation that it could take it back for military purposes at any time, and that its natural integrity should be disturbed as little as possible."² The City Council administered the park until a Park Commission was elected and established in 1888.

The opening of the park took place on September 27, 1888 with Mayor Oppenheimer, Mayor Grant of Victoria, and the Honourable John Robson, Provincial Secretary, taking part in the ceremonies. The city celebrated by holding a gala dance at the Opera House on Carrell Street. In October of 1889, Lord Stanley, the Governor General of Canada, came to Vancouver to dedicate the park which was named in his honour. It was declared a public

holiday, so that Lord Stanley could be met by the school children. A causeway with an arched bridge was built for his visit -- one of the first designed features for Stanley Park.

Vancouver prospered during the years 1886 to 1892, but then experienced a depression for the remainder of the 1890's. Many of the ideas for the development of Stanley Park had to be shelved until 1900 when the gold and mining finds caused the economy to boom in Vancouver until the beginning of the First World War. These initial years however, (1886-1900) saw the establishment of the basic design and priorities for Stanley Park, which have, for the most part, survived to this day. I would now like to address the development of Stanley Park between 1886 and 1900 -- both its physical development and the ideas and circumstances that led to its development, after which the boom period in Vancouver of 1900 to 1914 will be examined in a similar way.

The Initial Years, 1886 - 1900

The first clearing in Stanley Park was the path that went around the park. It was surveyed by L.A. Hamilton, a CPR land commissioner and alderman, and was graded by A.G. Ferguson, an American who was appointed a Park Commissioner and who "fathered" the park for 10 years. This path was followed almost exactly, when it was hard surfaced in 1911. It was surfaced with shimmering white shells that came from shellfish deposits in the waters opposite the site of the old Whoi-Whoi Indian Village where Lumberman's Arch stands today. (Illustration 1). From the beginning this "peripheral" path was designed to incorporate alternating vistas of huge trees and meadows, and the magnificent view of the mountains and the narrows. Today, the park drive is still the most heavily used part of Stanley Park.

Mr. Ferguson continued to give almost all his spare time to the park and the other commissioners were agreeable to leaving it to him.³ In the early years, when the annual sum appropriated by the Council for its up keep was depleted, Ferguson himself invariably paid the bills to the end of the year. Ex-alderman Costello said that one year Mr. Ferguson spent \$5,000 on Stanley Park. Mr. Ferguson and his wife did not have any children, so when he died he left part of his estate to his sister-in-law, Mrs. Ceperley, with the request that when she had no further use for it, that it should be left to the City of Vancouver for the purpose of enhancing Stanley Park. Mrs. Ceperley stated, "I believe that Mr. Ferguson stipulated in his bequest that the money should be used for a park for children."⁴ This request eventually resulted in Vancouver's first supervised children's playgrounds, the Ceperley Children's Playgrounds at Second Beach. Mr. Ferguson therefore, was a very important figure in the early development of the park.

As early as 1889, Brockton Point was used as an athletic ground. It was the first area to be cleared and was used for cricket, soccer and football. Besides using the peripheral road to get to the grounds, Vancouverites would land at Brockton Point by way of a ferry which originated from the foot of Carrall Street. Until 1892, Brockton Point was one of the most well used and well cared for parts of Stanley Park. The Park Board minutes reveal that in 1892, they permitted the ferry to go to Brockton Point provided that the rates were only 10¢ single, one way and 15¢ return, showing a concern for public access and an attempt to curb capitalist profit.

The entrance to the park was gradually groomed before 1890. A bridge was erected over the Coal Harbour mud flats (where Lost Lagoon and the Causeway are today) and in 1889, at the time of Lord Stanley's visit, an

arch was added to the south end, creating a gateway to the park. Henry Avison was Stanley Park's first "keeper" and in January of 1889, a cottage was built for him and his family near the Georgia Street entrance to the park. (Illustration 2) By 1892, Avison had put up a fence, had started an English flower garden, and had started a zoo consisting of a bear pit. (Illustration 3) The few formal elements were set against a very natural backdrop and various trails led off from the front of the cottage, taking one's eye into the depths of the forest.

By 1900 numerous trails had been cleared, many from the old logging skids and Indian trails in the park. A system of walking paths was cut connecting points of interest such as Beaver Lake, Prospect Point, Siwash Rock, the Zoo, and the Seven Sisters. (huge Douglas Fir trees northwest of Lost Lagoon).

From the beginning, the park drive was an integral part of the park. Buggy driving was a frequent leisurely pastime for the Victorians, and Vancouverites were no exception. As early as 1890, the city's most important carriages brought visiting celebrities to Prospect Point to view the north shore from high above the first narrows. The point was cleared, and a small shelter was erected near the edge of the cliff. (Illustration 4) Prospect Point was one of Stanley Park's first tourist spots as well as the favourite viewpoint of the local citizens. It, and other view spots along the drive helped to establish the park drive as an important peripheral function of the park. This has been further developed over the years until today, with the drive and sea wall, there is a very sophisticated circulation system that enables everyone to enjoy the magnificent views.

Finally, the initial years also established Stanley Park as the city's most important tourist attraction. Vancouver's early councils and park boards were dominated by businessmen who knew the value of the tourist dollar. In June of 1891, the Park Board appealed to Council for a larger park budget,

"That the Board desires to call the attention of the Council to the necessity for continuing the improvements in Stanley Park. The Board respectfully points out that the value of Stanley Park cannot be overestimated not only from its being a useful and pleasant resort for the citizens but that as an attraction for tourists and visitors to the city it has what might be termed a commercial value and the small amount spent upon opening up and improving the park ought to be looked upon as a good investment rather than as money spent."⁵

In the early 1890's, Vancouver began to experience a depression and it grew at a more moderate rate. Parks were not a top priority and consequently the Park Board faced a severe cut in its budget. An entry in the Boards minutes for May 26, 1893 reflected the situation,

"Resolved that after a careful examination of the financial position all work at Stanley Park should be stopped excepting the contracts already let, and a couple or three men to complete the underbrushing at Brockton Point."⁶

Thus, the development of Stanley Park was slowed during the 1890's, and did not pick up until 1900, at the beginning of what Norbert McDonald terms, "a critical growth cycle for Vancouver."⁷ At the turn of the century the physical developments that had occurred in Stanley Park were important in that they were a strong influence on the shape that Stanley Park was to take in the future. The peripheral drive delineated the function of the perimeter of the park; the Brockton Point athletic grounds established active recreation in the park; the trails enabled the heart of the park to be used by its citizens; the park entrance with its arched gate, and with Mr. Avison's

English flower garden designated the park's only formal area which in years to come, was expanded to include a rose garden (modelled on the Portland Rose Garden); and finally, the Park Board's concern for the naturalness of the park set a precedent that was to be followed until 1910.

Reflections on the Initial Years

In the public records and social histories of Vancouver, there are no convincing reasons to explain just what the city fathers had in mind when they applied to the Dominion Government for Stanley Park, or what they intended to do in terms of the park's design. It may be safely assumed that they did not intend to hire a landscape architect or "expert" such as Fredrick Law Olmsted to prepare a design, as many American cities had done. They did, however, want to acquire parkland, a desire that was also prevalent in many North American cities.

There is no evidence in the City archives to suggest that there had been a public cry in the community for a park, apart from a letter from A.W. Ross suggesting that Council petition the government for the reserve on the first narrows. Unlike the industrial cities in Britain, and even New York, there was no urgent need to create a rural setting within the small city of Vancouver because it was virtually surrounded by wilderness.

To obtain a clue to the underlying reasons, it is useful to look at the speeches made at the opening of the park in 1886 by the dignitaries present. Mayor Oppenheimer of Vancouver, Mayor Grant of Victoria, and the Honourable John Robson, Provincial Secretary, addressed the large Vancouver crowd. Mayor Oppenheimer stated, that Stanley Park was unsurpassed in beauty, and its grandeur of scenery; it could not be excelled in its fitness

for the purpose of public recreation; and that there was a need for a city park to enable citizens to get away from the "busy haunts of men." He went on to say however, that all great cities endeavour to provide parks and even singled out Richmond Park in London and Phoenix Park in Dublin as parks that temporarily outshone Stanley Park. He clearly saw a need for "art" in the park and predicted that when art united with nature in Stanley Park, that it would be the finest park on the continent. Both Mayor Grant and John Robson also mentioned the need for "art" although no one elaborated on what they perceived as "art".⁸

I would seem that the people of Vancouver in 1888 expected Vancouver to become a great city, and a public park was a reflection of its growing importance. Mayor Oppenheimer was undoubtedly not concerned about getting away from the city and "busy haunts of men" at that time, because there were numerous places people could go to get out of the small city. He envisioned that Vancouver would eventually become a great city at the end of the CPR, and would then need public park space to "escape" to. Art, to him, did not have a clear meaning but was another element to be added to make the park more grand -- a healthy reflection on the city.

In many cities across North America in the late 1800's, there was a desire to acquire a great park that would bolster the city's image nationally and internationally. The cities in the West, which did not as yet have any urban ills to "escape from" were often experiencing rapid growth, and saw parkland as a symbol of its current health and aspirations for the future. In 1886, Vancouver carried newspapers from San Francisco, Los Angeles, Portland, and Seattle, so Vancouverites were well aware of the events taking place in those American cities. Vancouver was increasingly being worked into a West

Coast urban network. While Hammond Hall did not begin his work on Golden Gate Park until 1890, Olmsted had done a plan earlier, and the desire for a large public park had been expressed in San Francisco for years. Seattle had also acquired parkland by 1886.

The people from Eastern Canada were likely aware of the numerous grants of land that the Dominion Government was making to many Eastern cities to be used as parkland. They saw Vancouver's opportunity in the military reserve in Coal Harbour.

The people that lived in Vancouver in the initial years undoubtedly had a profound affect on the early development of Stanley Park. The vast majority of the population was from Eastern Canada and the few Americans were in relatively influential positions. Because both these groups were familiar with the naturalistic type of urban park that Olmsted had been designing and that the English gardeners had been designing previously, it was natural that very formal parks were not advocated. The more formal French influence was not evident on the Vancouver landscape until the City Beautiful method of park and boulevard design was somewhat influential around 1910. In later years there were other French influences such as the "pattern making" floral design gardens such as the one at Prospect Point today that often reads, "Stanley Park, British Columbia."

The Eastern Canadians who came to Vancouver very early, brought a particular brand of Victorian middle class structure. They, like the British, also enjoyed promenading and carriage riding. The park drive, therefore, was a logical first development in the park. By 1892, there was an extension to the street railway system to Stanley Park which enabled people to ride to the

entrance and walk through the park.

Ed Gibson, in his thesis, "The Impact of Social Belief on Landscape Change: A Geographical Study of Vancouver," states, that, "the doctrine that human will and rationality can dominate nature does not appear to have been accepted by anyone."⁹ E. Wilson, a woman of the Vancouver middle class during that period wrote a book entitled The Innocent Traveller in which she explained her beliefs on man and nature. She advocated that nature influenced the well being of man.¹⁰ This respect and reverence for the natural landscape or the "rural countryside" as the British termed it, was evident in the initial years, and likely saved Stanley Park from threats that were to come in the following years. Several commercial ventures were planned for parts of Stanley Park, but the Park Board speaking for the majority of citizens, kept these to a minimum.

The influence of A.G. Ferguson was also of some consequence. As an American, he was perhaps familiar with Olmsted's work, and was anxious to guide Stanley Park in that direction. His constant attention towards the Park, and his financial generosity indicated that he may have had some kind of "comprehensive plan" in his mind. Ferguson may have been aware of what McLaren was accomplishing with the San Francisco park system, and that Vancouver also needed a "watchdog" and defender of the park landscape. Ferguson's name was later given to the point on the West Side of Stanley Park overlooking English Bay.

Another American influence was the creation of an elected park board. Vancouver was the first city in Canada to elect a park committee, and this was at a time when the City Councils across the country were jealously

guarding their power when it came to public parks. Most cities did not have park committees let alone elected ones. Even though Vancouver's first Park Boards were dominated by businessmen, they were nevertheless bodies that were able to concentrate on the narrower issue of parks rather than the problems of the city as a whole. It enabled a man such as Mr. Ferguson to go ahead with his little projects without having to answer to City Council and the public as a whole.

