



# Cultural Landscape Report Lowell Memorial Park

Within the Charles River Reservation



**August 2014**

---

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation  
Bureau of Planning and Resource Protection  
Office of Cultural Resources



Deval L. Patrick, Governor

Maeve Vallely Bartlett, Secretary, Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

John P. Murray, Commissioner, Department of Conservation and Recreation

Priscilla Geigis, Director, DCR MassParks

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), and agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA), oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, dams and parkways. The agency's mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural and recreational resources for the well-being of all. To learn more about DCR, our facilities and our programs, please visit us at [www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/](http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/). Contact us at [mass.parks@state.ma.us](mailto:mass.parks@state.ma.us), call 617-626-1250, or write to DCR, 251 Causeway Street, Boston, MA 02114.

This report was developed through the DCR Bureau of Planning and Resource Protection, Office of Cultural Resources.

Joe Orfant, Chief, Bureau of Planning and Resource Protection

Patrice Kish, Director, Office of Cultural Resources

Author: Wendy Pearl, Office of Cultural Resources

Thanks to the DCR Archives, DCR Plans Archives, the Cambridge Historical Commission, and the National Parks Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historical Site for their assistance preparing this report.

***On the cover: Lowell Memorial Park and Fresh Pond Parkway c.1910 (courtesy DCR Archives)***

# Table of Contents

<b>Abstract</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
Management Summary	7
MassParks	7
Office of Cultural Resources	7
DCR/OCR Policy to protect Archaeological and Cultural Resources	8
Scope and Methodology	8
Purpose of the Plan	8
Study Boundaries	8
Historical Overview	9
Summary of Findings	9
Recommended Historic Contexts and Periods of Significance	10
Treatment Recommendations	11
<b>Part 1 – Site History, Existing Conditions, Analysis &amp; Evaluation</b>	<b>13</b>
Site History	13
Elmwood (1767-1818)	13
Lowell Estate (1818-1898)	13
Lowell Memorial Park (1898-present)	15
Park Creation: The Olmsted Brothers Plan	16
Fresh Pond Parkway Development: The Shurcliff and Merrill Plan	21
Existing Conditions	23
Land Use	23
Vegetation	24
Views	25
Circulation	26
Structures and Site Amenities	26
Analysis and Evaluation	28
Integrity	28
Current Designations	28
Statement of Significance	29
Potential New Areas of Significance	29
Contributing Resources	31
<b>Part 2 – Treatment</b>	<b>32</b>
Preservation Treatment	32
Recommended Treatment	33
Priority Recommendations	33
Interpretation	35
Implementation	36
Short Term Project – Wall and Posts	36
Partnership	38
Regulatory Process	38
<b>Part 3 – Record of Treatment</b>	<b>39</b>

<b>References</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>43</b>
Olmsted Brothers Planting List	43
DCR Cultural Resource Management Policy	45
Best Management Practices	55
Graffiti Removal for Historic Properties	55
Historic Landscapes – Built Features	57
Historic Landscapes – Vegetation	61

## **Abstract**

Lowell Memorial Park is one of the Department of Conservation and Recreation's (DCR) most significant historic landscapes, but its location and size have diminished its value amid the sprawling system of Massachusetts parks within metropolitan Boston and beyond. Public access is limited, as the 3.5 acre park is divided by the four-lane, divided Fresh Pond Parkway, and there is no visitor parking or on street parking nearby. Despite its historic associations with pre-Revolutionary War Cambridge, American politics and the life and writings of American poet James Russell Lowell, Lowell Memorial Park has been managed as a component of the Fresh Pond Parkway and the Charles River Reservation. The park's listing as a National Historic Landmark (as part of Elmwood), its design by the noted Olmsted Brothers, and its local historic designations warrant a higher level of preservation and management.

In 2012 a group of neighbors contacted DCR about the condition of Lowell Memorial Park, expressing concern over the deteriorating brick walls, the health of trees, damaged benches, and safe use. This public interest spurred DCR to revisit the management of the park. At a public listening session in fall 2012 DCR committed to preparing a Cultural Landscape Report. The CLR is meant to document the history and existing conditions of the park and prioritize recommendations for preservation. The CLR will be a tool for DCR's staff, as well as a guide for public understanding of DCR's management intent.

In winter 2013/4 DCR engaged the architecture/engineering firm of Simpson Gumpertz & Heger Inc. to assess the condition of the historic walls. The same firm is developing plans and specifications for the repair of the walls, which will enable DCR to solicit bids on the project once a funding source is identified. DCR's arborist has also assessed the condition of the ancient maple tree at the center of the park. The results of those assessments have informed this report.

DCR looks forward to using this Cultural Landscape Report as a tool for continued public education, coordinated support, and good stewardship of Lowell Memorial Park.



# Introduction

## Management Summary

### DCR Mission

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is steward of one of the largest state parks systems in the country. Its 450,000 acres is made up of forests, parks, greenways, historic sites and landscapes, seashores, lakes, ponds, reservoirs and watersheds. The protection of cultural resources is part of DCR's core mission:

**To protect, promote and enhance our common wealth  
of natural, cultural and recreational resources for the well-being of all.**

DCR achieves this mission through planning and resource protection, project implementation, maintenance, public education, and compliance with state and federal historic preservation laws. Housed within DCR's Bureau of Planning and Resource Protection, the Office of Cultural Resources provides direct support to operations staff and other bureaus to support the agency's mission.

### MassParks Management Structure

The DCR Division of State Parks and Recreation, known as MassParks, maintains nearly 300,000 acres of the state's forests, beaches, mountains, ponds, riverbanks, trails, and parks across the Commonwealth. The system is organized under five Regions, which are then divided into Districts, and further delineated into Complexes. The Field Operations Team Leader is responsible for the day-to-day management and operation of the facilities within the Complex.

Lowell Memorial Park is located in the DCR Boston Region which contains three districts and six complexes. The park is part of the Charles Complex, one of three complexes within the Rivers District. The Charles Complex includes multiple parks, playgrounds and parkways along the Charles River in Cambridge, Boston and Watertown from the BU Bridge westward to the Waltham line. The District Headquarters is located on North Point Boulevard in Cambridge about 4 miles from Lowell Memorial Park.

### Office of Cultural Resources

The Office of Cultural Resources (OCR) preserves the cultural heritage of Massachusetts through stewardship of the Department of Conservation and Recreation's historic buildings, structures, landscapes, archaeological sites, and archival resources; through training, public education, and advocacy; and through the development of innovative tools for protecting historic landscapes. OCR supports the Division of State Parks and other bureaus and offices.

The OCR staff provides expertise, technical assistance, and project management skills in landscape preservation, historic preservation planning, archaeology, archival records management, and compliance with local, state and federal historic preservation laws. In addition to leading OCR initiatives

#### **Who's In Charge?**

Day-to-day management of Lowell Memorial Park is carried out by staff of the Charles Complex, under the direction of the Field Operation Team (FOT) Leader.

#### **Charles Complex**

Steve Cyr, FOT Leader  
[Stephen.cyr@state.ma.us](mailto:Stephen.cyr@state.ma.us)  
617-626-1058 x 250

#### **Rivers District**

Steve Cyr, Acting District Manager  
[Stephen.cyr@state.ma.us](mailto:Stephen.cyr@state.ma.us)  
617-626-1058 x 250

#### **Boston Region**

Nick Gove, Regional Director  
[nicholas.gove@state.ma.us](mailto:nicholas.gove@state.ma.us)  
617-727-5290

and programs, OCR staff directly support activities undertaken by other bureaus and divisions within DCR.

### **DCR/OCR Policy to protect Archaeological and Cultural Resources**

Activities and capital improvements at Lowell Memorial Park fall under the DCR policy for the management of cultural resources, and most proposed work will be reviewed by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. A full copy of the DCR Cultural Resource policy is included in Appendix A of this report, but it is also summarized here.

*The Department of Conservation and Recreation shall provide for the stewardship of all known and potential cultural resources on DCR property through sensitive resource management and planning and compliance with local, state, and federal historic preservation regulations. DCR actions and activities shall promote and foster the preservation, protection, and appreciation of these resources.*

The Office of Cultural Resources serves as the liaison with the Massachusetts Historical Commission, the State Historic Preservation Office responsible for administering regulatory review of state projects in accordance with MGL Ch.9 ss 26-27c and federal review of federally funded or permitted projects in accordance with Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act of 1966. OCR coordinates the submission of Project Notification Forms for all projects funded, approved, or permitted by DCR, and advises and directs the agency on measures to avoid, minimize or mitigate the impacts of projects on cultural and archaeological resources. OCR staff includes a qualified archaeologist who can also undertake limited surveys under a General Archaeological Permit.

OCR maintains a Cultural Resource Inventory (CRI) to support the preservation and management of cultural resources in the DCR park system. The CRI is supplemented from time to time through direct fieldwork, survey and research, and reports and documents prepared by consultants under contract with DCR or its partners.

### **Scope and Methodology**

#### **Purpose of the plan**

DCR is undertaking this Cultural Landscape Report for Lowell Memorial Park as part of its mission to protect to its cultural resources. The CLR format allows DCR and its partners to achieve a number of additional goals:

- Document the evolution of Lowell Memorial Park and extant historic features
- Identify preservation issues and priorities
- Outline an appropriate preservation treatment
- Prioritize recommendations

#### **Study Boundaries**

Lowell Memorial Park is a 3.5 acre park located along the Fresh Pond Parkway. Flanked by residential development to the east and west, the park is bounded by Brattle Street to the north and Mount Auburn Street to the south. Fresh Pond Parkway bisects the park into two sections. The northern section is about 2 acres, and the southern section is 1+ acres.

The park is located within a historic residential area of Cambridge known as Tory Row. Named after its pre-Revolutionary, British-sympathizing residents, Tory Row includes many prominent historic properties, including the Longfellow House Washington's Headquarters , a National Historic Site. The

area is also a local historic district, the Old Cambridge Historic District. Lowell Memorial Park is one of several significant historic designed landscapes in the area - Mount Auburn Cemetery (1841), Fresh Pond Reservation (1892), Longfellow Park (1887), Fresh Pond Parkway (1898) and the parks of the Metropolitan Parks System of Greater Boston, Charles River Reservation (1893-1905).

Lowell Memorial Park, with its brick and limestone entry pillars, defines the “gateway” to Fresh Pond Parkway which runs from Memorial Drive near the Eliot Bridge to its intersection with Alewife Brook Parkway (DCR) in the vicinity of Fresh Pond Reservation (City of Cambridge). The parkway divides the park into two parcels. So-called “Big Lowell” is roughly 2 acres and is located adjacent to the historic Elmwood house and the Brattle Street “Tory Row” neighborhood. Little Lowell is about a 1-acre triangle formed by Fresh Pond Parkway and Mount Auburn Street.

### Historical Overview

Lowell Memorial Park is a small park with a big history. The property is a National Historic Landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Elmwood property at 33 Elmwood Avenue. The property is famed for the Oliver-Gerry-Lowell House, a 1767 Georgian style house built by English sympathizers in the part of Cambridge that became known as “Tory Row.” Oliver, who served as Lieutenant Governor under the Crown, was forced to resign and later fled the country when the American Revolution began. During the war, the 100-acre property and house were used by George Washington’s Continental Army, and then sold to Andrew Cabot in 1779. Elbridge Gerry, signer of the Declaration of Independence and Vice President under James Madison, occupied Elmwood from 1784-1814. The Lowell family bought the property from Gerry’s heirs in 1818.

James Russell Lowell was born at Elmwood in 1819 and became a noted writer, poet and diplomat. Lowell and his Brattle Street neighbor Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, cultivated a new culture of American poetry, centered in Cambridge. Both were members of the Fireside Poets, a group of 19th-century American poets from New England whose popularity rivaled that of British poets, both at home and abroad. In addition to Longfellow and Lowell, the group included William Cullen Bryant, John Greenleaf Whittier, and Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.

When James Russell Lowell died in 1891, there was a local movement to save the only undeveloped parcel of his former estate and to create a memorial park. Funds were raised through private subscription, and the Metropolitan Parks Commission paid one third of the cost. The property was transferred to the MPC in 1898 and Lowell Memorial Park became the first parkland of the new Fresh Pond Parkway (opened 1900). The park was laid out by the notable Olmsted Brothers in 1906 and later redesigned by Shurcliff & Merrill in the late 1950s.

The northern section of Lowell Memorial Park is a National Historic Landmark, on the National Register of Historic Places, and within the Old Cambridge Historic District (a Local Historic District). Fresh Pond Parkway is also listed on the National Register as part of the Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston. The southern portion of the park has no historic designations.

### **Summary of Findings**

Although Lowell Memorial Park has several historic designations, the record does not fully reflect the park’s historic significance. Preservation practice has evolved significantly since the documentation of the property was completed in 1967-1975, expanding options for additional historic contexts and periods of significance. For example, the Elmwood National Historic Landmark nomination refers to the parkland as intact setting for the Elmwood House. There is no note of its design by the Olmsted Brothers,

the most famous landscape architecture firm in the country. Even recent documentation – the National Register nomination for Fresh Pond Parkway in 2005 – focused exclusively on the road profile and did not list the park as a character-defining feature, even though the parcel was acquired specifically for parkway construction.