The British people in Vancouver, few as they were in 1887, also had an influence in the early development of Stanley Park. The cricket pitch at Brockton Oval attested to that fact. The cricket club was one of the first clubs in Vancouver and was a major force behind the clearing of the athletic grounds. The British labour class that began to arrive with the completion of the CPR, was also vocal about its desire for recreation space.

The people that lived in Vancouver in the initial years, therefore, and the perceptions and aspirations that these people had for Vancouver as a city, influenced the early development of Stanley Park. They clearly saw Vancouver as a city with a tremendous future, but funnily enough, after all the opening day talk of "art" there seemed to be no consideration given to hiring a landscape architect or designer to prepare a plan for their "jewel park". Their incremental approach to the development of the park may have been the result of a lack of funds, or the desire to protect the natural features of the park by gradually adding features that would complement the landscape. In all likelihood, neither explanation is totally correct, and the real reason for the incremental approach is the total lack of any sort of development policy or idea of what they wanted Stanley Park to be. While

there are numerous reasons why some features are here or there in the park, the overwhelming desire to acquire land for park purposes, which in turn enhanced the city, was the primary reason for Stanley Park's initial existence as a park. The Park Commissioners did not start thinking seriously about the function and design of the Park until the early 1900's, when the economy was once again booming, and there was an influx of more sophisticated people in Vancouver.

The Boom Years 1900 - 1914

The depression ended around 1900 when Interior mining and gold prospects improved, and Vancouver's population began to grow very rapidly. It was, as Norbert McDonald called it, the "golden age of the real estate operator" as people bought and sold land in the West End and in Vancouver's new suburbs.¹¹ Between 1901 and 1911 the population of Vancouver grew from 27,000 to 100,000 people. It ceased to be a small town.

In 1892 the electric street railway had been brought to Stanley Park, but during the 1890's, little track was added to the system. In the early 1900's a 103 mile railway system was established, which enabled the expanding population to be accessible to Stanley Park. The Park Board had a more substantial budget once again, and more attention was turned toward the improvement of Stanley Park.

Generally, the new improvements built upon the existing design features. The sports grounds were further enhanced, picnic grounds were cleared, new trails were cut in the forest while the older ones were improved, and the zoo was slowly expanded. The peripheral park trail was hard surfaced in 1911, and a motorized bus service was started to drive visitors through

the park and stop at places like the zoo, Prospect Point, and the Big Hollow Tree. Playgrounds for children got their beginning at Ceperley's Children's Playground at Second Beach in 1907. In 1911 a greenhouse was built to cultivate shrubs for the park. The park entrance was still the most formal area of the park with various flower beds and picket fences. In 1912 the Board acquired a fire engine for the park's protection.

The citizens of Vancouver became more involved in the decisions made about Stanley Park, and raised a public outcry over two incidents during the boom period. These were threats to Deadman's Island and then to Lost Lagoon, events that saw the beginning of citizens' participation in the City of Vancouver, a phenomenon that had an impact on the destiny of the Vancouver park system.

Deadman's Island Issue

The first major threat to Stanley Park began in 1899 when the Federal Government claimed that the lease that transferred Stanley Park to the City of Vancouver did not include Deadman's Island, and it therefore intended to assert its claim in order to use it as an industrial site. The Park Board did not accept this interpretation of the lease and declared its claim to the island. In February the Federal Government signed a 25 year lease to an American industrialist, Theodore Ludgate, who wanted to build a sawmill on Deadman's Island. Reaction in the Community was immediate and very vocal. A local petition was circulated with over 200 signatures opposing the lease and supporting the Park Committee's claim to the island.

On the Vancouver Council, opinion was divided between conservationists and industrialists. Alderman McGuigan summarized the viewpoint of his

colleagues opposed to the lease, "the integrity of the park should be maintained by ensuring that Deadman's Island was not alienated for industrial purposes, but maintained as an integral part of the park. It is a unique possession throughout the continent and rights over it should not be lightly waved."¹² Expressing the opposite view, Alderman McPhaiden admitted that Stanley Park was important to Vancouver, but like some others, felt that the economic benefits outweighed the need to conserve the natural environment. He stated that those opposed to the mill were "not friends of Vancouver". At a council meeting, a spectator shouted, "a man never got a square meal off scenery!"¹³

Outside Council the lines separating the two viewpoints were drawn very quickly in the community. The liberal MP for Vancouver, G.R. Maxwell strongly upheld Ludgate interests and argued that the mill would alleviate some of Vancouver's unemployment. The Vancouver and District Trades and Labour Council ran numerous articles in their newspaper The Federationist stating that it saw this situation as another example of government favouring big business in surrendering the people to private interests. The Vancouver Daily News Advertiser was also strongly opposed to the lease and contended that City Council, the Park Board, the Board of Trade, and the Labour Council spoke for the majority of Vancouver's citizens. To compound the matter even more, many people in the community resented the fact that Ludgate was American, and saw him as a spectator, removing wealth from Canada. The people of Vancouver were clearly divided as legal custody of Deadman's Island was passed to Ludgate on March 1, 1899.

The battle raged for eleven years, with the Provincial Government becoming involved and going to court to restrain Ludgate from trespassing.

The court cases dragged on until late 1911, when Ludgate's claim was upheld and he re-occupied the island, evicting all squatters.

The significance of this long and emotional struggle over Deadman's Island was not only the chain of events, but the persistence and dedication of both sides involved. "It was a battle, albeit microscopic, in a war that had been going on between industrialists and conversationists across North America over the natural heritage of this continent."¹⁴ Many citizens of Vancouver who could be called conservationists or naturalists, believed in preserving the forest wilderness of all parts of Stanley Park and saw it as a part of their local heritage. Although the Indian community was not vocal at that time it is clear that Deadman's Island was an extremely important part of their heritage. It was the site of the great war with the Haida and southern tribes and is the subject of many Indian legends.¹⁵ It later became the local band's burial ground.

The Vancouver Province newspaper summarized the unrest which prevailed in the city after Ludgate cleared the island of its magnificent trees. "The last tree has been cut down on the isle of dreams, or Deadman's Island, and desolate and pathetic, it lies, across the entrance to Coal Harbour, shivering in its nakedness, a monument to materialism, vandalism, and stupidity, cleverness and illegality."¹⁶

A sawmill was never constructed on Deadman's Island because Ludgate died six years after he won his case. His estate could not pay the rent, so Deadman's Island was returned to the Dominion government. Unfortunately, the magnificent view of Deadman's Island from the West End ridge was lost forever.

(Illustration 5)

Mawson's Plan for the Head of Coal Harbour

The second threat to Stanley Park was actually a design scheme that promised to change the appearance and function of the park. By 1910 Vancouver began to be aware of the City Beautiful Movement and the Chicago World's Fair of 1893. Factions within the community began to vocalize the need for a more beautiful city. Like others across North America involved in City Beautiful thought at that time, they saw public parks and green space as an essential element.

The Park Board gradually became atuned to what the community was thinking. The Vancouver Council of Women asked the Park Board to meet them to discuss City Beautiful, and the Vancouver City Beautiful Association with its large membership from the business community and the Board of Trade, persuaded the Board that a more beautiful city would attract more tourist dollars.¹⁷ Accordingly, the Park Board endeavoured to incorporate such ideas within its own operations.

The Board saw that a landscape design for the Head of Coal Harbour and entrance to the park (at low tide this area was smelling mud flats) would enhance some of the piecemeal development that had progressed there and would be an opportunity to create a magnificent landscape reflecting Stanley Park's role as the city's major park and primary tourist attraction.

In 1912, Thomas Mawson toured Canada and expressed a wish to aid in the design of Stanley Park. The Park Board hired Mawson to prepare a plan for the Head of Coal Harbour. (which today is Lost Lagoon, the Causeway, and Brockton Point). Stanley Park was a landscape architect's dream, and Mawson

wanted to design the whole park, but the Board would not comply.

By June of 1912 he produced three very detailed plans for the southern portion of the park, and by October, the Board had chosen the third plan which was the most elaborate and Mawson's favourite. This plan was a very formal design using a great circular pond as the central element, surrounded by a football stadium, two neo-classical buildings housing a natural museum and a restaurant, and children's playgrounds. (Illustrations 6 and 7) The fresh water pond was to have a 180 foot ornamental obelisk in its centre. (Illustration 8)

Again, there was a reaction from segments of the community who did not want a formal design such as this in Stanley Park. The trade unions organized over the issue because they wanted the park to remain in a natural state with minimal clearing, for children's playgrounds. The unions were just as concerned about the function of the park as with the natural aesthetics.

The City Beautiful Association, a group formed to advocate the beautification of the city, did not apparently want to see the demise of the naturalness of Stanley Park and were violently opposed to the Mawson plan. They held a public meeting in December of 1912 to publicly tell the Park Board "Hands Off Stanley Park!"¹⁸ The Association pointed to the clause in the lease from the Dominion Government preventing the falling of trees or otherwise altering the park, except for the purpose of making roads, without the consent of the Minister of the Militia. They claimed that it would be illegal to build the stadium, museum and restaurant.

Mawson's design for Stanley Park was never actualized, partly

because of the negative reaction from the community and partly because the war caused energies to be channelled elsewhere. The incident illustrated however, that the citizens of Vancouver responded to threats to the naturalness of Stanley Park and that they wanted to participate in decisions made about their park.

By 1914, the Park Board still did not have a development policy for Stanley Park. What they did have was a better idea of how the public viewed the park. They realized that besides the expansion of features already in the park, they needed children's playgrounds and more public beaches.

Reflections on the Boom Period 1900 - 1914

The British Columbian gold rush brought Canadians, Europeans and Americans to Vancouver in large numbers and triggered an enormous building boom in the city. The numbers of Britons increased tremendously and by 1911, they accounted for 34% of the population. A great number of the English were in managerial and land owner roles, while many of the others were of the labour class and contributed heavily to the labour movement and socialist politics in Vancouver. Ed Gibson remarked in his thesis that "these British elements demonstrated definite sets of social beliefs usually expressed in the landscape, through social organizations and political action."¹⁹

The British were usually more sophisticated about the need for urban parks, and brought with them, the latest ideas for park design from Britain. The Gardenesque trend was still popular there at the turn of the century and showed in their individual flower gardens. Flowers were grown in beds and were grouped by particular species. They were often offset by shrubbery behind the beds, modifying the contrast of delicate flowers and large

trees. The entrance to Stanley Park gradually gained more and more floral beds, and through the years, this section of the park has become the formal flower garden area. This concern and care for flower arrangements in Stanley Park, Queen Elizabeth Park and numerous other parks in Vancouver is a very British trait and is not seen nearly to the same extent in American parks today.

The British community was however, not successful in influencing the creation of very large expanses of lawn that is characteristic to Hyde Park, Kensington Garden, and virtually all British parks. Even town commons were usually a very large expanse of lawn that could be used for games and walking. Loudon's Gardenesque style park had modified the vast stretches of lawn that were characteristic of Capability Brown's landscapes, and both the American and Canadian park designers or administrators chose to incorporate the smaller scale more private landscapes of the Gardenesque style. In the case of Stanley Park, there were no large expanses cleared for lawn except for the athletic grounds at Brockton Point which the British were originally responsible for, and the various playgrounds and picnic areas. The fact that Vancouver was such a young city and was not creating a park out of an already cleared area was an obvious influence, but it is surprising that there wasn't more clearing done on the British model.

The British also pushed for public tennis courts, playgrounds, and public beaches. The south corner of Stanley Park in particular, shows a strong British design influence. It is an active recreation area that, by the early 1920's had picnic grounds, playing fields, bowling greens, and tennis courts. To this day this section of the park is an active recreation area with pitch and put golf, shuffleboard, and other activities.

There was an increasing American influence in Vancouver from 1900 to 1914. Like the Americans, Vancouverites adhered to the principles of individualism, private enterprise, and the desire for rapid growth. Many thought that the city should rely on the private sector to provide the basic municipal services and utilities. With this atmosphere prevailing, it is amazing that the Park Board was able to prevent commercialism in the park.

By 1904 the Board insisted on controlling all building standards in the park. In 1906 the use of the roads within the park for commercial purposes was prohibited and in 1905 the Board rejected a proposal to build a speedway. Within the early years the Board turned down proposals for: a rifle range; motor boat races; a navy torpedo; a grain elevator; a howitzer; and English cabs.²⁰ Unfortunately, the Park Board was not as successful in preventing the demise of Deadman's Island for a proposed saw mill.