1922 City of Cambridge map showing Lowell Memorial Park in relation to the Charles River, Fresh Pond and Mount Auburn Cemetery (courtesy of the Norman B. Leventhal Map Center at Boston Public Library)

#### Recommended Historic Contexts and Periods of Significance

This CLR documents new historic contexts and periods of significance for Lowell Memorial Park. The design of the park and its addition to the Metropolitan Parks System is significant. James Russell Lowell died shortly before the Metropolitan Parks Commission (MPC) was created to build a regional park system, the first in the country. From its establishment in 1893, the system quickly grew to include Blue Hills Reservation, Middlesex Fells, Revere Beach and the Charles River Basin. Both founder and consulting architect to MPC, Charles Eliot aimed to protect landscapes of unique character and connect them with verdant parkways. Eliot died in 1897, but his vision was realized. Lowell Memorial Park became the first parcel acquired for the creation of Fresh Pond Parkway in 1898. Under the MPC the park was laid out by the Olmsted Brothers and retains a high degree of integrity from the 1906 design. Existing documentation completely overlooks the MPC context and the area of significance as an intact example of a master designer.

Recognizing these new areas of significance would require establishing a new period of significance for the property. The current documentation identifies the period as 18<sup>th</sup> century and 19<sup>th</sup> century with specific dates of 1767 and 1819-1891. A revised nomination would likely extend this period into the 20<sup>th</sup> century to encompass the efforts to protect the property (1896-1898), its addition to the Metropolitan Park System of greater Boston (1898 under the Metropolitan Parks Commission) and its original design by the Olmsted Brothers (1906). As a parcel associated with the Fresh Pond Parkway, Lowell Memorial Park may also be considered significant through 1956, the end of the parkway era and the beginning of a period of major alterations based on new highway standards.

The National Register nomination for Fresh Pond Parkway could also be amended, as it did not include any of the land at Lowell Memorial Park as a contributing feature. The park was the first land purchased for the parkway, and it is the historic gateway for the parkway. As such, the boundary for Fresh Pond Parkway should extend around both parcels of Lowell Memorial Park, and the park should be noted as a contributing feature. The nomination should also include the 1933 marker for Elmwood as a contributing feature.

#### Treatment recommendations

Lowell Memorial Park has a long history of association with the Lowell family home Elmwood, and was protected as a National Historical Landmark in 1966 as the last remaining parcel of the former 100 acre Elmwood property. However, the park attained its current character when it was preserved as a memorial to James Russell Lowell through popular subscription and by the Commonwealth in 1898. That memorial landscape was established through the work of the Olmsted Brothers 1904-1906 for the Metropolitan Parks Commission. Since that time, the park has retained much of the character of the Olmsted design and should be preserved as an example of their work and as an intact part of the original Fresh Pond Parkway layout.

The recommended treatment for Lowell Memorial Park is *rehabilitation*, which allows for integration of modern park amenities within a historic landscape. The rehabilitation should include a program to restore the well-documented planting plan and plant palette of the Olmsted Brothers design.



# Part 1 - Site History, Existing Conditions, Analysis and Evaluation

## Site History

Lowell Memorial Park history is linked to that of the “Elmwood” property at 33 Elmwood Avenue, both of which have a rich and varied history. The park was preserved as the last undeveloped land of the Elmwood estate and became the gateway to the Fresh Pond Parkway. The property is associated with the American Revolution and American politics, a prominent American poet and diplomat, and the development of the nation’s first regional park system. Lowell Park is also a landscape designed by the renowned Olmsted firm (Olmsted Brothers).

### Elmwood (1767-1818)

The Elmwood house was built in 1767 by Thomas Oliver (1733/4-1815) who owned nearly 100 acres in an area known as “Tory Row,” named for the wealthy British sympathizers who settled there. In 1774 Oliver served as the last Royal Lieutenant Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1774. Oliver’s tenure at Elmwood was short lived, though. In September of 1774 Oliver intervened when an angry mob was headed toward Boston, into a sure confrontation with British regulars. He stalled the armed march, but was later surrounded at Elmwood by thousands of people demanding his resignation from office. Oliver renounced his position and left the property for Boston, and by 1776 he was settled in England. During the American Revolution the property was used as a hospital by Washington’s army, and then sold in 1779 to Andrew Cabot, a Salem merchant.



In 1933 a simple granite marker was erected at the corner of Fresh Pond Parkway and Elmwood Avenue to commemorate Lowell’s home and its rich history.

Another notable era in Elmwood’s history began in 1787 when Cabot sold the property to Elbridge Gerry (1744-1814). Gerry was an early advocate of American independence, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and a delegate to the Continental Congress. He served as in the US Congress from 1789-1793, and later as Governor of Massachusetts. As Governor, Gerry proposed a salamander-shaped district to ensure Republicans would retain control over the state. Drawing odd redistricting boundaries for political benefit was termed “Gerrymandering” after Governor Gerry. After losing re-election in 1812, Gerry was nominated and served as Vice President under James Madison, taking the oath of office at Elmwood in March 1813. He died in Washington, D.C. the next year.

### Lowell Estate (1818-1891)

Reverend Charles Russell Lowell, Sr. (1781-1861) purchased Elmwood from Elbridge Gerry’s descendants in 1818. Lowell was pastor of the West Congregational Church in Boston. His son, James Russell Lowell (1819-1891) was born at Elmwood and became a noted writer, poet and diplomat.

Elmwood was the lifelong home of James Russell Lowell, although he spent many years abroad in various official posts. He was the Smith Professor of Modern Languages at Harvard from 1856-1872, while also editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* (1857-1861) where he was able to influence the direction of American literature. A noted writer, Lowell was a member of the “Fireside Poets,” a group of New

England poets who had a substantial national following and whose work was often read aloud by the family fireplace. The group included Lowell, William Cullen Bryant, John Greenleaf Whittier, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who lived nearby on Brattle Street.



Taken from 1877 City of Cambridge map by the Franklin View Company (Courtesy Norman B. Leventhal Map Center at the Boston Public Library)

James Russell Lowell wrote poetry and prose for many occasions. Lowell delivered “A Ode, Celebration of Introduction of Cochituate Water into Boston City” to a crowd of 100,000 gathered to witness the first water from Lake Cochituate flowing into the Frog Pond on the Common in October 1848. He published works against the Mexican War and spoke at a Harvard Commemoration to students lost in the Civil War. An abolitionist, he also used the power of the pen as Editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* to promote social causes. His anti-slavery poem “The Present Crisis” was published in 1845, but it influenced the modern civil rights movement, with Martin Luther King, Jr. quoting its verse frequently.

President Rutherford B. Hayes appointed Lowell Minister to Spain from 1877-1880 and then Ambassador to the Court of St. James in England from 1880-1885. During his travels abroad, Lowell sold several parcels of the estate, including western lots along Brattle Street. The 1877 City of Cambridge map shows at least three lots and eight structures on the “tip” of the triangle formed by Brattle Street and Mount Auburn Street. The same map also shows two buildings to the north east of the Lowell house.

To a Pine-tree (James Russell Lowell)

*Thou alone know'st the splendor of winter,  
Mid thy snow-silvered, hushed precipices,  
Hearing clogs of green ice groan and splinter,  
And then plunge down the muffled abysses  
In the quiet of midnight.*



Early (pre-1906) postcard of the southern section of Lowell Memorial Park (Courtesy Cambridge Historical Commission)

When James Russell Lowell died in 1891, there was a local movement to save the only undeveloped parcel of his former estate and to create a memorial park. Despite its location amid a growing residential neighborhood, the land that was to become the Lowell Memorial Park had a largely agricultural character at the turn-of-the-century. The triangular parcel to the west of the Elmwood home was bordered by Brattle Street to the north and Mount Auburn Street to the south. The northern part was relatively flat, mostly open meadow, with some fruit trees and hard woods on the northern edge, as well as a 30” maple in the center of the field. To the south, the land sloped toward Mount Auburn

Street, with a dense stand of pine trees in the southwest corner and hardwoods along the road edge. Pine trees, a subject of Lowell’s poetry, were common throughout the property, although in decline. The purchase price of \$35,000 was raised largely through private subscription, with the Metropolitan Parks Commission paying one third of the cost. The property was transferred to the MPC in 1898 and Lowell Memorial Park became the first parcel acquired for the Fresh Pond Parkway.



Northern section of Lowell Memorial Park from Olmsted firm Job # 01514 photo album (Courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site)

### Lowell Memorial Park (1898-present)

Sylvester Baxter (1850-1927) and landscape architect Charles Eliot (1859-1897) were the founding fathers of the park system of Greater Boston. In the 1870s Baxter and Eliot wrote extensively about the threats of urbanization and industrialization on the diverse landscapes in the less affluent communities outside of Boston. They encouraged the protection of these landscapes for public enjoyment, first through the creation of the Trustees of Public Reservations in 1891, then the Metropolitan Park System



1900 Atlas of Middlesex Co. showing proposed layout for Fresh Pond Parkway. Lowell Memorial Park is marked "Metropolitan Park Commission." (Courtesy of Cambridge Historical Commission)

of Greater Boston in 1893. Charles Eliot served as the consultant landscape architect for the Metropolitan Park Commission (MPC) and a partner of Frederick Law Olmsted until his sudden death at the age of 37 in 1897. Still, the Eliot and Baxter vision for a region system of parks, connected by parkways was realized. Acquired in 1898 as part of the gateway to Fresh Pond Parkway, Lowell Memorial Park was an early component of that system, reflecting several eras of development, with remarkably little change.

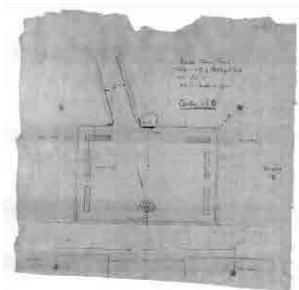


Fresh Pond Parkway and gateway to Lowell Memorial Park, Detroit Publishing Co. c 1910-1920 (Library of Congress)

*Park Creation: The Olmsted Brothers Plan*

The Metropolitan Parks Commission (MPC) acquired the Elmwood property as part of the expanding parkway system of Greater Boston, and the first parcel for the Fresh Pond Parkway. At that time, the Olmsted Brothers were working on the Fresh Pond Reservation for the City of Cambridge, and the MPC engaged them for both the Fresh Pond Parkway and Lowell Park (Job #1514). Early MPC work focused on building the first segment of Fresh Pond Parkway and laying sewer pipes, which was complete in 1900. But plans quickly turned to enhancing the park landscape.

The MPC engaged the firm of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and John C. Olmsted, known as the Olmsted Brothers firm. Charles Eliot, founder of the MPC, worked for two years at the F.L. Olmsted & Co. firm. The firm was known as Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot from 1893-1897, then F.L. and J.C. Olmsted from 1897-1898, and finally Olmsted Brothers from 1898-1957. Arthur Ashael Shurtleff (after 1930 known as Shurcliff) was a partner at the Olmsted Brothers firm and attended meetings of the Lowell Memorial Park Committee. In 1907 Shurtleff started his own practice and became consulting architect to the MPC.



1904 sketch of a memorial plaza, omitted in favor of the entrance posts and plaques (Courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site)

The Olmsted Brothers firm was engaged to design the memorial park, producing numerous drawings showing design elements that still define the character of the existing park, along with some ideas that were never executed. A rectangular plaza at the terminus of the main pathway near the parkway was part of an early design, with large oaks, benches and a stone tablet. The final plan (1906) did not include a formal memorial space. Correspondence from the Olmsted Brothers firm shows that the Lowell Memorial Park Committee preferred to have entrance pillars and bronze plaques along the parkway, which they funded. Other consistent design elements were the perimeter wall, pedestrian gateways (Brattle Street and Mount Auburn), open lawn, and hardwood trees. Plans also showed the maple at the center of the northern parcel retained as a central feature, as well as the retention of mature trees.



Stickney & Austin designed post and tablet c.1906.  
Enlargement at right (Courtesy DCR Archives)



### *Walls*

A perimeter wall or “curb” was shown in early Olmsted sketches. Originally specified as a stone curb with a metal fence above, the walls took on their current form at the request of the Lowell Memorial Park Committee. By 1904 a fully developed brick and limestone wall was illustrated in a drawing by Stickney & Austin, Architects. Red brick, accented with dark red headers in a Flemish bond, stood out against a bright white mortar and the white limestone coping. Two pairs of stone entrance posts with bronze plaques and limestone finials marked gateways into the park and the new Fresh Pond Parkway. At each entrance, one plaque was inscribed “Lowell Memorial Park” while the other dedicated the land to its namesake:

IN HONOR OF  
 JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL  
 BORN HERE 1819  
 AND DIED HERE 1891  
 MAN OF LETTERS ESSAYIST  
 HUMORIST CRITIC AND POET  
 POLITICAL SEER AND PATRIOT  
 INTERPRETER OF AMERICAN IDEALS

The brick walls were designed to enclose the park from adjacent main streets and to define the edges of the parkland. The wall runs along Brattle Street and Mount Auburn Street, with short sections at the entrance posts, including one section of curved wall at the Brattle Street/Fresh Pond Parkway

intersection. The posts were the grandest part of the wall. Three foot square in plan, the brick posts rose from granite bases to a height of 8 ½ feet at the top of the massive limestone finial. It is important to note that the design called for no wall along Fresh Pond Parkway, nor should the allee of trees continue through the park. In a February 26, 1906 letter to Mr. Las Casas, Chairman of the Metropolitan District Commission, the Olmsted Brothers wrote, "The avenue effect of red oaks should not be continued through the park as it would destroy the effect of unity between the two parts of the park lying on either side of the parkway. This effect is considerably weakened by the parkway, but nevertheless is evident enough to that it is worth preserving." This kept the connections between the roadway and the green space open, and also retained the sense of the two parcels being part of a larger whole.