These rejections again point to the fact that although the Park Board did not have a design plan for the park, it did have policy of keeping the park in its natural state as much as possible. This policy waivered, however, in 1912, when the American City Beautiful Movement had influenced many Vancouverites into thinking that a very formal entrance to the park would be a great asset to their city which, at that time, had very great aspirations. Because the American influence was so strong in Vancouver during those years and because it became evident that most American cities were not developing their parks incrementally but with an overall design plan, many people in Vancouver wanted Stanley Park to have a formal face lift. As in the cases of most American city parks redesigned during the City Beautiful Period, the whole park was not redesigned, but the entranceway became the most important

feature in defining the park in relation to the city. Mawson was commissioned to do a showpiece entrance to a wilderness park.

The fact that Mawson was English and worked in the Civic Art style was irrelevant. The plan was so influenced by the American City Beautiful Movement, and the landscape at the Chicago Columbia Exposition, that there is no question that this influence was American. The neo-classical buildings of similar scale and colour, and the circular pond could have been right out of the Jackson Park landscape in Chicago of 1893. The grandness that these cities was striving for was reflected in Mawson's desire to display natural history in the museum instead of in nature. Even more surprising, the city was willing to let a Seattle construction firm build the stadium, which reaffirms the Council's faith in American knowledge and technical superiority.

The fact that the Park Board's first non-incremental design scheme had failed, strengthened even more, the idea that Stanley Park should remain in its natural state as much as possible. There were many tree worshipping natives in Vancouver who saw reflected in Stanley Park, B.C.'s primary industry and original resource -- the forest. In 1918, the Board officially adopted the policy that all development in Stanley Park was to enhance the natural dignity of the park.

Although Mawson's plan was not adopted, it is possible to point out some City Beautiful influences on the landscape. The boulevard system idea was adopted during that time and from then on, the Park Board had a very formal planting policy for boulevards throughout the city. By 1916, the bandstand, also an American influence, was built behind the formal gardens near Malkin Bowl. Illustration 9 shows the formality of the area with very angular flower

beds and diagonal walkways, both City Beautiful features.

Summary

Looking at the years 1900 - 1914 in Vancouver's park history, it seems that, the original design features developed in Stanley Park in the initial years (1886 - 1900) were strengthened and elaborated in the more prosperous years. The original peripheral path was hard surfaced in 1911; the athletic grounds at Brockton Point were improved; the zoo was expanded to many varieties of indigenous animals; the southern section was expanded from a picnic area to include playgrounds, tennis courts, and bowling greens; and the entrance of the park near Avison's cottage acquired more flower gardens. The park's circulation system separating pedestrians, motorists, and riders was also developed by this time. It was very likely influenced by Olmsted's work in Central Park. Illustration 10, a map of Stanley Park in 1911, shows these features and their overall relationship to the park.

The great population expansion brought British, Americans, and other Canadians to the city, who had a somewhat more sophisticated attitude towards urban parks. The people who came to settle on the Pacific Coast apparently intended to be urban dwellers rather than farmers or miners, and therefore had a greater interest in amenities such as parks.²¹ These new settlers met head on with the basic value that seemed to run the whole length of the "last frontier" on the West Coast -- that parks were not a top priority because there was plenty of natural scenery. While the pioneers felt that rapid expansion was the most important criteria, the newcomers tended to feel that social amenities and public parks were also important assets to a city.

It is possible to see both British and American influences on the Stanley Park landscape. The interest in the American City Beautiful features with their basic French/Beaux Arts origin was fairly short lived. The Canadians as well as the Americans were unconsciously steeped in the British tradition of natural landscapes that go back to Capability Brown's work in the late 18th century. The obvious respect that Vancouver's citizens and visitors had for the natural dignity of Stanley Park, seemed to undermine any thoughts of alternative landscapes. It was for that reason that people were so adamant and willing to mobilize against the threat that they saw to Deadman's Island.

The threats to the Park in the form of the Deadman's Island issue and the Mawson Plan, lead to some of the earliest citizen participation in Vancouver's history. Established organizations as well as newly formed ones organized to lobby for a particular issue, came together for the first time to publicly state their opposition or approval of a proposal that would affect them as citizens of Vancouver. Open council meetings and public meetings were held in order to gain a concensus among the different factions in the city. In the case of Deadman's Island, the decision was out of the public's hands, but in the case of the Mawson design scheme for Coal Harbour, the vocal citizens' delegations were influential in preventing the plan from becoming a reality.

Hastings Park

The events surrounding the development of Hastings Park showed that the residents of Vancouver did not want every recreation space in the city to be a wilderness park.

A few months after acquiring Stanley Park, the City looked at Victoria with its recent grant of Beacon Hill from the Provincial Government, and decided to lobby the Provincial Government for 64 acres in Hastings Townsite. In 1888 the Provincial Commissioner of Lands and Works granted 160 acres in the townsite provided the city would extend its boundaries to include the park site and build an access road into the city.²²

From the beginning, City Council wanted the Vancouver exhibition, which had formerly been held in New Westminster, to be moved to the Hastings Townsite. An exhibition would reflect the vibrance and ambition of a young city.²³ Council decided not to assign the park to the Park Committee to administer, but instead called for tenders for a private group to cut, burn, and clear 23 acres of the parkland. The exhibition remained in New Westminster until after the depression of the 1890's however, so the Council did not go ahead with its plans until the early 1900's.

Little was done to the park during the 1890's except for the clearing of several trails through the forest. Few people lived in Hastings Townsite in comparison to the City, so it did not merit development as a neighbourhood park at that time. Council leased acreage within the park to the British Columbia Jockey Club as a site for its racecourse. It was not unusual for early Councils to allow private organizations to provide facilities because it reflected the contemporary view that the role of local governments should be limited.²⁴ Victoria had allowed a race track in Beacon Hill park, and part of Brockton Point was leased to the Brockton Point Athletic Association.

In the early 1900's with rapid population growth and increasing

prosperity, a core of interested businessmen (some of whom were aldermen and future mayors), farmers, and breeders who could afford to establish an exhibition, founded the Vancouver Exhibition Association. In March of 1909 a plebiscite was held on whether a grant of acreage and money (\$50,000) should be given to the Exhibition Association. Despite the objections of the Park Board²⁵ and numerous ratepayers²⁶, the plebiscite passed. Ten acres were cleared and graded, and after another plebiscite was held to raise an additional \$85,000, the first exhibition was held in 1910.

It was an immediate success. The attendance was 68,000 and the total receipts gathered from the exhibition were almost \$42,000.²⁷ The fair also became a major convention centre as six organizations held their conventions on the grounds.

When the Exhibition Association requested additional acreage in October of 1910, the Council, being impressed with the results of Vancouver's first fair, agreed to sign a lease for additional land.²⁸ At this point the Park Board expressed its objections, and after a joint meeting in November with the Board of Parks, it was agreed that the park should be divided in half -- the southern section being administered by the Park Board and the northern section going to the Exhibition Association. The Park Board was reportedly happy with finally officially obtaining half the park.²⁹

The Exhibition Association immediately pressed for another plebiscite to raise \$115,000 for the erection of major buildings and the development of landscaping. The plebiscite was successful, enabling the Exhibition Association to gain an even stronger position in the tug of war over Hastings Park.

The Park Board, after having to sit back for 23 years, decided to develop its portions of the park, especially in the light of the fact that the residents of Hastings Townsite had been lobbying for a neighbourhood park.³⁰ They began by using similar design ideas as for Stanley Park. Roads were laid out, two rustic bridges were built and trails were cut through the woods. In the First Annual Report published by the Park Board in 1912, they boasted of the delightful park at Hastings Townsite, and promised the addition of an ornamental garden and a playground. Their smugness was not to last long.

The fairs of 1911 and 1912 were even more successful, and the Exhibition Association asked Council for a lease on additional property in 1913. The Park Board argued strongly against this, saying that the function of the Exhibition was not in compliance with the terms of the 1911 provincial grant to the city, of parkland for recreational purposes. Park Superintendent W.S. Rawlings contended that \$30,000 had already been spent and the ratepayers had approved another \$10,000. He stressed the need to preserve some woodland and observed that Ward 2 ratepayers had gone on record as being opposed to any further portion of this park being taken from the public for exhibition purposes."³¹ Despite the Park Board's opposition, the Council permitted the Association to extend its grounds south to Hastings Street in February of 1913. The Park Board, feeling defeated, abandoned the last remnant of the park under its control and ceased to have ties with Hastings Park.³²

It is rare that someone would lament the loss of Hastings Park as a forest. Vancouver is a "PNE city" today, and this enthusiasm for exhibitions which began in the early part of the century in Hastings Park, has flourished through the years. Today, it is one of Vancouver's most diversified

parks although it is not under the auspices of the Park Board.

The evidence suggests that the citizens of Vancouver, between 1910 and 1913, approved of the exhibition, otherwise the numerous plebiscites would not have been supported. Illustration 11 taken at Hastings Park in the 1890's, shows a stock sale or show which was a tremendously popular use of the site long before the first exhibition in 1910. Illustration 12, taken in 1910, illustrates the new exhibition building and the splendor of the agricultural exhibition. People did not want another forested park -- they wanted a place to go to see horse racing, to picnic, and to walk around.

The evolution of Hastings Park from a natural landscape to a bustling exhibition ground in 1914, was a direct influence of the West Coast American example to the south. The whole idea of an agricultural fair was very strong in America at that time, and the Vancouver Exhibition Association promptly jointed several American as well as Canadian Fair Associations. Having close rail and other sorts of links with California, the Vancouver fair was quickly integrated into the Western American fair system rather than the dispersed Canadian fair system. The Vancouver Association became an active member of four American controlled organizations, the Pacific Grand Fair and Racing Circuit, the Congress of Festivals, the North Pacific Fairs Association and the International Circuits Association.³³ The manager of the Vancouver Exhibition Association was president of two of those organizations in 1912.

It was natural that the Vancouver Exhibition was modelled on the American counterpart. The design features were similar, such as specialized stock displays, circuses and midways.³⁴ The plan of the Vancouver Exhibition

grounds in 1915 (Illustration 13) shows an area just west of the athletic field as some sort of formal display area. The circular walkway within a triangle of bordered trees suggests the influence of the formalized shapes of the City Beautiful school. Finally, the southern portion that the Park Board began to clear was a series of lawns, playgrounds, and picnic areas in 1915.

City Park System to 1913

The development of a city park system was slow in Vancouver, and invariably, an incremental process. A Toronto realtor, E.J. Clark, offered a gift of land in 1888, which was on the southern periphery of Vancouver. The Park Board accepted this gift a few years later, but this was the last gift it accepted until the economy picked up once again after the depressed 1890's. In 1894, the residents from the East End did ask for a "block of land" between Dunlevy and Jackson Avenue (Cambie Street Site) for park purposes, but the Park Board was unable to make any acquisitions.³⁵ In 1889 therefore, Vancouver had three parks; Stanley Park, Hastings Park, and Clark's Park.

At the turn of the century, the Park Board was able to consider a city park system and it was in the next thirteen years that the first major expansion occurred. (Illustration 14) The population of Vancouver had doubled between 1891 and 1901, and the local residents began to push for neighbourhood parks.

In January 1902, the voters approved by a vote of 892 to 419, a \$25,000 debenture to purchase the Cambie Street site.³⁶ Both the Board and the residents wanted this site to be used as a sports ground because the only

other site was the isolated Brockton Point grounds which was used by a private club most of the time, and was not easily accessible. The purchase of the Cambie Street grounds was the first time that the Board had paid for park-land and it was located on the edge of the "Eastern Canadian" residential sector near the Granville Townsite. (Illustration 15) To the east was the working class residential area, and to the west was the middle to upper class residential area of the West End.