Along Brattle Street there are three cut outs for trees, which may have been a concession to the public dismay at tree cutting under the MPC. As one letter writer stated, "That fine lumberman's Instinct that is pained at the sight of a crooked tree, may be a good one In the Maine woods, but is a doubtful virtue in a body devoted to the promotion of natural beauty." (Cambridge Tribune, April 11, 1903). By the time the walls were being built, Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. was noting in a memo trees and the wall, "*the only thing to do is make a little break in the wall – a little jog in it – and the coping the wall or pieces of coping could perhaps have a bite taken out of the them and sealed across the gap.*" (October 3, 1905)

#### *Plantings*

Between 1904 and 1906 the Olmsted Brothers laid out the park in two sections, incorporating a broad lawn with specimen trees and colorful border plantings, a perimeter wall to define the park space, and a simple system of pathways. The layout retained views of the park from Fresh Pond Parkway and Brattle Street, but neighboring residential lands were more heavily screened. The boundary with Elmwood was shown with an open fence, mature trees and partially open border plantations, retaining a visual connection to the storied house.



*"Where trees stand partially in line of proposed wall – the portion of the wall interfered with by the tree is to be omitted and the coping cut to fit around the tree..."* Note on Olmsted Brothers Plan for Lowell Park, February 14, 1906.



Fresh Pond Parkway-Cambridge Mass, Planting Plan for Lowell Memorial Park, Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects, Brookline, Mass, 14<sup>th</sup> February 1906 1514-51 9 (Courtesy of the National Park Service, Frederick law Olmsted National Historic Site)

Under the Olmsted plan, the southern part was regraded with a gentler, more regulator slope from the parkway toward Mount Auburn Street. The design enhanced, but did not completely obliterate the agricultural character of the land and association with Lowell’s Elmwood home. A large maple in the center of the northern parcel, shown on pre-MPC plans, was retained and made a focal point of the design. Parkway views featured the tree, and the single 6’ wide pathway from the Brattle Street entrance was designed to curve gently around the old tree. Hardwoods of oak, maple and elm rose above a large lawn in the northern parcel, while borders were planted heavily with flowering trees and shrubs. In the southern section, a dense stand of pines noted as “in decline,” and plantings on the western border were designed to screen adjacent properties.

The plant palette of the Olmsted Brothers plan was comprised of specimen trees (primarily hardwoods) over lawn and dense border plantings of fragrant and flowering shrubs. Species were primarily of Asiatic origins, most of which put on two displays - showy spring flowers and colorful fall foliage and fruit. Several of those plants are now considered invasive (see list in Appendix). Most beds were of various plant combinations, but the fragrant and showy mock orange was used exclusively in the northeast corner (30 plants) and southwest corners (117 plants). Throughout the park, these mixes would have been attractive to birds, bees and butterflies, as well as a visual delight to visitors. Other plants such as Japanese Andromeda remained green throughout the year, providing winter interest.

The planting plan retained many existing trees, most notably the central maple and the large oak at the end of the path near Fresh Pond Parkway, both in the northern section. At the corner of the parkway and Brattle Street, there were 13 existing trees shown, but no new trees were indicated in the northern parcel. The southern parcel included the note “Pine Grove - Trees Gradually Dying.” It appears the plan called for the natural decline of the pines made famous by Lowell’s writings, in favor of a mixed hardwood forest. In the southern parcel (within the brick wall) the plans showed 19 existing trees to remain and 18 new trees to be planted. Evergreen trees – over 100 Canadian hemlock and Austrian pine – were planted along the property line to screen private residences to the southwest. While the northern parcel was intended to be very open, the southern section was much more wooded.

### Views

The most significant views of the Olmsted plan are the same views of today – those from the Fresh Pond Parkway into the parkland. The northern section was virtually devoid of trees. The “entrance” to the parkway (northbound) passed between the Lowell Memorial Park posts, then quickly expanded into views across the wide lawn toward the central maple tree and the planted border beyond. Limited street trees and a large oak would have provided a contrasting foreground. Similarly from the north, a parkway user would “enter” the park between the brick posts, with an immediate reward of views into both parcels.



View of northern section toward Elmwood and shrub border (c.1909). Fresh Pond Parkway is at right (Courtesy DCR Archives)

Along Brattle Street, mature elm, white oak and other hardwoods trees were retained, providing a high canopy under which the flowering border was planted. Views from Brattle Street would have been limited, but beautifully framed by the trees and shrubs. Along Mount Auburn Street, existing trees and border plantings on either side would have framed views into the wooded section of the park. The brick and limestone wall provided a grounding element for the composition.

The visual connection to the Lowell estate was also preserved. Although the entire eastern boundary was planted with flowering shrubs, the 1906 plan noted, “Any of the oaks and white pine already planted along the east boundary which may eventually act as an obstruction to views from the two estates north of the Lowell estate should be removed.” So views of the park from Elmwood and the other Tory Row estates were significant. In contrast, residential lots along the southwestern borders were screened with evergreens, large trees and border plantings, restricting the views from those parcels. This may have been an effort to retain the park’s associations with the early history of the neighborhood, as reflected in the colonial homes, including Elmwood, to the east.

In the 1906 Olmsted Brothers plan, the street trees along Fresh Pond Parkway were altered, with the plan showing eight removals, four existing trees to remain, and four new trees along the park. While red oaks were planted in 1900 when the parkway was built, the new plan diversified the species, bringing white ash and a European linden into the mix. Tree removals opened views into the northern parcel, toward the old maple tree. In 1938 the park saw path improvements, replacement plantings and the addition of a new water fountain. Otherwise the park remained unchanged for over 50 years.

### *Fresh Pond Parkway Development: The Shurcliff and Merrill Plan*

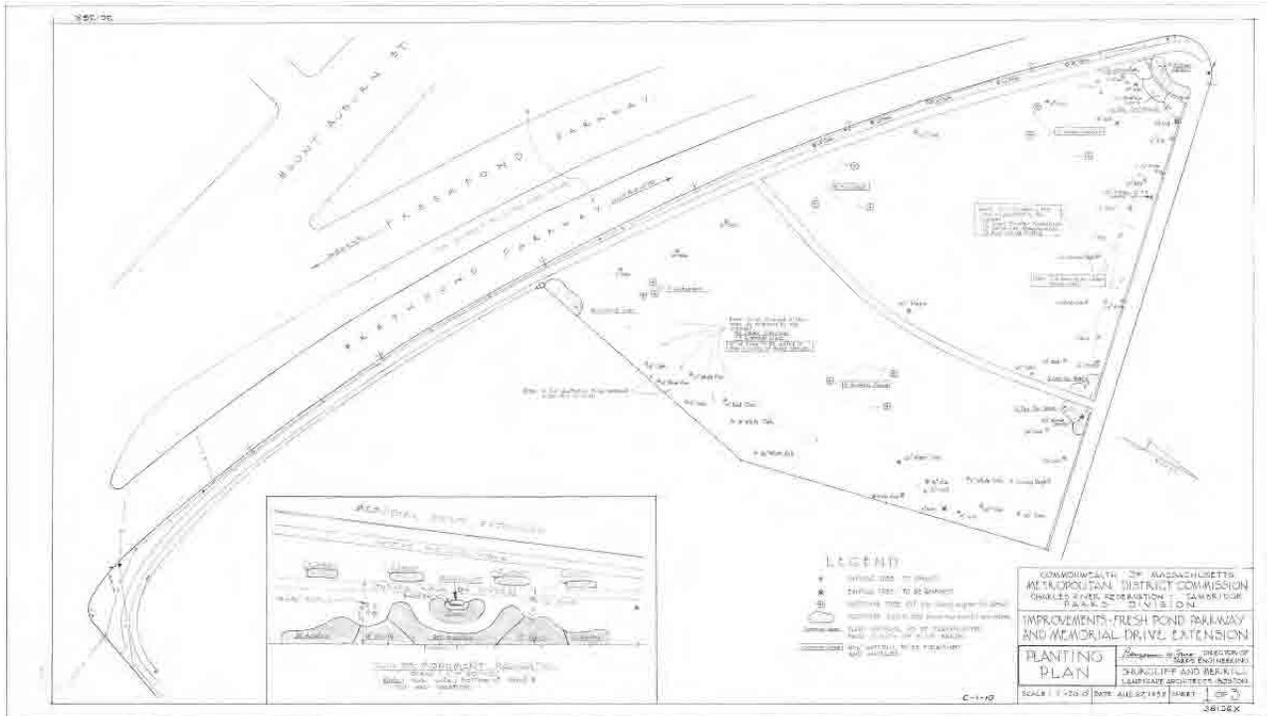
The parks and parkways of the greater Boston region rapidly developed through the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, meeting the needs of a growing suburban population and the transition to the culture of the automobile. By 1917 Fresh Pond Parkway was resurfaced with a standard bituminous binder. In 1919 the Metropolitan Park Commission was changed to the Metropolitan District Commission, and the era of parkway expansion continued.

Since its opening in 1900, Fresh Pond Parkway had expanded through Cambridge out to Alewife Brook Parkway, and then to the Concord Turnpike (current Route 2) in 1934. With that expansion came increased use of the parkway as a major commuter route for residents of the western suburbs. The 1941 reconstruction of Fresh Pond Parkway resurfaced the roadway, introduced overhead electric wires, and added new granite curbing to most of the parkway. However, it was not until the late 1950s that Lowell Memorial Park saw its most significant changes.

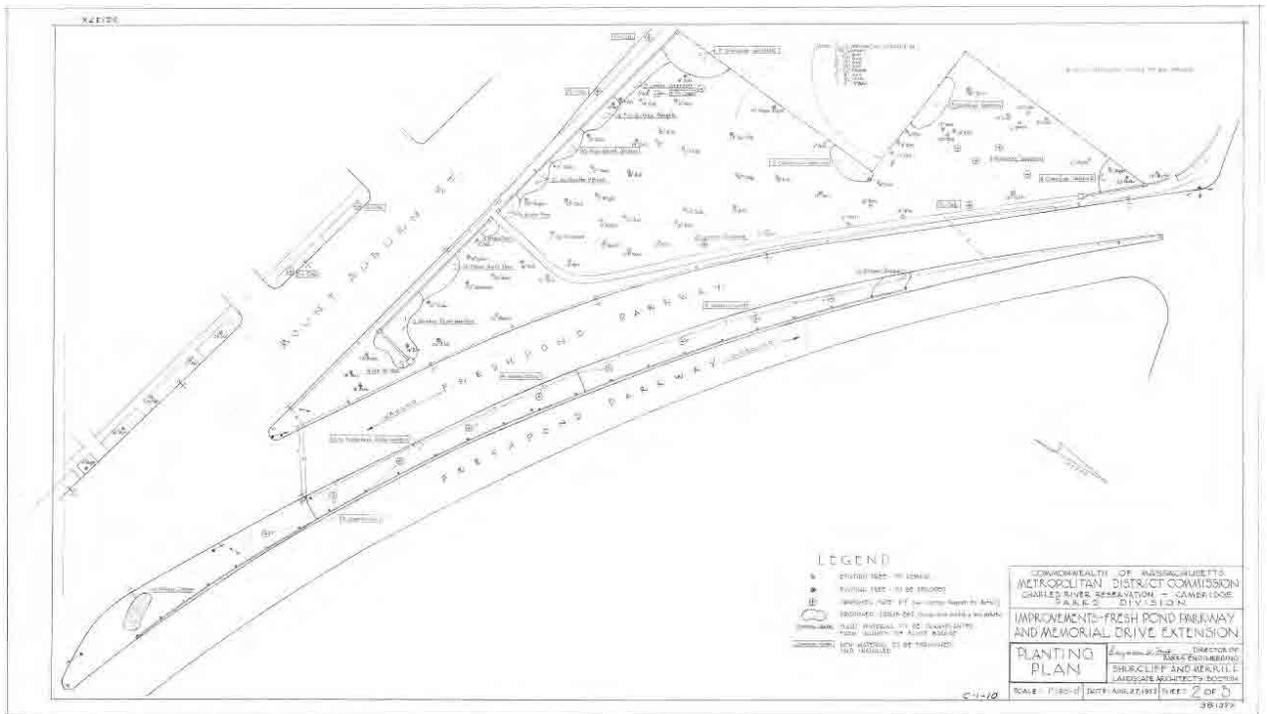
In 1959 the MDC developed a plan to accommodate the increased traffic, including a major expansion of Fresh Pond Parkway at Lowell Park. The two lane road was widened to four lanes, divided by a planted median. Land for the new travel lanes was taken from the southern parcel of Lowell Memorial Park, reducing its size. The new parkway layout also changed the brick and limestone walls and posts, the first MPC-built feature of the park. Freestanding posts were moved further into the parkland and adhered to the wall ends. The dedication tablets, originally facing the parkway entrances, were reoriented. The plan also included traffic lights at Brattle Street and new mercury lights along the parkway. The parkway median was planted with a regular row of honey locust with juniper and wintercreeper below.

The landscape of the park was rehabilitated as part of the parkway expansion. The MDC engaged the landscape architecture firm of Shurcliff and Merrill. The firm was established in 1954 by Sidney N. Shurcliff (1906-1981), son of MPC landscape architect Arthur A. Shurcliff (1870-1957) and Vincent Merrill. The firm's layout followed the Olmsted Brothers' concept, creating a border of flowering shrubs while retaining the open lawn and mature trees, walls and pathways. The old maple in the northern section was retained and identified as a 30" maple. Many plants were transplanted from land around the Eliot Bridge, then undergoing a major redesign as part of the expansion of Memorial Drive.