As other neighbourhoods such as Kitsilano and Grandview began to clamour for neighbourhood parks, the Park Board began to pay attention. In September of 1902 the Council gained the public's permission to raise \$125,000 to purchase further park properties.³⁷

One of the first sites acquired after the plebiscite was Tatlow Park in Kitsilano in 1907 and Greer's Beach near Kitsilano Point. The Board had to lease the beach park from the CPR (5 year lease originally) with the understanding that the city was to pay \$50 a month "based on the present assessment of the Kitsilano property and if that value went up at any time, the rent would be increased by ratio."³⁸ The Greer's Beach Park, later called Kits Beach, was immediately successful and the city improved the site by planting a lawn and shade trees, and by putting up a bath house. Some of the local residents wanted to expand the beach and raised \$1,500 to purchase acreage behind the beach, to be used as a public park.³⁹ A citizens' group called the Kitsilano Improvement Association began to be vocal within the area, and pressed for further park space. The City responded by acquiring the land bought by the local residents and returning their \$1,500, plus acquiring additional property for \$63,000. Kitsilano Beach area soon became a major public park and the Park Board began to consider a long term improvement

program for the park.⁴⁰

The Kitsilano Improvement Association began to have a great deal of influence in the decisions made about the design and function of Kits Beach. Their position was influential in several respects: adopting a by-law prohibiting religious services on the beach; opposing a bid by an amusement company to operate at Kits Beach; opposing a renaming of the beach to Ocean Park; the adoption of a by-law to purchase more CPR lands to the southwest of the beach; and finally, the acquisition of floodlights to light the boardwalk at the beach. The Association obviously had an idea of what they wanted in terms of a park design. The influence was largely British, indicated by the importance of sea bathing, the desire to improve the boardwalk for promenading, and the desire to exclude any active or recreational uses other than walking through the shade trees and expanse of lawns.

Besides Kits Beach and Tatlow Park acquired in Kitsilano between 1902 and 1911, the Park Board also managed to acquire another park site in Kitsilano. In 1911, it applied to Victoria for a grant of a site on the sparsely settled western periphery of Kitsilano. Thus by 1911, the Park Board was developing three park sites in the new district of Kitsilano -- Tatlow Park, Kitsilano or Greer's Beach, and McBride Park.

In the district of Grandview, there was also citizen input into the form of the new parks. In 1908 the Mount Pleasant and Grandview ratepayers petitioned the Board to improve Clark's Park which had not been developed since it was acquired nineteen years previously. The ratepayers and Edward Odlum, spokesman for the Grandview Progress Association, told City Council that they were in dire need of recreation space.⁴¹

In January of 1909, the Park Board asked the city's residents for permission to borrow \$300,000 for parks throughout the city. McKee speculates that, "because the Board proposed to purchase park lands in every ward except Ward 2 (West End) and presented a comprehensive plan rather than local options, the measure passed by a wide margin."⁴² With part of this money, the Board acquired Victoria Park in Grandview and was able to consider improvements to Clark's Park.

Immediately after the acquisition of Victoria Park, there was a confrontation between members of the Grandview community, over the design of the park. The Grandview Ratepayers Association, many with a British background, began to lobby for a floral park to upgrade the "image of the neighbourhood". Others in the community, including Mr. Odlum advocated an athletic ground.

The Park Board, which in later years was to be impressed with Civic Beauty ideas, probably held values, similar to the fairly affluent residents of Grandview, and because organized ratepayers wielded some political power, it is not surprising that the Board requested the Ratepayers Association to canvas their district for a consensus on the design for Victoria Park. Inevitably, in 1911, Grandview Park was designed as a very ornamental park. These ideas of increased civic pride originated with the City Beautiful in the U.S. and perhaps to a larger extent, the Civic Art movement in Britain, which was more concerned with ornamental flower gardens as a part of structured civic improvements.

The Park Board was concerned about other parts of the city as well. Between 1909 and 1913, the Board asked the city ratepayers on a few occasions for permission to raise funds for the purchase of land for parks. Each time,

the ratepayers enthusiastically supported the Park Board's desire to acquire land. Although this expansion was impressive to many citizens, there was not much thought put into the design and function of these parks and in most cases, they were not touched until the 1920's. The overall desire in that era, was to acquire land.

In 1910 the Park Board did start negotiations with the municipalities of South Vancouver and Point Grey to purchase Little Mountain from the CPR, but that was not to come about until 1928. The Park Board acquired land in 1908 on the north arm of Burrard Inlet, directly across from Barnet, and close to where Belcarra Park is today. The Board acquired it as a picnic and camping ground. Although Admiralty Park was developed very slowly, it did indicate that the Park Board was thinking toward the future when Vancouver would be a large city.

Playgrounds and Public Beaches

In comparison to other West Coast cities, Vancouver was slow to provide playgrounds. The idea of play areas for children was relatively new, because, while Paxton in Birkenhead Park, and Olmsted in the design for Central Park, set aside "playground areas" these were for organized adult games rather than children's activities. Bill McKee suggests that the idea for supervised children's playgrounds arose from the Chicago World's Fair and then diffused across the continent.⁴³

In Vancouver's early days the school playgrounds were used for children's play. In 1907 the Park Board added six swings at the Lord Roberts school grounds, their first involvement specifically with children's activities.

Concerned citizens formed the Juvenile Protection Agency to attempt to abate the juvenile delinquency problem in Vancouver in the early 1900's. This group was outspoken about the fact that they did not see parks solely for the sake of recreation, but also as a "tool for socializing youth through supervised recreation."⁴⁴ In a letter to the Park Board, George Healy, the Chairman of the Playground Committee of the Juvenile Protection Association requested that the city investigate the lack of playgrounds in Vancouver, and he referred the Board to the excellent examples of supervised playgrounds in San Francisco and Los Angeles.⁴⁵

The Juvenile Protection Association approached the Board in March of 1910, requesting playground provisions at the Harris Street Grounds, later to be called McLean Park. The Park Board agreed, but because the Council had not provided any funds for this conversion, it was July, 1912 before the facilities were installed. Despite the Council and Park Board being dominated by the wealthy business community who lived in the West End, the first park to have children's playground facilities was in the East End of Vancouver. Although it was not supervised, it was a positive step forward.

Although a second playground was planned for Robson Park in Mount Pleasant, the coming war prohibited the expansion at that time. Immediately after the war the Vancouver Gyro Club, a men's service club, like their American counterparts, began to become involved in the provision of playgrounds.⁴⁶ They applied enough pressure to cause a growing city-wide demand for supervised children's playgrounds. In 1922 the widow Ceperley, remembering the wish of Mr. Ferguson, her brother-in-law, left money to the city to construct playgrounds similar to those she had seen in Portland. The Ceperley Playgrounds

became a key element in Vancouver's Park system.

The origins of the idea for supervised children's playgrounds were definitely from the United States. If it has originated at the fair in Chicago, it had quickly spread to all parts of the country including the West Coast. The Juvenile Protection Associations and Mrs. Ceperley both looked to cities along America's West Coast for models to emulate.

Long before the first Park Board was elected, the residents of Vancouver, especially those of British background, were swimming at Second Beach in Stanley Park and at Kits Beach. As early as 1891, the Vancouver Trade and Labour Council (dominated by people of English background) complained to council about the lack of cleared beaches.⁴⁷ In 1895, the City, backed by the Trades and Labour Council and the wealthy residents of the West End, (who would naturally prefer a public beach to industry on the English Bay shoreline) approached the Federal Government for the title to the foreshore. The City was advised that it would need authorization from shoreline property owners, and because the economy was depressed and it was unlikely that the City could purchase the necessary permission, the proposal was temporarily abandoned. As the economy picked up at the turn of the century, the City initiated the long term project of purchasing lots along Beach Avenue as they became available.

By 1904 when the Park Board "ascertained that the English Bay beach was in city hands" and when it looked like an important tourist attraction, it invited representatives from City Council, the Board of Trade, the Trades and Labour Council and the Tourist Association to offer suggestions for improvements to the beach. A plebiscite was held due to the opposition

of the wards farthest from the sea. In 1907 however, a by-law was passed by the city voters to make these improvements because; there was a bigger tax base due to growing prosperity; the street car system was substantially improved; and the Park Board, in collaboration with other groups, was able to present a specific plan including a pier and bathing house.

Kits Beach, as mentioned previously, was also very popular with residents of Point Grey. In 1914 it actually surpassed English Bay as the most used public beach. Elaborate plans for a pier and a formal garden were never actualized due to the wartime economy in 1914.

Apart from the idea for a formal garden at Kits Beach in 1914, which was obviously influenced by the City Beautiful schemes of that time, the whole development and push for public beaches likely came from the British population in Vancouver. Swimming in the sea is something that the British have done for centuries, and was not something that was readily transferred to America. In the first decade of the 20th century when Vancouver was soliciting ideas for the development of its beaches, city officials contacted their counterparts in Seattle for information. They were surprised to learn that Seattle had not developed its beaches at all!⁴⁸

In Norbert McDonald's article, "Population Growth and Change in Seattle and Vancouver", he notes that there were more foreign born people in Vancouver than in Seattle at the turn of the century. (The largest group was from the British Isles). The largest group of foreign born people that came to Seattle during 1900 - 1910 were Scandinavians. This group however, did not tend to have a profound affect on the political and social development of the city. From this evidence, it could be argued that Seattle experienced

"the melting pot" phenomenon while Vancouver experienced more of a "cultural mosaic."⁴⁹ The British were an outspoken group and, through their tradition of sea bathing, influenced the development of Vancouver's public beaches.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Norbert McDonald, "A Critical Growth Cycle for Vancouver 1900 - 1914," B.C. Studies 17, (Spring 1973); 26.
- 2 Additional Manuscript, 54 Vol. 13, Stanley Park Files.
- 3 Major J.S. Matthews, Vancouver Historical Journal (City of Vancouver: Archives Society of Vancouver, January 1958), p. 66.
- 4 Ibid., p. 66.
- 5 City of Vancouver, Park Committee Minutes, Volume 1, June 1891. (Hereafter papers in the Vancouver Park Committee or Parks Board public record unit will be cited as R.G. 7 [Record Group 7]).
- 6 Ibid., May 26, 1893.
- 7 McDonald, p. 26.
- 8 Matthews, pp. 18 - 21.
- 9 Edward Gibson, "The Impact of Social Belief on Landscape Change: A Geographical Study of Vancouver" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1971), p. 109.
- 10 Ibid., p. 110.
- 11 McDonald, p. 27.
- 12 William McKee, "The History of the Vancouver Park System 1886 - 1929" (Masters Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1976), p. 46.
- 13 McKee, p. 46.
- 14 Ibid., p. 51.

15 Deadman's Island was the site of the great battle between northern and southern tribes, which culminated in two hundred warriors volunteering to be exchanged for captured women and children. All the warriors were put to death. Fire flowers sprang up where they fell, frightening the foe into retreat. They were living tombstones of the Indian warriors. Hence its name, Deadman's Island.

Eric Nicol, Eric Nicol's Vancouver (Vancouver Doubleday Canada Ltd: 1970), p. 22.

16 "Deadman's Island" Vancouver Daily Province, 28 November 1911.

17 McKee, pp. 107 - 108.

18 "Hands Off Stanley Park, Their Slogan", Vancouver Daily Province, - 20 December 1912.

19 Gibson, P. 118.

20 Ibid., p. 111.

21 Norbert McDonald, "Population Growth and Change in Seattle and Vancouver", Pacific Historical Review 39 No. 3 (August 1970): 309.

22 City of Vancouver, Office of the City Clerk, Inward Correspondence, Volume 1, Provincial Government 1888 file, F.G. Vernon to David Oppenheimer, Mayor, November 20, 1888. (Hereafter City Clerk's Inward Correspondence will be cited as R.G. 2 A1 [Record Group 2, Series A1]).

23 McKee, p. 63.

24 Ibid., p. 64.

25 R.G. 2, B1, Volume 15, June 15, 1908, p. 401.

26 Ibid., September 21, 1908, p. 526.

27 McKee, p. 66.

28 R.G. 2 B1, Volume 17, October 10, 1910, p. 375.

- 29 McKee, p. 67.
- 30 Hastings Townsite amalgamated with the City in January, 1911.
- 31 McKee, p. 68.
- 32 R.G. 2 A1, Volume 52, Park Board 1914 file, W.H. Boggs, Secretary Park Board to Mayor, May 14, 1914.
- 33 McKee, p. 70.
- 34 Ibid., p. 70.
- 35 R.G. 2 B1 Volume 6, May 28, 1894, p. 95.
- 36 R.G. 2 D2, Volume 1, January 9, 1902, p. 162.
- 37 Ibid., September 20, 1902, p. 165.
- 38 McKee, p. 81.
- 39 Ibid., p. 82.
- 40 Ibid., p. 82.
- 41 Ibid., p. 83.
- 42 Ibid., p. 83.
- 43 Ibid., p. 91.
- 44 Ibid., p. 89
- 45 R.G. 7 Correspondence, 1908-10 file George H. Healey to Chairman Park Board, July 31, 1908.