In the northern parcel the ancient maple was retained and a new flowering border planted. With several new trees installed, the lawn began to lose its original open character. The plan showed 14 trees to be removed and 12 to be planted – 3 each of red cedar, scotch pine, pin oak and honey locust. Clusters of six yews flanked the park entrance from Brattle Street, with forsythia, honeysuckle and aralia planted along the Brattle Street edge under existing mature hardwoods (primarily oak, elm, and maple). The scheme also changed the plantings at the curved brick wall at the corner of Brattle and Fresh Pond Parkway. On the park side of the wall, there were andromeda and mountain laurel beds, and 14 juniper plants on the outside of the wall. Juniper and viburnum lined the Elmwood boundary, with a cluster of lilac next to the repositioned brick post.



Improvements to Fresh Pond Parkway and Memorial Drive Extension, Planting Plan, Shurcliff and Merrill, 1959 (northern section).



Improvements to Fresh Pond Parkway and Memorial Drive Extension, Planting Plan, Shurcliff and Merrill, 1959 (southern section).

The southern parcel was most radically changed in the 1958 plan. The loss of parkland to the widened parkway changed the original pathways, creating a single curved path running from the sidewalk on Fresh Pond Parkway to the Mount Auburn entrance. The path connecting the two parcels was eliminated. Once dense with pine trees, the parcel had filled in with hardwoods including oak, ash, elm, and maple. The Shurcliff & Merrill plan retained most of the trees over grass, with only 15 removals. New plantings consisted of clusters of Canadian hemlock at the northern corner and along the boundary with neighboring homes, a shrub border, and 8 new trees (4 dogwood, 3 pin oak, 1 London planetree). Mugo pine flanked the Mount Auburn Street entrance and Japanese yews were planted on the outside of the southern brick wall, next to the repositioned post. Along Mount Auburn Street the plan called for Rosebay rhododendron, rose, spirea, Aralia, Weigela and viburnum to form a colorful shrub border.

No major construction projects have occurred at Lowell Memorial Park since 1959, but the landscape has changed. Mature trees have declined, to be replaced with various new trees, although no planting plan has been developed. Recognized as an iconic landscape element, the ancient maple tree in the northern section was cabled and braced sometime in the 1990s. The extensive flowering shrubs shown in both the 1906 Olmsted plan and the 1959 Shurcliff and Merrill scheme are largely lost, but the overall character of the park is intact and the shrubs could be easily replanted.

### **Existing Conditions**

Lowell Memorial Park is a surprisingly intact historic landscape, given the changes to Fresh Pond Parkway and major population increases in the area over the park's 100+ year history. While larger, more accessible Metropolitan Park System parks have been altered to include more active recreation facilities (playgrounds, ball fields, tennis courts, etc.), Lowell Park's small size and lack of parking have prevented that kind of development. The park still looks like the park laid out by the Olmsted Brothers, and it still functions as a gateway to Fresh Pond Parkway and a small, neighborhood park.

### Landuse

Although Lowell Memorial Park was created over 100 years ago, the setting of the park and surrounding land uses have changed very little. The park is flanked on all sides by established residential areas of large, historic homes. Elmwood, the house and immediate grounds, are used as the Harvard President's House, and are well-maintained. A green chain link fence separates the historic house from the park, but some visual connection remains.



Today's Lowell Memorial Park still functions as both a gateway to the Fresh Pond Parkway and a small neighborhood park, providing an open setting to the adjacent Elmwood property. The parkway has been expanded to four lanes with a planted median, increasing automobile traffic and noise, particularly during rush hour. The expansion of the roadway has further separated the main northern area of the park from the smaller southern parcel. However, the brick posts with massive limestone finials still demarcate the edges of the park and serve as a formal gateway to Fresh Pond Parkway, as historically intended.

The park is currently used for passive recreation, with most people strolling, sitting on benches, or walking dogs in the park. With no on street or public parking close by, visitors are likely residents from surrounding neighborhoods or employees from nearby businesses and institutions. Students at the Shady Hill School and Buckingham, Brown & Nichols pass through the park's southern parcel which is the pedestrian connector from Fresh Pond Parkway across Mount Auburn Avenue.

There appears to be an encroachment issue in the southern section of the park. In the corner of the southwestern area of "Little Lowell" there are numerous objects associated with the neighboring property. Garden art, a compost bin, and various bird feeders are tucked into the corner. A gate provides direct access from the adjacent parcel. Given the heavy growth of understory, this area reads as part of the private property.



This ancient maple has stood on this spot since before Lowell's time

### Vegetation

Existing vegetation appears to date primarily to the Shurcliff and Merrill design. Both parcels of Lowell Park are planted primarily with mature hardwood trees above broad expanses of open lawn. Some shrubs edge the northeastern corner of the park in and around the curved section of wall at the corner of Brattle Street and Fresh Pond Parkway. These edge plantings include yews, Honeysuckle, Andromeda, and Aralia. In the southern section of the park, there are denser stands of Eastern hemlock and shrubs that serve as screens between the park and neighboring house lots. The historic, dense, flowering shrub border is no longer extant.

### *Trees*

Trees played a prominent role in the historic design of Lowell Park and remain a significant feature. The ancient maple in the center of the northern parcel is a key visual element. Cabled and braced

in the recent past, the tree is clearly in decline. The tree appears to leaf out without sign of stress, and the old bracing is intact. However, the tree should be monitored for any changes in condition, and it should be replaced within the next 5-8 years according to DCR's arborist. When the tree has to be removed, a 4-5" caliper replacement tree should be planted as close to the original location as possible.

There are significant mature trees in both the northern section and southern section, some of which date back to the 1906 Olmsted Brothers plan. Most of the hardwood trees stand as specimen trees over lawn, which hemlock and pine stand along the borders as screens. In the northern section, English ivy is overtaking a white pine and should be carefully removed from the tree. Decisions about tree removals



should take into account the historic significance of the tree and its condition. For most mature hardwoods, hazard pruning and regular maintenance can ensure a long life. As historic trees decline, DCR can plan for their replacement by interplanting.

Volunteer trees have filled in the edge of the park along Brattle Street and now impact both the view and the foundation of the brick wall (*see picture at left*). Although

Norway maples were part of the Olmsted Brothers planting plan, volunteer trees have taken root in bad locations. Small caliper Norway maples within 5 feet of the brick wall should be removed.

Many new trees have been planted at Lowell Memorial park, but no planting plan was ever done. The addition of so many trees has adversely affected the historic character of Lowell Park and most should be removed. In the northern section, two new Hop hornbeam trees along the pathway occupy what should be open lawn. Other small caliper trees near the edge of Fresh Pond Parkway obscure views from the roadway. Many smaller trees are not thriving and should be removed anyway. The dogwood planted at the corner of Brattle Street and Fresh Pond Parkway should be removed, as no tree has ever stood in that location. A full tree removal plan is included in the Treatment chapter of this report (see page 32).



#### *Invasives*

Several invasive plants from adjacent properties have infiltrated the park. Along the northern boundary, a small stand of bamboo has spread from under the wooden fence. Bamboo spreads by rhizomes and can be very difficult to control. If not treated soon, this small cluster of plants will spread rapidly. In the same area, English ivy has crept over, around and under the wooden fence, taking over turf and climbing trees. Ivy can be controlled mechanically, but this is a large infestation that will need several treatments and periodic maintenance. Care should be taken when removing the ivy from the mature trees which are otherwise healthy. A similar issue is occurring in the southern section of the park, where English ivy is spreading along the residential fence line. An aggressive program of mechanical removal is needed. DCR should also work with neighbors to eliminate invasive plants from the immediate property line, create a buffer zone, or install root barriers.

#### *Turf*

Turf conditions in the park vary, but most grasses are in just fair condition. There are eroded areas next to the paved pathway in the northern section of the park and near benches. Depressions and bare areas are abundant in both parcels, and shaded areas near the boundary with Elmwood are bare.

#### Views

The visual connections from Fresh Pond Parkway into the northern and southern sections of Lowell Memorial Park are still strong, despite the addition of several trees in the historic lawn areas. Also strong is the link between the parkland and the historic Elmwood house. When Lowell Park was created, the Elmwood House was set aside for family use, so some privacy was required. Historically, a low, open wooden fence divided the parcels. The green chain link fence that separates the properties is quite transparent, and vegetation management on the Elmwood side has kept the understory open. There are still glimpses of the



Newer trees have diminished the open character of the park; and turf is in poor condition

Elmwood house and carriage garage from Lowell Memorial Park, similar to those in historic photographs.

### Circulation

The circulation patterns in and around Lowell Memorial Park have changed very little in design and layout, but increased traffic on the parkway has had significant impact on the park. The circulation system is a simple network of park pathways and sidewalks, with no dedicated parking (or on street parking). The central pathway is an original element of the Olmsted Brothers design, but it is no longer continuous between the northern and southern parcels. Fresh Pond Parkway is a major feature of the park, but it does not serve any internal circulation function.



There is one major path through the northern parcel, leading from the northern entrance at Brattle Street, through the lawn and out to Fresh Pond Parkway where it intersects with the sidewalk. Historically there was a crossing from this point over to the southern parcel, but that connection was lost when the parkway was widened in 1959. Originally laid out as a 6 foot wide path, the bituminous walkway has narrowed and is not completely level. The Olmsted Brothers plan laid out the pathway to align with the crosswalk at Brattle Street, but that crosswalk has been moved to the east.



In the southern parcel, a curved concrete walkway leads from the southern gateway on Mount Auburn Street to the northwest, joining the concrete sidewalk along Fresh Pond Parkway. This path provides access from the Brattle Street intersection, through the park, across Mount Auburn Street, to the residential area of Coolidge Avenue, Mount Auburn Cemetery and two private schools. Historically this path connected with the main northern pathway (across Fresh Pond Parkway), but that connection has been lost.

Northern pathway (top) is narrow bituminous material, while the southern path (bottom) is wider concrete

Concrete sidewalks along Brattle Street and Mount Auburn Street are managed by the City of Cambridge. The concrete sidewalks along Fresh Pond Parkway are Commonwealth property under DCR's care.

### Structures and Site Amenities

Structures within Lowell Memorial Park are limited to the perimeter walls, benches, a light post, one sign, and a fountain. Laid out by the Olmsted Brothers and designed by MPC architects Stickney & Austin, the c.1906 walls are the oldest built feature of the historic landscape except for the parkway.

### *Walls and Fences*

The original brick and limestone wall and posts are the most prominent structures at Lowell Memorial Park. The walls are mostly freestanding, with a short section along Mount Auburn Street functioning as a retaining wall. Comprised of water struck brick in a Flemish bond pattern, the walls are topped with 6' long limestone caps. Brick piers, square in plan, flank Fresh Pond Parkway at its southern and northern

entries. The posts are finished with massive limestone ball finials. Bolt holes for plaques are visible, but no signage remains. The walls stand intact, with some areas of spalling, cracks or shifting evident. Some



Wall and post at Brattle Street and Fresh Pond Parkway (Simpson Gumpertz & Heger)

limestone capstones have been damaged, displaced or are missing, but the ball finials at the posts are in excellent condition. Capstone cutouts for trees, noted in the Olmsted Brothers plan of 1906, remain, but the trees that once fit them are gone. In fall 2013 DCR contracted with Simpson, Gumpertz & Heger to complete an assessment of the walls and make recommendations for their repair. The estimated cost to rehabilitate the walls is \$294,000.

Fencing dividing Lowell Memorial Park from adjacent residential parcels is privately owned and maintained. Fence types range from green coated chain link at the Elmwood property, to various wood panel designs.

Most private fencing is in good condition.

#### *Small Features and Site Furnishings*

There are several other small structures on the property, most of which are modern. A single light post stands in the center of the northern parcel, illuminating the walkway. The cobra head style metal post is incompatible with the landscape. A concrete water fountain is located near the northern entrance to the park, off of Brattle Street. The fountain is a simple concrete cylinder with a narrow shaft and shallow bowl, dating to approximately 1938. A small concrete block sits nearby, presumably as a step for children. The fountain is non-functional.

There are eight benches in the northern and southern parcels, placed in various locations, some facing into the park, other facing roadways. All benches are constructed of metal pipe with metal plank seats and backs (all painted green) and do not compliment the historic character of the park. In summer 2013 many benches were in terrible condition, but the planks have been replaced and benches are once again functional.

A single metal trash receptacle is located at the northern entrance to the park, but it is located on the sidewalk and is owned and maintained by the City of Cambridge.

There are no bicycle racks in the park. Two small signs note “Leash and Clean Up after Dogs \$25 fine.” There is no identifying signage for the park or DCR anywhere on the property.



From left to right: Concrete fountain and step, bench (typical) and cobra head style light post.

## Analysis and Evaluation

### Integrity

Integrity is defined by the National Park Service as “the authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's historic or prehistoric period.” Integrity is assessed by looking at seven characteristics relative to the historic and existing features of a property. The seven aspects of integrity are location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Not all must be present for a property to have historic integrity.

For the historic context related to the historic significance of the Elmwood property, Lowell Memorial Park retains integrity of location, setting, materials, feeling and association (the Elmwood house is still visible from the park). Design is somewhat diminished due to the conversion of the farm parcel into a designed park landscape, and workmanship is similarly affected. The park still conveys its significance relative to the National Historic Landmark property.

As an early park of the Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston, Lowell Memorial Park retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. As the gateway to Fresh Pond Parkway, the park still evokes a sense of arrival, with the brick entrance posts at each end, and views into the parkland from all directions. Lowell Memorial Park remains a key contributor to the “park” in the parkway.

For the proposed historic context relative to the Olmsted Brothers design Lowell Memorial Park retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Despite the loss of a lot of original plant material, the overall character of the park reflects the 1906 Olmsted design, including the circulation, fences, mature trees over lawn, and (scant) shrub borders. The changes made in 1959 to accommodate the widening of Fresh Pond Parkway affected the brick entrance posts, as well as the proportions and pathway connections between the northern and southern sections of the park. However, the 1959 planting scheme by Shurcliff & Merrill evoked some of the same basic design principles of the Olmsted plan. Even with little of the shrub border remaining, the basic character of the original (1906) design is still evident.



Lowell Memorial Park still reflects the design of the Olmsted Brothers, despite expansion of Fresh Pond Parkway

### Current Designations

The northern section of Lowell Memorial State Park is a National Historic Landmark (as part of the Elmwood property), is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and is part of the Old Cambridge Historic District, a local historic district. Fresh Pond Parkway is listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston Multiple Property Submission. The smaller, southern section of Lowell Memorial Park has no historic designations.

The nomination form for the Elmwood property dates to 1967-1975. As an early version of the nomination form, it predates the establishment of the National Register criteria. However, it is clear that the nomination is based on only the history of Elmwood (including Lowell Memorial Park) as the home of poet James Russell Lowell. The only area of significance is literature, even though the period of significance includes the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and the pre-Lowell history is described in the

nomination. Evaluated under today's preservation standards, Elmwood and Lowell Memorial Park would be nominated for additional areas of significance reflecting the property's rich and varied history.

#### Statement of significance

Lowell Memorial Park is significant under National Register criteria A, B and C in the areas of politics, military, community planning and development, engineering, conservation, landscape architecture, and transportation at the local level. Under criterion A the property is significant for its associations with the Elmwood estate and events of pre-Revolutionary and Revolutionary America, specifically the ousting of Oliver and the use of the property as an army hospital under George Washington. Under criterion B it is significant as the home of Vice President Elbridge Gerry and as the lifelong home of poet and statesman James Russell Lowell. Under criterion C the park reflects the characteristics of early parks of the Metropolitan Park System, the nation's first regional park system. It is also significant as the work of the Olmsted Brothers, master landscape architects.

#### Potential New Areas of Landscape Significance

Lowell Memorial Park is likely significant in areas other than its association with the historic Elmwood property and the life of poet James Russell Lowell. The park is an early component of the first regional park system in the United States and the work of a noted landscape architect, the Olmsted Brothers.

Lowell Memorial Park is likely significant under Criterion C in the areas of community planning and development, engineering, and landscape architecture as part of the Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston. The park was conserved in honor of a Cambridge poet, but it was tied into a larger park movement. James Russell Lowell died shortly before Cambridge Charles Eliot teamed up with Sylvester Baxter to propose a regional park system. The system was born in 1893 with the establishment of the Metropolitan Parks Commission and the creation of Beaver Brook Reservation. The system quickly grew to include Blue Hills Reservation, Middlesex Fells, Revere Beach and the Charles River Basin. In addition to protecting landscapes of unique character, Charles Eliot advocated for green parkway connectors between these reservations, including one in Cambridge to connect to the city's Fresh Pond Reservation. Eliot died in 1897, but his vision was realized. Saved from development by local advocacy, the 3 acre park was turned over to the Metropolitan Park Commission in 1898. By 1900 the MPC was constructing the first segment of Fresh Pond Parkway and engaging landscape architects to layout the new park.

The park is also likely significant under Criterion C as the work of the famous architecture office of Frederick Law Olmsted, specifically as the work of the Olmsted Brothers. The 1906 plan for Lowell Memorial Park was laid out by the Olmsted Brothers, a legacy firm of the renowned office of Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. (1822–1903), father of American landscape architecture. In practice since 1857 when he designed New York's Central Park with Calvert Vaux, Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. moved his office to Brookline in 1882, partnering with his stepson John Charles Olmsted (1852–1920) under the name F.L. & J.C. Olmsted in 1884. Charles Eliot (1859-1897) joined the firm in 1893, and the name changed to Olmsted, Olmsted and Eliot. Eliot brought with him the design commissions for the new Boston metropolitan parks system, but his career was cut short when in 1897, at the age of 37, he died of meningitis. In 1898, John Charles and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. (1870–1957) formed the partnership of Olmsted Brothers which lasted until 1961. Lowell Memorial Park is a significant example of the Olmsted Brothers work.

The National Register nomination for Fresh Pond Parkway could also be amended, as it did not include any of the land at Lowell Memorial Park as a contributing feature. The park was the first land purchased for the parkway, and it is the historic gateway for the parkway. The park is eligible for listing under

Criterion C in the areas of community planning and development, engineering, landscape architecture and transportation. As such, the boundary for Fresh Pond Parkway should extend around both parcels of Lowell Memorial Park, and the park should be noted as a contributing feature. The period of significance for this nomination would not change.

Recognizing these new areas of significance would require establishing a secondary period of significance for the property. The current documentation identifies the period as 18<sup>th</sup> century and 19<sup>th</sup> century with specific dates of 1767 and 1819-1891. A revised nomination would likely extend this period into the 20<sup>th</sup> century to encompass its addition to the Metropolitan Park System of greater Boston (1898 under the Metropolitan Parks Commission) and its original design by the Olmsted Brothers (1906). As a parcel associated with the Fresh Pond Parkway, Lowell Memorial Park may also be considered significant through 1958, the end of parkway development. A possible secondary period of significance would be 1898-1958.



1901 Map of the Metropolitan District showing Metropolitan Parks Commission properties in green (Courtesy DCR Archives)

### Contributing Resources

The 1973 National Historic Landmark nomination for the Elmwood property was completed in the early stages of an emerging preservation practice and does not specify landscape features that contribute to the significance of the property. The MDC parkland was “included in the designation because of both its value to the setting of the Landmark and its historical association with the house as part of the original “Elmwood” estate.” The nomination notes the period(s) of significance as 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Under the proposed areas of significance, the following features should be considered as character-defining elements:

- Brick and limestone walls and posts
- Open lawn with hardwood trees scattered throughout
- Pathways (location and alignment, not materials)
- Views from Fresh Pond Parkway into the park
- “Gateway” views of parkland and entrance posts (dedication plaques should be restored)
- Street trees and planted Fresh Pond Parkway median



View from Brattle Street, November 2013. The ancient maple and Fresh Pond Parkway are visible in the distance (left).

## Part 2 - Treatment

### Preservation Treatment

The purpose of this Cultural Landscape Report is to document the historic significance and condition of Lowell Memorial Park and make recommendations for its preservation. The preservation strategy is based on an overall preservation treatment.

A treatment is a physical intervention carried out to achieve a historic preservation goal. There are many practical and philosophical variables that influence the selection of a treatment for a historic property. These include, but are not limited to, the extent of historic documentation, existing physical conditions, historical value, proposed use, long and short term objectives, operational and code requirements, and anticipated capital improvement, staffing, and maintenance costs.

The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* include four preservation approaches for historic properties:

- **Preservation** focuses on the maintenance and repair of existing historic materials and retention of a property's form as it has evolved over time.
- **Rehabilitation** acknowledges the need to alter or add to a historic property to meet continuing or changing uses while retaining the property's historic character.
- **Restoration** depicts a property at a particular period of time in its history, while removing evidence of other periods.
- **Reconstruction** re-creates vanished or non-surviving portions of a property for interpretive purposes.

At first glance, Lowell Memorial Park would be an excellent candidate for restoration. Restoring the park to the 1906 Olmsted Brothers plan would bring the park back to a period reflecting all areas of significance. The 1906 plan was the original vision of a memorial park dedicated to James Russell Lowell; the 1906 plan was part of the early layout of Fresh Pond Parkway (also under the Olmsted Brothers) and the development of the Metropolitan Park System. However, a restoration treatment is intended to recreate an authentic historic property based on substantial documentary and physical evidence. For Lowell Park, that evidence shows that Fresh Pond Parkway would be narrower, with a pedestrian crossing right in the middle. Given the current traffic volumes and configuration of the park, returning the parkway to its historic configuration is not possible. Therefore, a true restoration to 1906 is not possible.

A more flexible approach for Lowell Park is rehabilitation. Under rehabilitation, the goal is to preserve the overall historic character, without major intervention to remove or replace features not associated with a specific historic period. This is a flexible treatment that still preserves character-defining features such as vegetation, walls and fences, and views. Rehabilitation can also include selective restoration of lost features, if those features are critical to the management and interpretive goals for the property. The rehabilitation treatment also allows for adaptive reuse – changes to accommodate new uses. At Lowell Park this might include improvements for handicapped accessibility, for example, or replacement of invasive plants with non-invasive ones.

## Recommended Treatment

The recommended preservation treatment for Lowell Memorial Park is **rehabilitation**, with a strong focus on restoring the shrub border shown in the Olmsted Brothers 1906 planting plan (excluding invasive species). Rehabilitation is the most flexible treatment, allowing for continued contemporary use along with the repair of extant historic features and a return to the design intent of the Olmsted Brothers plan.

Specific recommendations under this treatment follow in order of priority. All work should be in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*.

## Priority Recommendations

- 1) Brick Walls and Posts
  - a) Preservation in accordance with SGH report (can phase work as needed). This includes repairing two of three cutouts made for trees that no longer exist. One cutout is unstable and compromises the wall's integrity and will be filled.
  - b) Restore bronze plaques using historic photos (consider alternative material to deter vandals)
- 2) Vegetation
  - a) Invasive Species
    - i) Remove Honeysuckle and other invasive shrubs
    - ii) Bamboo and English ivy
      - (1) Remove existing plants
      - (2) Create barrier at property line
      - (3) Coordinate with neighbors on invasive control
  - b) Develop Planting Plan. Plan should address the following needs:
    - i) Turf – rehabilitate turf, patch holes for safety
    - ii) Restore shrub border. Develop a new planting plan for a colorful and fragrant shrub border than will screen adjacent properties and attract birds and butterflies. The 1906 Olmsted Brothers plan can be the basis for the planting plan, with substitutions as needed to avoid use of invasive plants. If equivalent native species are available, they can also be used.
    - iii) Trees
      - (1) Prune all trees for health and safety
      - (2) Tree Removal Plan

Prior to removing any trees at Lowell Memorial Park, DCR staff should tag trees for removal and notify the Office of Cultural Resources. Consultation with the Cambridge Historical Commission and the Massachusetts Historical Commission may be required. DCR may also want to post a public notice about tree removals. Removals, in order of priority, are listed below:

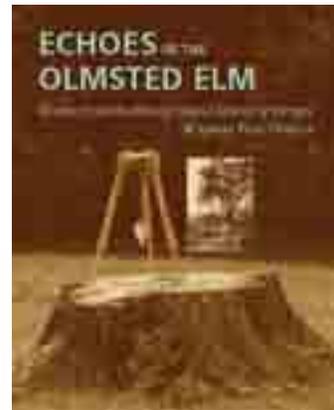
        - (a) Volunteer Norway maples along Brattle Street wall (6" caliper and smaller)
        - (b) Dead and severely damaged trees (north and south parcels)
        - (c) 3 red cedar in northern section (east of main path)
        - (d) White oak at Brattle Street entrance (blocking pathway)
        - (e) All trees within 5 feet of brick walls and posts; stump grind
        - (f) Inappropriate recent plantings:
          - (i) Dogwood at curved wall
          - (ii) 2 Hop hornbeam along main path (northern section)
          - (iii) Various hardwood trees in northwestern section of park, all under 3" caliper.

- (3) Ancient Maple – Monitor for changes in condition. Plan for replacement in 5-8 years. Coordinate removal of the tree with public outreach and possible interpretive or artistic program for reuse of hard wood.

#### Potential Interpretive Program and Arts Partnership

The ancient maple has “witnessed” a broad swath of American history from pre-Revolutionary unrest to American politics and literature, landscape design and the creation of the nation’s first regional park system. DCR should contact local fine arts institutions to see if a partnership to salvage and re-imagine the ancient maple could be developed. The program can be modeled after the Rhode Island School of Design’s Witness Tree Project.

***The Witness Tree Project*** is a curricular initiative involving Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) and the National Park Service (NPS). Witness trees, as designated by the NPS, are long-standing trees that have “witnessed” key events, trends, and people in American history. The Project arranges for fallen witness trees to be shipped from a national historic site to RISD, where students, enrolled in a joint history seminar and furniture studio, interpret the history the tree witnessed make relevant objects from the tree's wood. In addition to classroom study, the Project variously involves field trips, guest lectures, exhibitions of students' objects, and other events that highlight the significance of material culture, landscape, and design in learning about American history.



In 2011, the elm at the Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site was transformed through the Witness Tree Project. The iconic elm was also replaced.

### 3) Circulation

- a) Regrade and repave central pathway in northern section, to accessible specifications and using concrete to match sidewalks (48” min. width required by MAAB). The southern path is probably too steep to meet accessibility requirements. The requirement can be waived by the MAAB when a property is historically significant and accessibility upgrades would adversely impact the resource. A waiver may also be required if the wall openings fall short of 48” (walls should not be altered).
- b) Brattle Street Entrance
  - i) Remove white oak blocking path
  - ii) Retain mature trees
  - iii) Replace yews with plants from Olmsted Brothers design
  - iv) Repair wall and piers
  - v) Install historically appropriate signage to identify park and DCR (location, scale and materials to be carefully considered)
- c) Mount Auburn Street Entrance
  - i) Remove shrubs along entrance wall (follow 1906 Olmsted Brothers plan)
  - ii) Repair wall and piers
  - iii) Consider installation of metal bollards to protect pedestrian area and deflect plowed snow (see SGH report)

- 4) Site Amenities
  - a) Signage
    - i) Install cantilever style signs at Brattle Street and Mount Auburn Street entrances. Signs should identify the park as a DCR facility and historic site.
    - ii) Replace bronze plaques on brick posts
  - b) Replace cobra head light with pedestrian scale light fixture in historically compatible design
  - c) Replace benches with “Shurcliff” bench or other historically appropriate model
  - d) Reposition benches and include at least one accessible bench in each parcel (locate along accessible path with proper pad)
  - e) Replace water fountain



- 5) Management
  - a) Research encroachments in south west corner of park and work with Legal Services to eliminate private use of DCR lands; then eliminate composter, bird feeders, garden art and other private property from south western corner of park
  - b) Follow the Office of Cultural Resources Best Management Practices for historic landscapes – vegetation and built features and graffiti removal (see appendix)
  - c) Establish regular maintenance program for mature trees
  - d) Do not plant new trees unless indicated on planting plan
  - e) Explore partnership with Harvard (Elmwood owner), City of Cambridge and/or neighborhood groups to undertake projects, develop programs, or otherwise promote good stewardship

### Interpretation

Given the size of Lowell Memorial Park, new interpretive features should be limited. The DCR website could provide additional information on this significant park, linking it to Cambridge history and the Longfellow National Historic Site. The addition of an appropriately designed DCR sign would clarify ownership. On site, interpretation should be focused on a single panel or kiosk in a strategic location and personal (guided) programs, whenever feasible.