46 The Gyro Club was originally an American men's organization that was interested in American cultural development.

47 R.G. 2 B1, Volume 4, November 23, 1891, p. 577.

48 Norbert McDonald, Professor of History, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, telephone interview, August 1979.

49 McDonald, "Population Growth", p. 309.

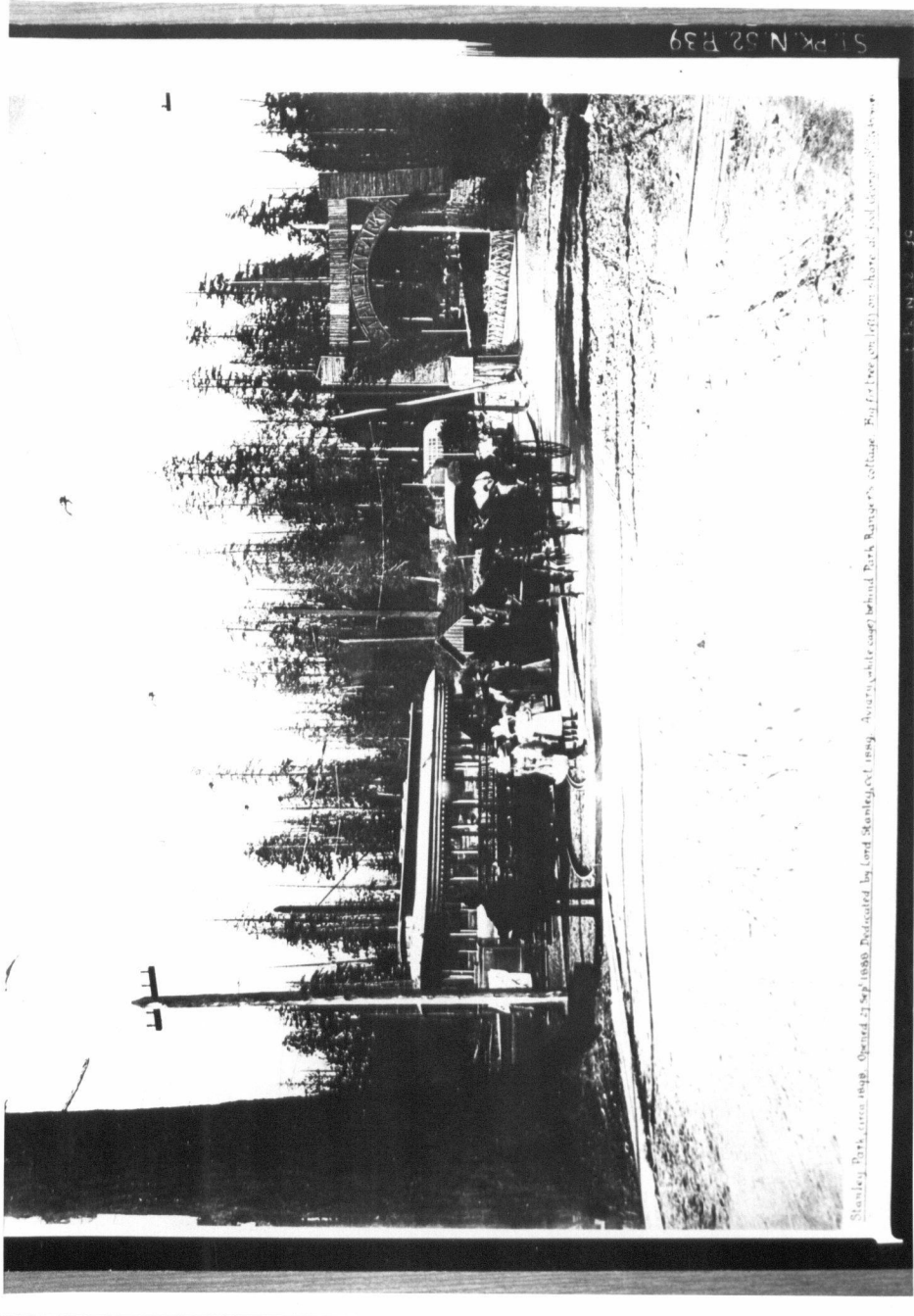
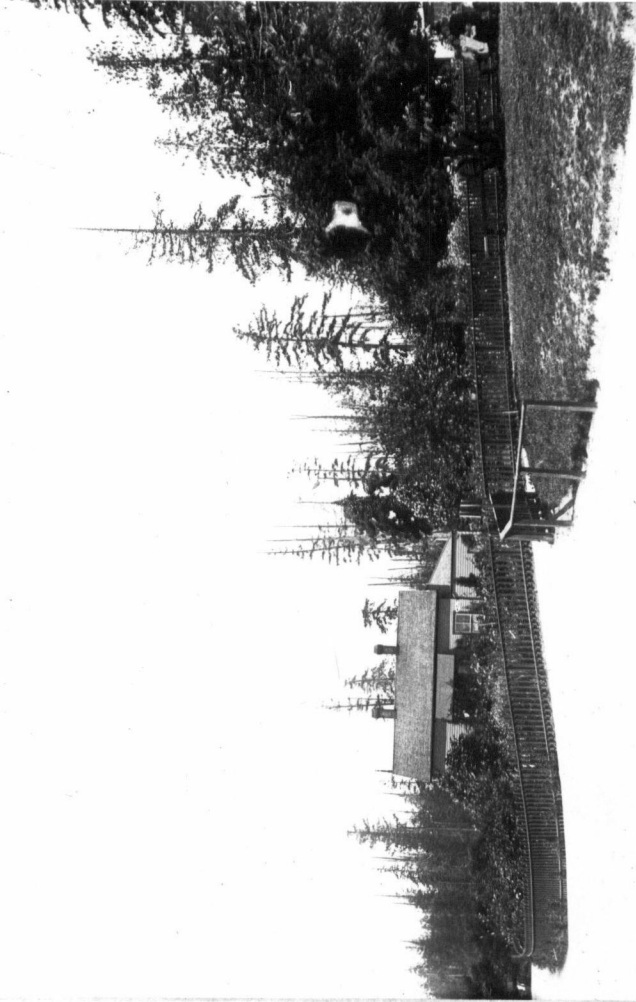


ILLUSTRATION 2 ENTRANCE TO STANLEY PARK 1898.
VANCOUVER CITY ARCHIVES.



Stanley Park. Entrance and Park Ranger's cottage circa 1896. It was the first Parks Board building in Vancouver. It faced south and looked down directly on the Coal Harbour bridge. This photograph looks due west from the present site of the children's memorial monument to Queen Victoria, the hotel. At the time it was built the forest on the south shore opposite of Coal Harbour had not been felled. It was occupied until 1898 by Park Ranger Henry Anison and his Anison, in whose honor "Anison Trail", Prospect Point, was named in Dec. 1948. Their son, Henry Stanley Anison, was born in the cottage Feb. 17, 1899; the first white child born in Stanley Park after it was named. The extraordinary whiteness of "Park Road" is due to a surface of white calcined shells excavated from a prehistoric Indian midden, or refuse heap eight feet deep at Whoi-whoi, now Lumbermen's Arch, First Narrows. On the extreme right appears the cages of the zoo, started by Mrs. Anison with a big black pet bear chained to a stump. She had several bears for years afterwards until the minister's wife poked one with her umbrella; then they write but in a deep concrete pit.

City Archives, V. Stan G. N. 93, N. 1, P. 88, 89.

ILLUSTRATION 3 ANISON'S COTTAGE 1896.
VANCOUVER CITY ARCHIVES.



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ST. PK. N. 26. P. 78

DEAD MANS ISLAND from GEORGIA ST.

VANCOUVER B.C.

DEADMAN'S ISLAND

ILLUSTRATION 5 DEADMAN'S ISLAND BEFORE THE TREES WERE FALLEN.
VANCOUVER CITY ARCHIVES

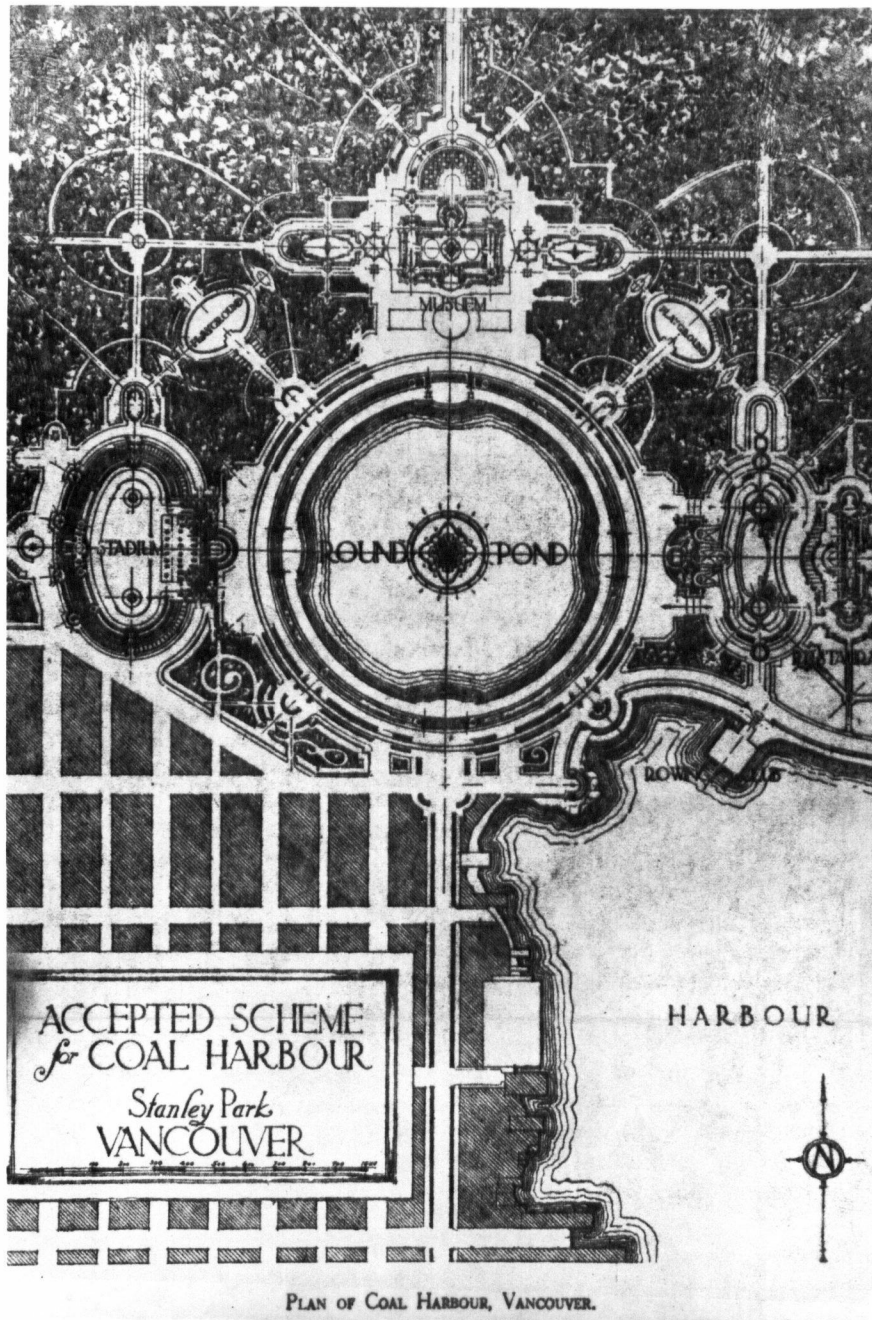
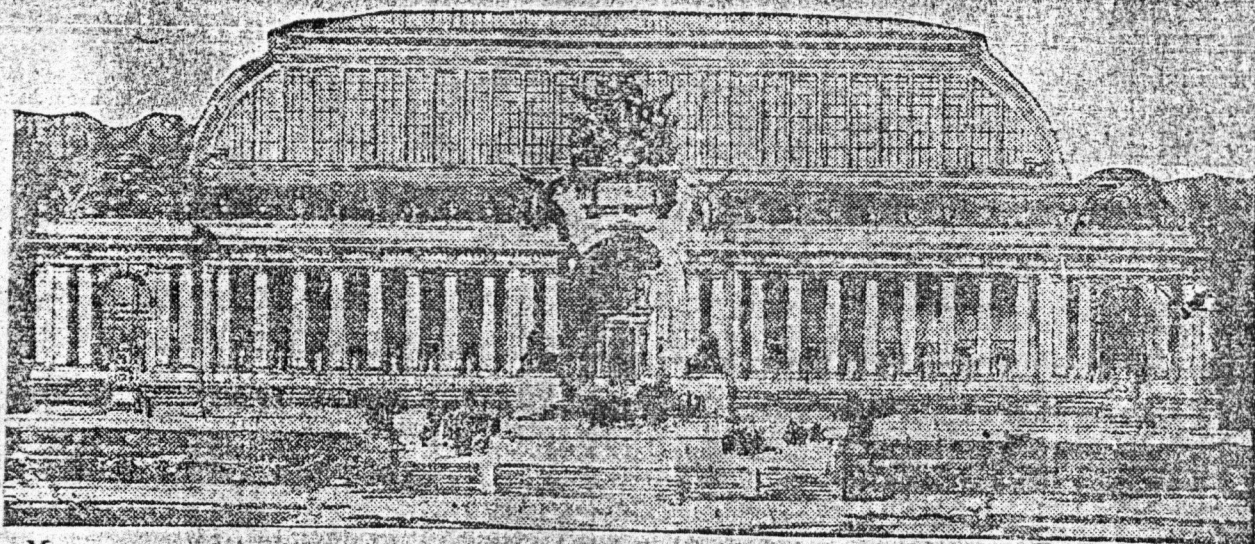