A simple interpretive panel or a small information kiosk in the northern section of the park would be an effective way to convey the history and significance of Lowell Memorial Park. The panel/kiosk should cover the three major historic periods for the property – Tory Row and Elmwood, The Elmwood of James Russell Lowell, Lowell Memorial Park as part of the Metropolitan Park System – as well as the Olmsted Brothers design.

Restoration of the original bronze plaques on the brick posts that flank Fresh Pond Parkway will further convey the property’s history.

Design of both the DCR sign and any interpretive panels/kiosks must be compatible with the historic landscape. See also “Regulatory Process” below.

## Implementation

The preservation treatment and recommendations for Lowell Memorial Park should be viewed as a long range plan. Without a dedicated preservation budget, recommendations will be undertaken utilizing resources as they become available.

### Short Term Project - Wall and Post Repair

The historic brick and limestone walls and posts at Lowell Memorial Park are one of the most significant historic features of the historic landscape. Concurrent with the development of this plan,, DCR contracted with the engineering firm of Simpson Gumpertz & Heger to conduct an assessment of the walls. They completed their analysis in December 2013. Although the walls retain much of their historic character, there are areas of cracked and spalled bricks, collapsed areas and missing capstones, all of which require a good amount of skilled labor to repair in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The cost to rehabilitate the walls is estimated at \$294,000.

Repair of the walls is a high priority. DCR has committed \$30,000 to complete plans and specifications for the project, making it "shovel ready" if and when funding is identified. Design will be complete by September 2014. The plans will outline work including:

*The following is excerpted from the Historic Wall Assessment, SGH for DCR January 2014*

### Materials for Repairs

- Brick: Grade SW, size and color to match existing, per Section 2.2 and Appendix B.
- Mortar: ASTM C270, Type N. Approximate proportions by volume per table in Section 2.2 and Appendix A. Choose the color of the cement, and the color and particle size of the sand to match the original as closely as possible.
- Limestone: Indiana limestone.
- Repair mortar for limestone: Jahn M70 repair mortar, or equal.
- Stainless steel dowels: Type 304 stainless steel threaded rods.
- Metal flashing: 20 oz zinc-tin alloy-coated copper.

### Overall Survey

Perform an overall survey of the wall, documenting existing conditions, missing elements, displacement, locations where foundation is buried, etc.

### Displacement

- Rebuild selected portions of the wall where damage has occurred from impact, or where the wall is bulged. Depth of the rebuilding should vary with the depth of deterioration or displacement. Reuse the original brick where possible and practical.

- Install a series of four bollards, 3 to 4 ft high metal posts, at the edge of the sidewalk opposite T intersections of the adjacent streets to reduce future snowplow and/or vehicular impact damage.
- Re-grade the soil on the park side where the granite foundation stone is buried to expose the granite.
- Remove all trees within 5 ft of the wall, to be coordinated with landscape treatment plan. As part of the landscape treatment plan and general maintenance procedures, prune vegetation in contact with the wall to provide some clearance of the wall from the vegetation.
- Cut-outs for trees: There are three cut outs along Brattle Street. For the two smaller cut outs, accept the condition, and take no action other than cleaning, repointing, etc. as prescribed for the overall wall repairs. For the one cutout which is unstable, rebuild the section of the wall. Provide new brick where cut, and perform dutchman repair at the limestone coping and granite foundation where cut.

#### Cracks

- Repoint 100% of the wall. Remove mortar a minimum depth of 3 in. or 2.5 times joint width, whichever is less. Remove mortar to a greater depth wherever necessary to reach sound mortar.
- Rebuild severely cracked and displaced areas, as described under Section 3.1 above.

#### Spalls

- Replace isolated spalled brick with new matched brick. Repoint around all new brick.
- Perform dutchman repair using new stone where existing stone is not present on site at large spalls in limestone coping.
- Install repair mortar, such as *Jahn* mortar, for smaller spalls in limestone coping.

#### Missing, Dislodged, or Displaced Elements

- Provide new elements (coping, brick) where not present on site.
- Reset displaced granite foundation stone and brick. Rebuild foundation with new slate shims to match existing.
- Remove and dispose of all lead flashing beneath coping. Provide new zinc-tin-coated copper flashing, if available. If not available, provide copper flashing. Reset all coping stones with two dowels per stone, set at quarter points.

- Rebuild small pillar at Wall Section D, where coping stone is missing. Provide new coping to match similar small pillars.

#### Snapped headers

- Rebuild 1 ft of wall on either side of snapped headers.

#### Soiling, Staining, and Graffiti

- Fully clean the wall using procedures as determined in mockups. Do not use procedures that will harm or abrade the brick or limestone, such as aggressive abrasive blasting, and avoid techniques that will saturate the core of the wall, such as aggressive high-pressure power-washing techniques. Do not use a strong acidic cleaner on the limestone. The most-effective cleaning may be different for the different materials. Perform mockups of cleaning for each different material, protecting all other materials during cleaning.
- Mockup cleaning of graffiti using products such as Graffiti Wipe by ProSoCo.

#### Partnership

DCR welcomes partnership opportunities of all kinds – interpretive programming, Park Serve events, clean ups, etc. Outside partners interested in working with DCR should contact the DCR Office of Partnerships at <http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/get-involved/partnerships/>.

DCR's Partnership Matching Grant Program could be a source for funding projects at Lowell Memorial Park. The Partnerships Matching Funds Program accepts applications from park advocacy groups, civic and community organizations, institutions, businesses, non-state government partners and individuals with an interest in improving the Commonwealth's natural, cultural and recreational resources. DCR considers applications that will provide a match of non-state funds for capital projects in state parks. DCR assigns a project manager to each approved project who will oversee implementation of the project in close consultation with the partners making the contributions. A 2:1 match will be provided to successful applications with contributions up to and including \$25,000 and 1:1 will be provided for contributions above \$25,000.

#### **Regulatory Process**

Any work at Lowell Memorial Park, a National Historic Landmark, will be subject to the review of the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC). DCR's Office of Cultural Resources oversees MHC compliance and has a staff of preservation professionals to assist DCR staff and partners.

Since Lowell Memorial Park is within a Cambridge historic district, DCR should consult with the Cambridge Historical Commission to determine the extent of the local regulatory jurisdiction. DCR will likely have to apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness from the CHC for any changes to the property.

## Part 3 Record of Treatment

The purpose of Part 3 of a Cultural Landscape Report is to document implementation. It is a record of as-built conditions, including any variation from the proposed treatments in the CLR and those actually carried out. It is not a maintenance record. Work can be carried out in phases over an extended period of time. At the time of printing of this report, no treatment is planned. As such, there is no record of treatment in this plan. Any treatment implemented at Lowell Memorial Park will be documented and added to this CLR as a future appendix.

Part 3 will be prepared by the project manager in charge of the treatment project. That could be a DCR project manager, a historical landscape architect, contractor, or park staff. The Part 3 documentation should include:

- intent of the work
- way in which the work was approached and accomplished
- time required to do the work
- cost of the work

The record of treatment contains copies of field reports, condition assessments, and contract summaries. The format of the documentation may vary - plans, details, narrative descriptions, photographs, and video are all acceptable formats. The documentation requirements should be included in the scope of work for the consultant or designer (as appropriate).

If treatment is not carried out for a long period of time, the Record of Treatment should also document any changes to the landscape over that period of time. This might include loss of views, catastrophic loss of landscape features, or changes in ownership or management. When completed, the documentation provided in Part 3 becomes valuable for future historic research on the property.



## References

Cambridge Historical Commission archives, various

*1877 City of Cambridge* bird's eye view, Franklin View Co., Norman B. Leventhal Map Center at Boston Public Library.

*1922 City of Cambridge*, Lewis M. Hastings, City Engineer, Norman B. Leventhal Map Center at Boston Public Library.

### Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Department of Conservation and Recreation

- Resource Management Plan for Chestnut Hill Reservation, Pressley Associates for DCR, 2006.
- Resource Management Plan for the National Monument to the Forefathers, Walker-Kluesing Design Group for DCR, 2006.
- Doherty, Joanna, Cultural Landscape Report and Preservation Recommendations, National Monument to the Forefathers, Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, January 2004 (draft)
- Historic Wall Assessment Lowell Memorial Park, Simpson Gumpertz & Heger for DCR, January 2014.

*The following are resources of the former Metropolitan District Commission:*

- Annual Reports. Boston: Metropolitan District Commission, 1906-1947
- Archives, Boston, various dates
- Architectural and Engineering Plans, Boston, multiple dates
- Green Ribbon Commission, "Enhancing the Future of the Metropolitan Park System." Boston: Metropolitan District Commission, 1996.

Massachusetts Architectural Access Board, 521 CMR: Architectural Access Board

### United States Department of the Interior

- Birnbaum, Charles A. 1994. *Preservation Brief 36: Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes*, Washington, DC: USDI, NPS, Cultural Resources, Preservation Assistance Division.

- Birnbaum, Charles A. with Christine Capella Peters, eds. 1996. *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*, Washington, DC: USDI, NPS, Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships, Heritage Preservation Services Program.
- Keller, J. Timothy and Genevieve P. Keller, 1987, *National Register Bulletin 18: How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes*, Washington, DC: USDI, NPS, Cultural Resources Interagency Resources Division.
- Page, Robert R., Cathy A. Gilbert and Susan A. Dolan, *A Guide To Cultural Landscape Reports: Contents, Process, and Techniques*, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships, Park Historic Structures and Cultural Landscapes Program, Washington, DC, 1998.
- National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, Job 01514 archival records
- National Park Service
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1991. *National Register Bulletin 16A: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*. Washington, DC: USDI, NPS, Cultural Resources, Interagency Resources Division.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1995. *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. Washington, DC: USDI, NPS, Cultural Resources, Interagency Resources Division.
- \_\_\_\_\_. 1995. *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. Washington, DC: USDI, NPS, Cultural Resources, Preservation Assistance Division.
- National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form for the *Metropolitan Park System of Greater Boston, Parkways 1893-1956*, Boston, 2002
- National Register of Historic Places (National Historic Landmark) Nomination Form for *Elmwood, James Russell Lowell Home, The Oliver-Gerry-Lowell House*, Cambridge, 1967-1975
- National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form for *Fresh Pond Parkway*, Boston, 2002

#### **United States Library of Congress, Manuscript Division**

- The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted, General Correspondence 1895-1928
- Olmsted Associates Records
  - Job #1460 Fresh Pond Parkway, Cambridge 1896-1916
  - Job #1514 Fresh Pond Parkway, 1898-1920

# Appendices

DCR Cultural Resource Management Policy

Best Management Practices

Historic Landscapes – Built Features

Historic Landscapes – Vegetation

Graffiti Removal for Historic Properties

## Olmsted Brothers 1906 Planting List

### Trees

Canadian hemlock (*Tsuga Canendensis*) - native

Austrian pine (*Pinus austriaca*)

European linden (*Tilia vilgaris*)

Norway maple (*Acer platanoides*)\*

White ash (*Fraxinus Americana*) – native

Red oak (*Quercus rubra*) – native

### Evergreens

Common Privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*)

Large leaved evergreen creeper (*Euonymous radicans*)

### Flowering shrubs

Mock orange (*Philadelphus grandiflorus*)

Kerria (*Kerria japonica*)

Tartarian honeysuckle (*Lonicera tartarica*)\*

Golden bell forsythia (*Forsythia fortunei*)

Ninebark (*Spirea opifolia*)

Wayfaring tree (*Viburnum lantana*)

Sharp-leaved spirea (*Spirea arguta*)

Lily of the Valley bush/Japanese Andromeda (*Andromeda floribunda*)

Wild Weigelia (*Diervilla trifida*)

Dwarf cranberry bush (*Viburnum opulus nanum*)

Double flowering plum (large shrub or small tree) (*Prunus triloba*)

### Fruiting/flowering shrubs and trees

Washington thorn (*Crataegus cordata*)

Cockspur thorn (hawthorn) (*Crataegus crus-galli*)

Japanese barberry (*Barberis thunbergi*)\*

Japanese quince (*Cydonia Japonica*)

Indian currant (*Symphoricarpos vulgaris*)

Small-leaved Japanese holly (*Ilex crenata microphylla*)

Large-leaved Japanese holly (*Ilex crenata macrophylla*)

\*invasive, prohibited in Massachusetts





**POLICY:** The Department of Conservation and Recreation shall provide for the stewardship of all known and potential cultural resources on DCR property through sensitive resource management and planning and compliance with local, state, and federal historic preservation regulations. DCR actions and activities shall promote and foster the preservation, protection, and appreciation of these resources.