ILLUSTRATION 6 MAWSON'S PLAN FOR COAL HARBOUR 1912.
VANCOUVER CITY ARCHIVES

HOW MR. MAWSON WOULD IMPROVE COAL HARBOR

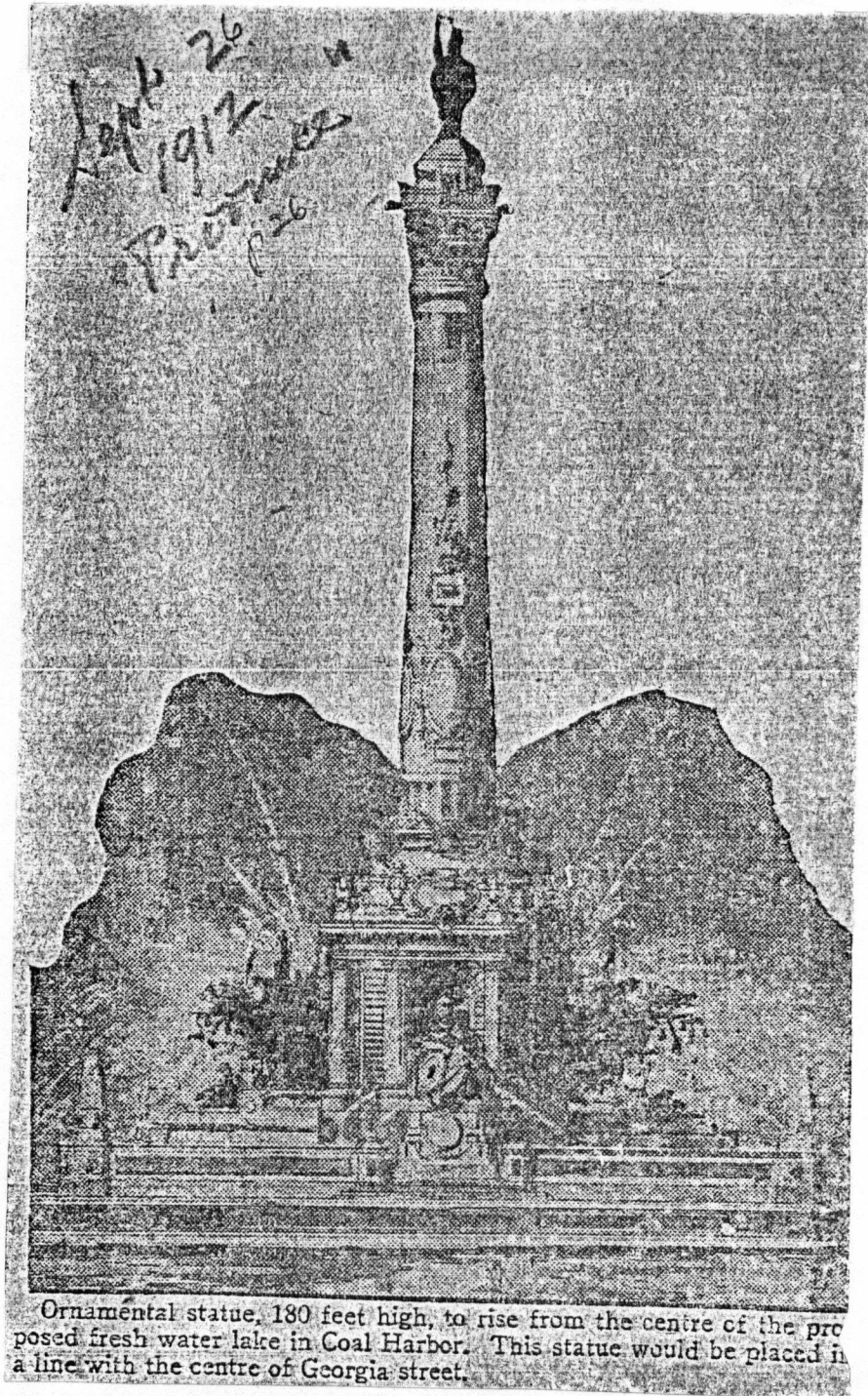


This represents the magnificent entrance to a proposed huge stadium planned to seat 40,000 people. Mr. Mawson plans to convert the upper end of Coal Harbor into a fresh water lake. To the southwest he would build a stadium, somewhat on the lines here suggested. Reference to the last page of this paper will show an outline plan of the layout of this section of the park as Mr. Mawson would make it over on a comprehensive scheme extending over many years. The stadium is shown as the semi-circular enclosure near the centre of the lower part of the plan on page 26.



Mr. Mawson proposes to have this building placed on a line with Georgia street across the proposed fresh water lake. It would serve as a natural history museum for British Columbia for all time, he says.

ILLUSTRATION 7 MAWSON'S PLAN FOR STADIUM AND MUSEUM IN COAL HARBOUR. VANCOUVER CITY ARCHIVES



Ornamental statue, 180 feet high, to rise from the centre of the proposed fresh water lake in Coal Harbor. This statue would be placed in a line with the centre of Georgia street.

ILLUSTRATION 8 MAWSON'S PLAN FOR OBLISK AT ENTRANCE TO STANLEY PARK.