**APPLICABILITY:** All Divisions, Departments, Bureaus, and Staff

**TABLE OF CONTENTS:**

- I. Definitions..... 45**
- II. Mission Statement -- Office of Cultural Resources ..... 46**
- III. Implementation ..... 46**
- IV. Regulatory Compliance – Project Planning..... 47**
- V. Regulatory Compliance -- Other ..... 5**
- VI. Resource Management and Planning..... 6**
  - A. OCR Program of Inventory and Evaluation..... 6
  - B. Procedures for Protecting Cultural Resources..... 7

**PROCEDURES:**

**I. Definitions**

The following definitions explain terms used throughout this policy directive:

**Cultural Resource**—A district, site, building, structure, landscape, object or ethnographic resource that is at least fifty years old and has important historical, cultural, scientific, or technological associations. Cultural resources also include pre-historic or historic archaeological sites containing physical remains or indications of past human activity and/or any artifacts that have been constructed or manipulated by human influence and holding potential significance for understanding past, present, or future human behavior.

**Cultural Resources Inventory (CRI)**—A baseline inventory of cultural resources in the DCR system, consisting of location maps, related reports, and individual site inventory forms with background historical information.

**National Register**—The National Register of Historic Places is the official federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture.

**Project**—Any action, activity, program, construction or land modification that is directly undertaken by DCR, receives any financial assistance from DCR, or requires the issuance of a license or permit by DCR.

**Project Notification Form**—The form that is completed by DCR or a private project proponent in order to notify the Massachusetts Historical Commission of a project requiring review under state or federal historic preservation regulations.

**Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties**—General guidelines for the preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction of historic buildings, established by the National Park Service to encourage consistent preservation practices at the national, state, and local levels.

**State Register**—The State Register of Historic Places includes the following properties:

- All districts, sites, buildings, or objects listed in the National Register of Historic Places or formally determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places by the Keeper of the Register, United States Department of the Interior;
- All local historic districts or landmarks designated under local ordinances or by-laws;
- All structures and sites subject to preservation restrictions approved or held by the MHC;
- All historical or archaeological landmarks certified or listed pursuant to MGL Ch. 9, Sec. 26D+27.

**Site**—The location of a significant event, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure, whether standing, ruined, or vanished, where the location itself possesses historic, cultural, or archaeological value regardless of the value of any existing structure.

## **II. Mission Statement—Office of Cultural Resources**

The Office of Cultural Resources (OCR) preserves the cultural heritage of Massachusetts through stewardship of DCR’s historic buildings, structures, landscapes, archaeological sites, and archival resources; through training, public education, and advocacy; and through the development of innovative tools for protecting historic landscapes.

The OCR staff provides expertise, technical assistance, and project management skills in landscape preservation, historic preservation planning, archaeology, archival records management, and compliance with local, state and federal historic preservation laws. In addition to leading OCR initiatives and programs, OCR staff directly support activities undertaken by other bureaus and divisions within DCR.

## **III. Implementation**

The Commissioner shall designate a staff person to coordinate agency implementation of this policy.

The Commissioner shall ensure that an archaeologist is on staff who meets the professional qualifications and standards for investigation and reporting as outlined in 950 CMR 70.00 and retains DCR’s state permit for archaeological investigations on public lands or lands in which the Commonwealth has an interest.

The agency shall provide training on all aspects of this policy to DCR planning, engineering, project management and operations staff.

#### **IV. Regulatory Compliance—Project Planning**

During the project planning process DCR shall comply with historic preservation laws at the local, state, and federal levels, listed below. OCR serves as the Department’s liaison with local historic district commissions and the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) pertaining to project notifications and requests requiring assistance from and consultation with these commissions. All inquires from MHC shall be directed to OCR.

##### A. Local Landmarks and Historic Districts

Many municipalities within the Commonwealth have designated local historic landmarks and historic districts to protect the distinctive characteristics of important sites and districts and to encourage new structural designs that are compatible with their historic setting. Local Historic District Commissions review all applications for exterior changes to landmarks or properties within local districts to ensure that changes to properties will not detract from their historic character. Review criteria are determined by each municipality.

MGL Ch. 40C <http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/gl-40c-toc.htm>

##### B. State Register Review

DCR must notify MHC, through filing of a PNF or Environmental Notification Form (ENF), of any projects undertaken, funded, permitted, or licensed in whole or in part by the agency in order that MHC can make a Determination of Effect of the project on historic and archaeological resources listed in the State Register. DCR shall send copies of PNFs or ENFs to the local historical commissions in those communities that have received Certified Local Government status from MHC. It is the responsibility of the MHC to determine whether State Register properties exist within the project’s area of potential impact. When MHC determines a proposed project will have an adverse effect on historic properties, DCR must consult with MHC and any interested parties to explore feasible and prudent alternatives that would eliminate, minimize, or mitigate the adverse effects and, following consultation, adopt such alternatives.

DCR may enter into a Programmatic Memorandum of Agreement (PMOA) with the MHC to streamline the state review process, including identifying possible activities that qualify as categorical exemptions. OCR is responsible for the coordination of any PMOA with the MHC and directly oversees implementation.

MGL Ch. 9, Sec. 26-27C <http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/9-27c.htm>

950 CMR 71

### C. Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA)

Some DCR projects may require filing an ENF with MEPA in addition to the State Register Review. MHC reviews all ENFs and comments on those in which there are concerns that the project has the potential to affect significant historic or archaeological properties. MEPA regulations state that an ENF must be filed if a project involves: 1) demolition of all or any exterior part of any Historic Structure listed in or located in any Historic District listed in the State Register of Historic Places or the Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth; or 2) destruction of all or any part of any Archaeological Site listed in the State Register of Historic Places or the Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth unless the project is subject to a Determination of No Adverse Effect by MHC or is consistent with a Memorandum of Agreement with MHC that has been the subject of public notice and comment.

301 CMR 11.00

<http://www.mass.gov/envir/mepa/thirdlevelpages/meparegulations/meparegulations.htm>

### D. Section 106 Review

DCR is required to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act when undertaking projects that require a permit, funding, license, or approval from a federal agency. The federal agency (or, in many cases, the recipient of federal assistance or permits) is required to notify MHC of such projects and take into account the effects of the project on historic properties that are listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. When the federal agency, in consultation with the MHC as the Office of the State Historic Preservation Officer, determines that a project will result in an adverse effect to those properties, the federal agency must take prudent and feasible measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate those effects. Other interested parties such as local historical commissions or Indian Tribes are also consulted as part of the process.

16 USC 470 et seq <http://www.cr.nps.gov/local-law/nhpa1966.htm>

36 CFR 800 <http://www.achp.gov/regs-rev04.pdf>

## **V. Regulatory Compliance—Other (See also Emergency Scenarios/Procedures below)**

Other DCR activities require compliance with additional state historic preservation laws:

### A. Massachusetts Unmarked Burial Law

When human skeletal remains are discovered or if human remains are disturbed through construction or agricultural activity, DCR staff must immediately notify the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (617-267-6767, ext. 176). The Medical Examiner shall conduct an inquiry to determine whether the remains are suspected of being 100 years old or more, and, if so determined, shall immediately notify the State Archaeologist at MHC. The State Archaeologist conducts an investigation to determine if the skeletal remains are Native American. If the remains are deemed likely to be Native American, the State Archaeologist shall immediately notify the

Massachusetts Commission on Indian Affairs, which shall cause a site evaluation to be made to determine if the place where the remains were found is a Native American burial site. Consultation occurs to develop a written agreement to preserve the burials in situ or, if no other feasible alternative exists, to excavate the burials.

MGL Ch. 38, Sec. 6 <http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/38-6.htm>

MGL Ch. 9, Sec. 26A and 27C <http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/9-26a.htm>

<http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/9-27a.htm>

MGL Ch. 7, Sec. 38A <http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/7-38a.htm>

#### B. Preservation Restrictions

When DCR seeks to acquire a preservation restriction on a property, MHC must review and approve the language of the restriction before it is finalized. A preservation restriction means a right, whether or not stated in the form of a restriction, easement, covenant or condition, in any deed, will or other instrument executed by or on behalf of the owner of the land or in any order of taking, appropriate to preservation of a structure or site historically significant for its architecture, archaeology or associations, to forbid or limit any or all (a) alterations in exterior or interior features of the structure, (b) changes in appearance or condition of the site, (c) uses not historically appropriate, (d) archaeological field investigation without a permit, or (e) other acts or uses detrimental to appropriate preservation of the structure or site. Certain projects on properties with a preservation restriction require MHC approval.

MGL Ch. 184, Sec. 31-33 <http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/184-31.htm>

<http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/184-32.htm>

<http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/184-33.htm>

#### C. Consultation with Massachusetts Native Americans

DCR must consult directly with Wampanoag (Gay Head and Mashpee) Tribal Councils and the Massachusetts Commission on Indian Affairs (MCIA) for management of the reservation in the Fall River-Freetown State Forest. DCR must consult with the Wampanoag and Nipmuc Tribal Councils on matters affecting each of those tribes. DCR must consult with the MCIA and with other tribal and intertribal councils on matters that affect all other tribes.

Executive Order 126 <http://www.lawlib.state.ma.us/ExecOrders/eo126.txt>

## **VI. Resource Management and Planning**

### A. OCR Program of Inventory and Evaluation

One of the primary objectives of OCR is to provide an ongoing program of inventory and evaluation of cultural resources on DCR property. This first and most critical step in cultural resource management

entails identifying potentially significant cultural resources and discovering the significance or meaning of each resource within a local, statewide, and national context. To this end, OCR shall develop, maintain and oversee the use of its own statewide baseline inventory of cultural resources, known as the Cultural Resources Inventory (CRI). Information from the CRI shall be available for use by DCR staff, but it shall not be made available to the public without approval from the OCR Director, and particularly, the written approval of the State Archaeologist for requests of disclosure of archaeological site locations.

In order to recognize highly significant cultural resources, OCR shall identify those that appear to meet the criteria for the National Register of Historic Places and, in consultation with MHC, nominate them for listing on the National Register. OCR shall initiate and manage the nomination process in consultation with other DCR staff and the MHC.

OCR shall expand and update the CRI as necessary to supplement historical background and geographical information on currently inventoried cultural resources, add newly discovered cultural resources, and update baseline information on cultural resources on properties acquired or disposed by DCR, and provide information on newly inventoried cultural resources to the MHC to coordinate with MHC's Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth.

The CRI shall also be supplemented with other cultural resource-oriented data and publications, such as MHC inventory forms, historic structure reports, condition assessments, interpretive materials, maintenance/repair records, and archaeological impact studies.

OCR shall provide CRI information to district, regional and facility supervisors with the understanding that archaeological site locational information is confidential, not a "public record," and must be secured from inadvertent or unauthorized disclosure or from subsequent disclosure without written permission of the State Archaeologist (MGL Ch. 9, Sec 26A and 27C (950 CMR 70.13(7))). The CRI shall be used by DCR to enable informed

preservation decisions as part of DCR's resource planning and management activities, including the prioritization of capital projects for stabilization, repair and adaptive reuse.

## B. Procedures for Protecting Cultural Resources

### *1. Acquisition of Land and Conservation/Preservation Restrictions*

OCR staff shall sit on the DCR Lands Committee and provide assistance and input into the protection of properties of significance to the state's cultural heritage through acquisition in fee, conservation restrictions, or preservation restrictions. Once an acquisition is complete, the OCR shall determine whether a baseline inventory should be undertaken on the property to identify cultural resources. Preservation restrictions must be reviewed and approved by MHC prior to DCR acquisition.

## 2. *Resource Management Plan Development*

OCR staff shall provide technical support toward the Resource Management Planning Program to insure that the protection of cultural resources is a core component of Resource Management Plans. Depending on the type of DCR facility and the scope of the RMP, this support may range from data collection and documentation to property analysis and treatment recommendations.

## 3. *Project Planning*

DCR shall make every effort to protect cultural resources on DCR property. For projects planned at any Department level, appropriate Department staff shall consult with OCR to consider potential project impacts on cultural resources. Consultation with OCR shall occur as early as possible in the planning process, but no later than the 25% design development phase. When a conflict between a project location and its impact on cultural resources is identified, cultural resource management strategies shall be brought into consideration to determine if the impact to the resource can be avoided, adverse impacts mitigated, or whether additional site investigation is necessary. OCR shall initiate and manage those activities that will minimize or mitigate adverse impacts to cultural resources.

When necessary, OCR shall conduct a coordinated program of basic and applied research to support planning for and management of cultural resources on DCR property. Repairs, rehabilitation, and other preservation activities shall follow the guidelines in the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. Adequate research to support planning and compliance with MHC Review will precede any final decisions about the treatment of cultural resources or operational activities which may impact cultural resources.

For each DCR project, a Project Notification Form (PNF), including a project description, a site plan, and photographs, shall be provided to OCR. OCR shall forward the PNF to MHC and, where required, local historic district commissions. If outside consultants are preparing the PNF, then OCR staff shall be given an opportunity to review the draft PNF before it is submitted. The submission of an Environmental Notification Form (ENF) under the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) satisfies MHC notification, and no PNF is needed for project undergoing MEPA review. Copies of ENFs shall be provided to OCR.