VANCOUVER CITY ARCHIVES

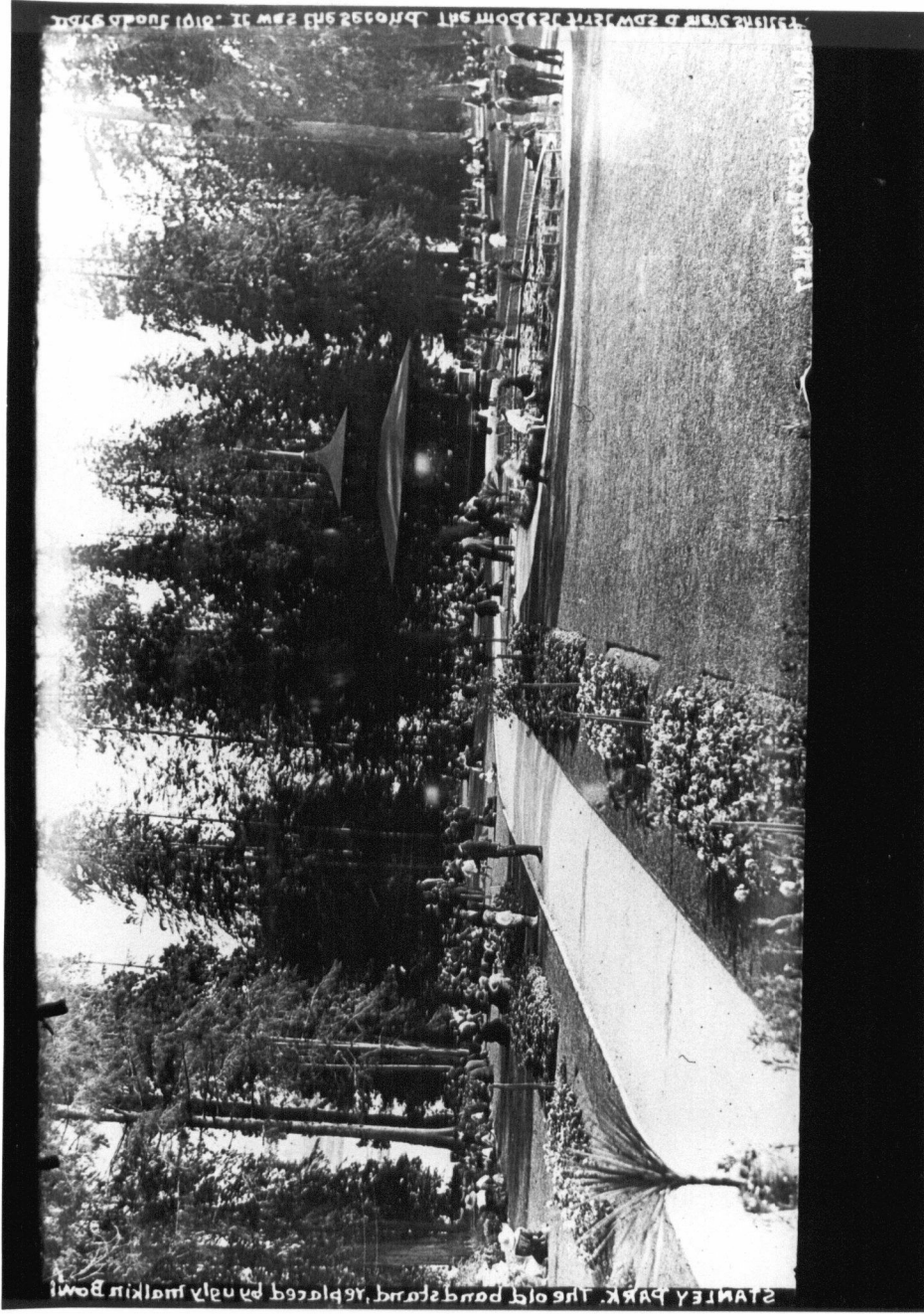


ILLUSTRATION 9 FORMAL GARDENS AT MALKIN BOWL 1916.
VANCOUVER CITY ARCHIVES

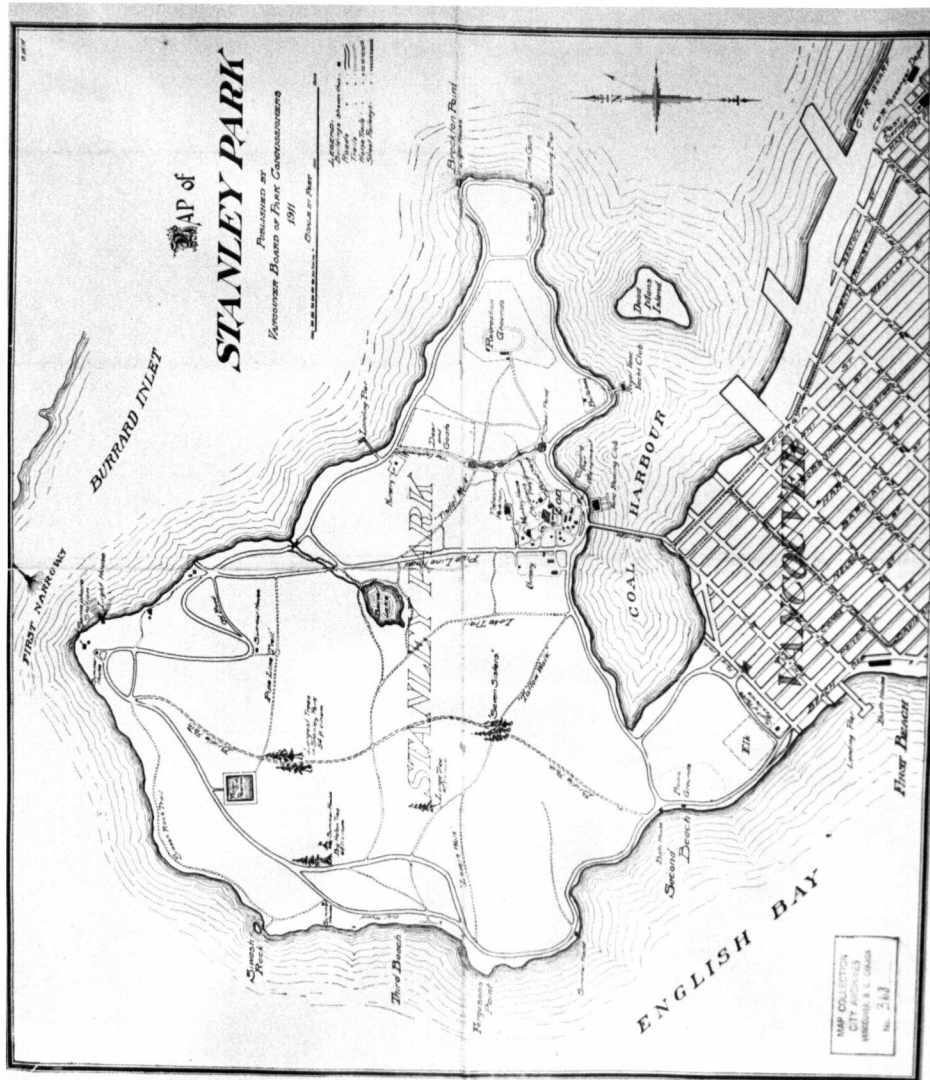


ILLUSTRATION 10 STANLEY PARK 1911. VANCOUVER CITY ARCHIVES



ILLUSTRATION 12 EXHIBITION BUILDING, HASTINGS PARK 1910.
VANCOUVER CITY ARCHIVES

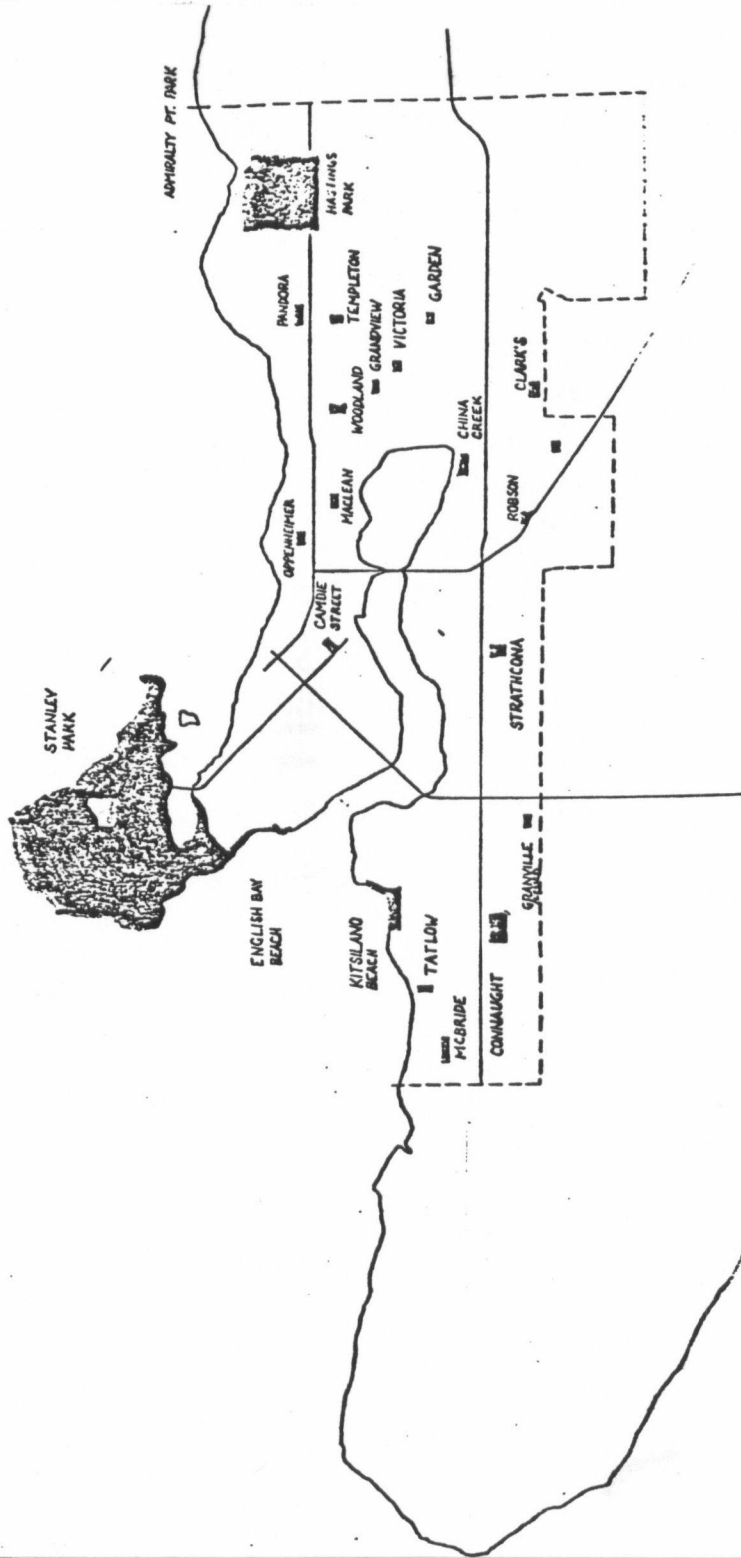
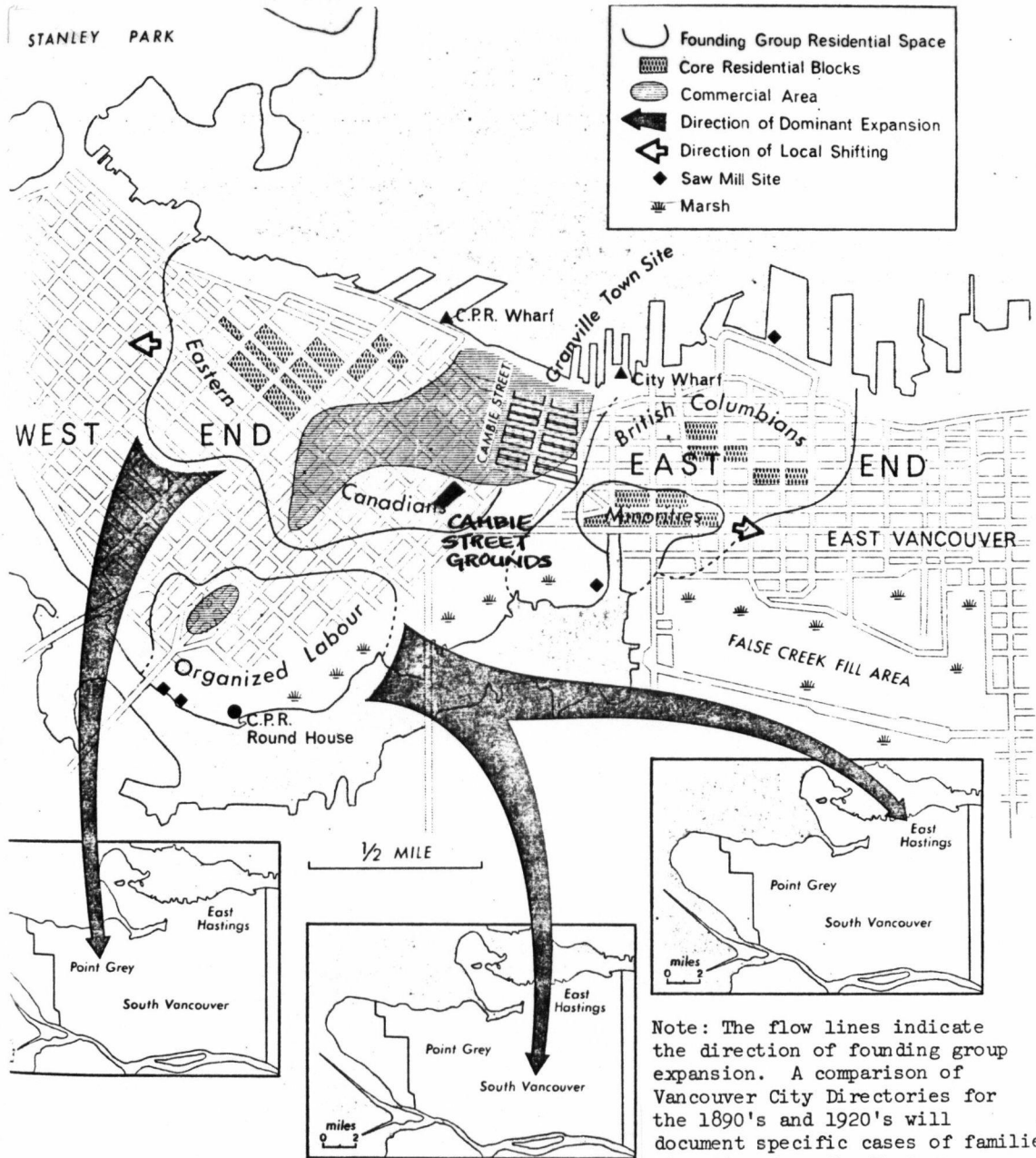


ILLUSTRATION 4 VANCOUVER PARK SYSTEM 1913.
VANCOUVER CITY ARCHIVES



Note: The flow lines indicate the direction of founding group expansion. A comparison of Vancouver City Directories for the 1890's and 1920's will document specific cases of families migrating from the Eastern Canadian and Organized Labour areas to Point Grey and South Vancouver respectively.

MAP 5 VANCOUVER PENINSULA 1890:
Residential Spaces of Founding Groups

Sources: Kerr 1943 and Holiday Supplement to Vancouver Daily and Weekly World 1890

Base map from National Topographic Series: 1:25000 sheets 92G/6a and /6b. A.S.E., R.C.E. 1961

ILLUSTRATION 15 CAMBIE STREET GROUNDS
VANCOUVER PENINSULA 1890.
VANCOUVER CITY ARCHIVES

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Development of the Public Park

The heritage of the North American public park is deeply rooted in the Englishman's traditional love of the rural countryside. The British never completely accepted the very formal garden designs modelled on Renaissance garden art, and when the literary and artistic leaders began to advocate the virtues of man and nature in the 18th century, the landscape designers began to create extremely naturalistic landscapes for their clients. Capability Brown and his development of the "Picturesque Landscape" was the extreme example of this love of nature. His landscapes were soft with rounded shapes in a sweeping setting which were almost completely devoid of colour except for variations of green. Modern golf courses are rather like Picturesque Landscapes. Claudius Loudon, in the early 19th century developed the British landscape one step further. He recognized the British desire for privacy, and thus created gardens with smaller scaled sections displaying specific exotic plant specimens available because of the recent increase in world travel. It was largely the Gardenesque design style, with some noticeable Picturesque characteristics, that was used for the Victorian parks in Britain during the 19th century.

The first public parks in England resulted from the negative effects of the industrial revolution. The desire to alleviate bad living conditions together with the established natural landscape design tradition produced a naturalistic public park in which one would "retreat" to nature. This "escapist" theme was passed across the Atlantic to the Americans, where it was also used to justify the existence of urban public parks. The early American urban park

like the English park, "seemed to be a result of and not a solution to civic ills".¹

In Paris, the first parks designed for the public were created when Napoleon III and Georges Haussmann completely redesigned the central urban structure of Paris in the early 19th century. They were not created as a reaction to industrialization (which had not, as yet, occurred in Paris), but as an attempt to rejuvenate the city and were used to link green corridors and important focal points in the city. The Parisians have always been very urbane people, and their love of Paris and their support of public open spaces has resulted in a park system that is a very positive and essential part of the urban structure. Although the Bois de Boulogne, the Bois de Vincennes, and the other former parks of the nobility were redesigned at this time along the English model at the specific request of the Emperor, the overall park system has obvious formal elements that make it very distinctive from the British open space system. The French sense of civic pride and flair for formality surfaced in the United States at the end of the 19th century in the Beaux Arts inspired City Beautiful Movement. Although the movement did not change the overall design of public parks in the U.S., it influenced the design of the entrance to many parks and the manner in which parks were presented as an important component of the urban fabric.

Andrew Jackson Downing and Fredrick Law Olmsted were tremendously important in the development of urban parks in the U.S. because they chose to develop their parks on the British natural landscape model. Olmsted was successful in adapting these principles to the American landscape, but his writings on his social theory expressed the intent to create a park where the population could "escape to". Perhaps the most significant American

contribution to the public park movement was the establishment of park systems in the last part of the 19th century. Olmsted and his followers began to design park systems in cities from the east to west coast which attempted to integrate green space into the city structure while taking advantage of the natural topographic features.

The Canadian case is somewhat different. While Canadian urban parks largely reflect the British natural landscape heritage, they were not created as a response to unsatisfactory living conditions in the cities. They were usually parcels of land granted from the federal government which were formerly defence posts or training grounds for the military. Canadians did not seem to hire "experts" to design parks and certainly did not have a "Fredrick Law Olmsted" who affected the design of public parks across the country.

Vancouver's Park Landscape to 1913

In 1914, Vancouver had a growing park system that consisted of the jewel, Stanley Park, various neighbourhood parks and recreation grounds, and the public bathing beaches. By this time the Park Board was no longer involved in the management of Hastings Park, because its use as a picnic ground and promenade was pre-empted by the exhibition and racing activities of the Exhibition Association.

The basic design features of Stanley Park were developed in the initial years between 1886 and 1900. These characteristics included the park drive running around the periphery of the park; the walking trails through the heart of the park; the Brockton Point Athletic Fields; the relatively formal entrance to the park with the nearby zoo; and the Second Beach bathing area.

During the boom years of 1900 to 1913, these features were further developed in the style that was reflective of the current attitudes held by the influential citizens of Vancouver at that time. Because both the Park Board and City Council were dominated by businessmen, the development of the park system was not only a concern for the needs of the community, but was a practical, economic and political solution as well.

The acquisition and development of the neighbourhood parks was usually the result of lobbying by the ward ratepayers. Similarly, the creation of supervised children's playgrounds in the 1920's and the development of Second, English Bay and Kitsilano Beaches in the early 1900's happened only after particular groups provided the impetus for these facilities.

It appears that although Vancouver had a growing park system that was blessed with the possession of magnificent natural features, this system was not the result of an extraordinary appreciation of the value of parkland or the result of a well formulated policy or design scheme. However, the Vancouver park system, by and large, experienced very favourable incremental development that was based on the idea that the natural design style was best suited to public parks. These natural landscapes were later adaptable to more active recreational pursuits such as children's playground facilities, tennis courts, and ball fields.

Attitudes

The early development of Vancouver's public park system was influenced by the attitudes held by the people living in the city at that time. As in America, the pioneer instinct had encouraged the "mania for private property"² and the principle of individualism and capitalism. Because the

City fathers saw parks as a means and opportunity for promoting their "great city", they were eager to "acquire" land. The simple acquisition of land was a fundamental goal of the Park Board that plagued its operation for many years. In the city records there is no evidence that there was any thought given to the design of the parkland that was acquired, or to the specific function that the parkland was to serve. At the opening speeches for Stanley Park, Mayor Oppenheimer expressed the desire to unite art with nature in Stanley Park, but it is doubtful that the Mayor had a clear conception of what he considered art, or what he wanted in the way of design for the park. The citizens of Vancouver also supported this desire for the acquisition of land for park purposes, by passing almost all plebiscites put before them.

The acquisition of Stanley Park did not come out of a need or reaction to unfavourable living conditions, as in some British and American cities. It did not benefit from an established landscape design style. It was a former military reserve that, like other Canadian city parks, was leased to the city to be used as a public park. The first City Council did not acquire the site because of a determined policy to acquire land of natural magnificence. It acquired Stanley Park, because it happened to be a site which belonged to the Dominion Government, and was a site that could not be used for commercial or development purposes.

Hastings Park, Clark's Park and many of the other parks in Vancouver's early park system were also arbitrarily acquired. With the exception of the beach parks, these sites were conveniently available, and the character and function of the parks were developed long after their acquisition.

Influences

Many of the design ideas and concepts for the development of Vancouver's parks were a result of the experience and values held by people living in Vancouver who had varying national backgrounds. In the initial years of the Vancouver park system (1886 - 1900) the local pioneers and the people from Eastern Canada made up the majority of the population, thus perhaps explaining the absence of a well formulated parks policy and the absence of a landscape design for Stanley Park. These people obviously did not feel the need for an elaborately designed park on the English natural landscape style, when the small city was completely surrounded by wilderness.

The people from Eastern Canada had Victorian middle class attitudes and enjoyed promenading and carriage riding. The peripheral park drive therefore, was a logical first development in the park. The British population, although small in the 1880's, also had an influence because the cricket pitch at Brockton Point was one of the first cleared areas in the park. Had people from Quebec migrated to Vancouver in the initial years, there may have been some French influences on the Vancouver park landscape.

After the depressed 1890's, the economy once again boomed in Vancouver. There was an influx of people from many countries, but the majority were those from the British Isles and the United States.

In Vancouver's early history the city developed a residential sector pattern much like other British Victorian cities. The British population in Vancouver was divided into the working class British and the middle class "British Canada",³ and each sector made a contribution toward Vancouver's

public parks. The working class possessed a definite set of social beliefs that were often expressed through social organizations and political action -- specifically through the Vancouver Trades and Labour Association. The working class British were always pushing for active recreation space, and although their requests were often ignored, they kept up a constant pressure that was eventually effective in the creation of active game areas within the parks.

The British middle class were also interested in recreation, and were originally responsible for the development of the Brockton Point athletic fields. (Cricket had been a gentlemen's game for centuries). The British also set a fine example for the rest of Vancouver with their meticulous and colourful private gardens. Flower beds and shrubbery in the Gardenesque style gradually became more and more plentiful and obvious at the entrance to Stanley Park. Today, the formal flower gardens are a popular part of Stanley Park just as they are in Queen Elizabeth Park, Van Dusen Gardens, and other city parks.

The promenading areas in Stanley Park, Jericho Park, and some of the beach parks were a British influence. Many of these promenades were developed early in Vancouver's history, such as the first trails cut in Stanley Park, and the promenade was still popular in the 20th century with areas like the boardwalk at Kitsilano Beach. The development of Vancouver's bathing beaches was also a British influence.

The greatest influence that the British experience had on Vancouver's parks, and particularly Stanley Park, was a respect for that which is natural. The love of a natural heritage is a principle that the British passed

along to Canadians, and this bias was to emerge on numerous occasions in Vancouver when her citizens vehemently opposed threats to the natural integrity of Stanley Park.

At the turn of the century, there emerged some American influences on Vancouver's park landscape and these influences grew as the century unfolded. The creation of an elected Park Board in Vancouver was an American influence. Although the Park Board budget was handed down annually from the City Council, it encouraged more autonomy within the Park Board and enabled a dedicated person like Mr. Ferguson who had a great interest in parks, to give all his spare time to the development of Stanley Park.

Like the Americans, Vancouverites were involved in the push for private enterprise, and the Park Board's domination by businessmen ensured that the tourist dollar was a strong consideration in the development of Stanley Park. The hard surfacing of the peripheral park drive in 1911, for example, enabled the establishment of a motorized bus service to take tourists through the park.

The incremental development of Hastings Park as an exhibition ground was an American influence, and Vancouver was quickly absorbed into the Pacific Northwest Fair circuit. The design and function of the grounds were dictated by American examples.

The advent of the City Beautiful movement in Vancouver brought numerous design elements that had originated in the ideas presented at the 1893 Chicago World's Columbia Exposition. Thomas Mawson's plan for the Head of Coal Harbour was an ambitious City Beautiful design scheme and although it

was finally rejected, elements such as the geometric flower beds and covered bandstand at the Malkin Bowl area in 1915, are part of that legacy. Some of the areas at the Hastings Exhibition grounds in 1915 also displayed the influences of City Beautiful thought.

The movement for supervised children's playgrounds also originated at the Chicago World's Fair. It was a movement that crossed the continent at the turn of the century although the fruits of this movement were not evident in Vancouver until the 1920's.

Vancouver's proximity to the American West Coast was very influential and was increasingly reflected on the landscape. The California bungalow style home offered a less formal way of living with indoor-outdoor rooms, (verandahs) and scores of these were built in the early part of the century, particularly in Kitsilano.⁴ The City Clerk's correspondence reveals that the Vancouver Park Board was in frequent contact with West Coast cities. They wrote to Bellingham to confer on the best strain of grass for a Northwest park; they modelled the Park Board's first Annual Report in 1911 on Seattle's example; and based on the success of the rose gardens in Portland, expressed the desire to make Vancouver the "Rose Capital of Canada."⁵ There is little evidence of any architectural influences from Eastern Canada⁶ and the Park Board's correspondence revealed minimal contact with Eastern Canadian Park authorities.

The Community

Citizen participation in Vancouver is not a phenomenon that developed in the middle of the 20th century. It was also a feature of the 1890's when the first threat to Stanley Park induced a fierce battle between industrialists and conservationists and resulted in all the established groups

and organizations in Vancouver publically supporting one side or the other.

When Thomas Mawson's design for the Head of Coal Harbour was presented and approved by the Park Board in 1912, numerous groups again expressed their opposition to the threat to the naturalness of the park. It is interesting that the Vancouver City Beautiful Association was not a group advocating the American City Beautiful design elements, but a group advocating the "beautification of the city", and in their minds Stanley Park was best represented by its natural features. This group was instrumental in preventing Mawson's plan from being carried out. In 1918, the Park Board officially adopted a policy specifying that all future development in the Park was to enhance its natural dignity.

Neighbourhood ratepayers groups were also influential in the design of neighbourhood parks. The Kitsilano Improvement Association was instrumental in the expansion of Kitsilano Beach and later had a great deal to say in the design and function of Kits Beach. Similarly, the ~~Mount Pleasant and Grandview~~ ratepayers petitioned the Board for improvements to Clark's Park and the acquisition of Victoria Park in Grandview. The ward system was very conducive to active citizen participation in early Vancouver and for political reasons, organized ratepayers seemed to carry considerable weight with the City Council.

Various non-political clubs were also able to add to the Vancouver park landscape. The Brockton Point Athletic Association developed the athletic grounds at Brockton Point in the late 1800's; the B.C. Jockey Club developed horse racing at Hastings Park; the Juvenile Protection Agency and later the Gyro Club advocated the provision of supervised children's playgrounds; and after the First World War, the Kiwanis club provided the Stanley Park Rose

Garden. These groups as well as the local citizens groups were an important part of public involvement in the development of Vancouver's park system.

Although there were flaws in the Vancouver park system, the citizens of Vancouver were tremendously proud of their parks. Tourist brochures inevitably concentrated on the magnificence of Stanley Park, and today if one were to examine a display of postcards in a Vancouver shop, a large percentage of them would undoubtedly be of Stanley Park. Local citizens perceive the park as being one of the City's finest assets. Eric Nicol sums up the attitude that the people of Vancouver have, whether consciously, or unconsciously, towards Stanley Park.

"Unlike London's royal parks, or the sporty ambiance of the Bois de Boulogne, Stanley Park means to the Vancouverite, a permanent preserve of wilderness and the virtues of le sauvage heureux de bon. Older cities have long since forgotten the natural state of innocence that man's habitation expunged. Vancouver holds it in trust, zealously, within the nine-mile perimeter of "the Park". Vancouver's citizens half expect their daughters to be violated, but he who lays a rapacious hand on the Park is begging for violent avenging."⁷

FOOTNOTES

1 Jere Stuart French, Urban Green, City Parks of the Western World (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publ. Co., 1973), p. 21.

2 Ibid., p. 5.

3 Edward Gibson, "The Impact of Social Belief on Landscape Change: A Geographical Study of Vancouver" (Ph.D. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1971), p. 118.

4 Deryk Holdsworth, "House and Home in Vancouver: Images of West Coast Urbanism, 1886-1929", in The Canadian City: Essays in Urban History, ed. G. Stelter and A. Artibise (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1977), p. 195.

5 William McKee, "The History of the Vancouver Park System 1886 - 1929" (Masters Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1976), pp. 132-133.

6 The Roger's Sugar Refinery, built in the late 1800's, is a magnificent example of British Victorian Industrial architecture which was also used in Eastern Canada. Rogers however, was an American who grew up in New York and New Orleans, and because he played a large part in the design of his refinery, it is likely that the influence was British, by way of the United States.

7 Eric Nicol, Eric Nicol's Vancouver (Vancouver Doubleday Canada Ltd: 1970), p. 78.

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