MHC has a maximum of 30 days to make a Determination of Effect on historic resources or request supplemental information in order to make a Determination of Effect. In the event that the MHC makes a determination of "no effect" or "no adverse effect" on historic resources, the project may proceed. If MHC determines that the proposed project will have an "adverse effect" on historic resources, DCR shall consult with MHC to explore options to avoid, minimize, or mitigate the adverse effect. If, after consultation, no feasible or prudent alternative exists that would avoid the adverse effect, a Memorandum of Agreement between DCR, MHC and any other interested parties is required to resolve the adverse effect and complete the consultation process.

Local historic district commission review will vary by municipality.

No physical work for projects shall occur until the review process has been completed with MHC and (if applicable) the local historic district commission.

#### *4. Emergency Scenarios/Procedures*

In the event an unanticipated site of archaeological or cultural significance is encountered during the project implementation stage, project work shall be halted and OCR shall be notified. OCR shall initiate the review process with MHC and make a recommendation to the Deputy Commissioner of Planning & Engineering whether or not to suspend all aspects of project implementation during consultation with MHC.

If human remains are discovered during project implementation, project work shall be halted, the area must be secured, the State Police must be notified, and the Medical Examiner (617-267-6767 ext, 176) and the DCR staff archaeologist must be contacted to determine if the remains are over 100 years old. No one should touch or remove the remains. If the remains are over 100 years old, the State Archaeologist at MHC must be notified and will consult with DCR (and the Massachusetts Commission on Indian Affairs if the remains are Native American) to avoid or mitigate impacts to the graves. In any such situation, DCR staff shall work with OCR to comply with the state's Unmarked Burial Law.

If DCR must take immediate action to avoid or eliminate an imminent threat to public health or safety or a serious and immediate threat to the environment, OCR shall be notified as soon as possible. OCR shall attempt to seek prior oral approval of the MHC for the project via telephone if written notice is not practicable, provide written notification of the emergency work within ten days, and commence full compliance with MHC review requirements within thirty days, under the terms of 950 CMR 71.10.

#### *5. Day-to-Day Operations*

Management of DCR's property shall be carried out with cultural resource protection in mind. Adverse impacts to cultural resources should be avoided and mitigated, where possible, with appropriate protection strategies. Cultural resources shall be adequately maintained, following recommended techniques where formal guidelines are in place. Cultural resource management decisions should be made with input from OCR.

Discovery of artifacts should be reported immediately to OCR, noting the exact location of the find. Be aware of sites that may be exposed or threatened by erosion or visitor impacts. Any vandalism, unauthorized digging, or removal of artifacts should be reported to the appropriate law enforcement personnel and OCR. Archaeological investigations on public lands require a permit from the State Archaeologist at MHC (MGL Ch. 9, Sec 26A and 27C (950 CMR 70)).

#### *6. Lease/Permit Programs*

The issuance of leases and permits by DCR for activities involving the physical alteration of a property must undergo MHC review with OCR and MHC, as outlined above.

The proposed issuance of DCR permits to investigate archaeological sites shall be reviewed by OCR. OCR shall coordinate the issuance of a special use permit with the State Archaeologist at MHC, who must also issue a concurrent State Archaeologist permit for any field investigations on DCR property (MGL Ch. 9, Sec 26A and 27C (950 CMR 70)).

*7. Disposition of Real Property*

The protection of cultural resources, including the preservation and continued use of significant historic buildings and structures, shall be accommodated as part of any disposition of DCR property. Under the State Register review regulations (950 CMR 71.05(e)), the transfer or sale of a State Register property without adequate conditions or restrictions regarding preservation, maintenance, or use will result in an “adverse effect” determination from MHC. DCR must consult with MHC and any interested parties to resolve the effect of the proposed transfer or sale of the State Register property.

*(End of policy)*





**MA Department of Conservation and Recreation  
Office of Cultural Resources  
Best Management Practices**

## Removing Graffiti from Historic Properties

**Contact:** Jeffrey Harris, OCR, 617-626-4936  
[jeffrey.harris@state.ma.us](mailto:jeffrey.harris@state.ma.us)

**Goal:** Remove graffiti that defaces historic buildings or structures; prevent damage to cultural resources during removal process

### Guidelines

#### General

- Act as soon as graffiti is identified. The longer it remains, the more difficult it is to remove. Prompt removal also can discourage future vandalism.
- Do not paint over graffiti on previously unpainted masonry, as it may damage the masonry, attract future vandalism, and detract from the historic character of the resource.
- Always begin with the gentlest cleaning method possible, applying cleaning agents using the shortest dwell time.
- For any cleaning technique, test in an inconspicuous area of the graffiti first to make sure that it does not leave a residue or damage the underlying material.
- Avoid the use of “off-the-shelf” aerosol-based graffiti removal products, which can stain other areas as the dissolved paint runs down the surface.
- Avoid the use of abrasive cleaning techniques or harsh chemicals, which can cause permanent damage to a historic resource that is worse than the graffiti itself.
- To avoid creating stark “clean spots,” clean the entire masonry unit, or feather out the cleaning into the surrounding area.
- Protect surrounding plantings during cleaning.
- Always follow product manufacturer’s directions for application procedures and safety precautions. Note that some cleaning measures may not be effective in cold temperatures.

#### Action Steps

- To the best of your ability, identify the vandalized building material and type of graffiti material.



- If graffiti impacts a significant cultural resource, fragile stonework, historic gravestones, or covers more than a few square feet, contact the Office of Cultural Resources to determine whether the assistance of an experienced contractor is required.
- First attempt to remove graffiti using clean water and a plastic or fiber-bristle brush. Low-pressure water spray may also be effective (100 psi or below). Also try adding a detergent to the water, such as clear dishwashing soap. These techniques may have limited effectiveness on old graffiti or non-soluble markers/paint. **Never use wire brushes, steel wool, mechanical sanders, or sandblasting equipment.**
- If graffiti covers a **previously** painted metal, wood, or masonry surface, it is acceptable to cover the graffiti with paint if matching paint for the underlying color is available.
- If graffiti is applied to unpainted brick, stone, or concrete, select a cleaning agent that is appropriate to the type of masonry. “Acid sensitive” materials include limestone, marble, shales, polished stones, glazed terra cotta and glazed brick. “Non-acid sensitive” materials include slate, granite, unglazed terra cotta and unglazed brick. “Alkali sensitive” materials include some granites, Indiana limestone, and sandstone.
- Cleaning agents should also be selected to be appropriate to the type of graffiti. The most commonly used materials are spray paints and felt-tip markers.
- Commercial graffiti-removal products are available at most hardware or paint stores, such as “Goof Off” or Motzenbocker’s “Lift Off.” Note that many of these products may be hazardous to your health, so be sure to follow the manufacturer’s instructions. Wear protective goggles and gloves. Collect runoff for proper disposal. **Do not allow hazardous chemicals to enter into the storm drain system.**
- Professional graffiti removal products are also available that, while more expensive, may be more effective and are safer to use. These include Peel Away 1 or Prosoco’s Graffiti Wipe. They may not be available at your local chain hardware store—check with specialty paint shops.
- Following cleaning, rinse the surface thoroughly, then rinse again. Even the gentlest cleaners can discolor materials if left on surfaces for a long time.
- Consider assembling a graffiti removal kit to enable quick action. Kit should include a scrub brush with natural or plastic bristles, rubber gloves, safety goggles, spray bottle, detergents and cleaners, clean towels or rags, and plastic tarps.

#### Preventing Future Graffiti

- Quick removal of new graffiti will often help to discourage vandals from returning in the future.
- Alert police, rangers and Friends groups to graffiti incidents. Implement a ParkWatch program and post a phone number for reporting vandalism. Only law enforcement officials should directly confront vandals.
- Consider the installation of security lighting in areas that are popular targets for graffiti. While transparent barrier coatings can be applied to surfaces to ease the removal of future graffiti, they generally are not recommended for use on historic masonry. Please consult with OCR prior to applying any such coating.



**MA Department of Conservation and Recreation  
Office of Cultural Resources  
Best Management Practices**

## Hardscape in Historic Landscapes

**Contacts:** Wendy Pearl, DCR Historic Landscape Preservation Initiative, [wendy.pearl@state.ma.us](mailto:wendy.pearl@state.ma.us), 617-626-1389

**Goal** Preserve significant historic landscapes through maintenance; keep DCR's historic park and building settings intact for interpretation and public enjoyment

### Guidelines

#### General

- Historic landscapes in DCR facilities can include the grounds around historic buildings, designed gardens, cemeteries, historic agricultural landscapes, and landscapes associated with the recreational development of the DCR parks system (parkways, CCC camp complexes, beaches)
- Landscapes are more than plants. A historic landscape should be viewed as a combination of the plantings and vegetation along with the “hardscape” including rock formations, walls, roads and paths, structures and objects (eg bird baths, fountains, pergolas).
- *Related BMPs: Stone Walls, Wells, Archaeological Sites*

#### Structures – walls, fences, gates, benches, sheds, buildings

- Do not relocate historic structures
- Do not paint structures that were historically unpainted
- Maintain painted surfaces on fences, benches and other wooden structures, repaint every 5-7 years or as needed to protect wood
- Iron fencing (painted) – maintain painted finish; if rust appears, scrape and sand down to clean/stable material, prime and paint
- Manage vegetation on fences, walls and other structures to avoid damage from moisture retention, roots and suckers, and possible structural overload (100 year old vines are heavy!)
- Cut plants close to the surface, do not pull roots on or near built features



- When maintaining pergolas and trellises that include climbing plants, carefully pull vegetation off of the structure, place on the ground and protect during work, then retrain to the structure after maintenance is done.

**Objects** - headstones, sculptures, sundials, fountains, birdbaths and markers (various materials)

- Cleaning should be limited. If cleaning is needed (to remove biological growth, for example) use only plastic or natural bristle brushes, water and **no soap**
- Removal of graffiti and more extensive cleaning and repair should be undertaken under the direction of a conservator (consult with OCR)
- For metal plaques and objects, check fasteners to ensure secure connections. If loose, tighten or replace fasteners, or consult with OCR for options for epoxy sealants (note: epoxy may not be appropriate for all conditions)
- Do not move objects from their original setting; consult with OCR if moving objects is necessary for their preservation (for example, if materials could be stolen, collapse or otherwise be lost without intervention)
- Report damage or theft of objects to OCR.

**Circulation**

- DCR facilities may contain designed carriage roads, footpaths and recreational trails associated with former estate use, the CCC, or even Native American or Colonial era transportation networks.
- Retain paths and trails in their original layout, alignment, and construction.
- Preserve and repair, in kind, path and trail surfaces, unless alterations are part of an overall plan for an adaptive reuse of the landscape. For example, converting a historic woodland trail into a paved, accessible interpretive route.
- Do not alter curbing, drainage features and stairs without further analysis.
- Trails which have “ancient” associations but no surviving visible historic features should be treated as archaeological sites (see Archaeological Features)

**Topography**

- The lay of the land, including hills, valleys, streams and ponds are integral to the historic landscape and may be related to important viewsheds or historic land use.
- Avoid topographical changes. For example, exposed ledge should not be removed in historic quarries or overlooks.

**Views and Vistas**

- The relationships among various landscape elements can be significant to the property's character and should be retained. Views from roads into gardens, a sequence of framed views

through buildings, or wide scenic vistas at the terminus of a main drive are all intended to heighten the experience of the landscape.

- Maintain vegetation regularly to keep vistas clear.
- Include vista maintenance as part of any construction or other maintenance on associated built features such as towers, overlooks, bridges or roads.
- Views and vistas should be clearly identified on plans used to manage the landscape (preservation plan, planting plan, or vegetation management plan).





**MA Department of Conservation and Recreation  
Office of Cultural Resources  
Best Management Practices**

## Vegetation in Historic Landscapes

**Contact:** Wendy Pearl, DCR Historic Landscape Preservation Initiative, [wendy.pearl@state.ma.us](mailto:wendy.pearl@state.ma.us), 617-626-1389

**Goal** Preserve significant vegetation in historic landscapes through maintenance; keep DCR's historic park and building settings intact for interpretation and public enjoyment

### Guidelines



#### General

- Historic landscapes in DCR facilities can include the grounds around historic buildings, designed gardens, cemeteries, historic agricultural landscapes, and landscapes associated with the recreational development of the DCR parks system (parkways, CCC camp complexes, beaches).
- Non-Natives and Invasive plants may have been intentionally planted in historic landscapes. The preservation plan for a historic landscape may include plants that are ornamental, non-native or even invasive, as historic gardening designs often took advantage of new imported species. OCR may have options for controlling potential invasives or appropriate substitute plantings for more aggressive species when those plants are critical to the historic landscape character.
- DCR's *Terra Firma #2 – Caring for Mature Trees in Historic Landscapes* provides additional information. Available online ([www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/conservation/cultural-resources/](http://www.mass.gov/eea/agencies/dcr/conservation/cultural-resources/)) and by request to the Office of Cultural Resources.
- *Related BMPs: Hardscape in Historic Landscapes, Historic Building Maintenance, Mothballing Historic Buildings, Archaeological Features*

#### Invasive and Volunteer Growth

- Volunteer trees and shrubs can destroy the design of a historic landscape, eliminating views and introducing plants that are out of place and out of scale to the original character. Volunteer tree saplings should be pulled immediately, and larger trees should be cut to grade.
- Invasive species can quickly overtake a historic landscape, so their control or elimination should be a priority. The treatment of an invasive plant may depend on the species. The New England

Wildflower Society has developed guidelines for controlling the most common invasive species <http://www.newfs.org/protect/invasive-plants/removal/common-invasives-management.html>.

- Park staff should first attempt to control invasives using pulling, cutting to grade or mowing (see link to guidelines above). If an infestation is severely out of control and requires the application of herbicides, staff should contact one of DCR's licensed applicators for treatment.
- Invasive species can also be managed using a controlled burn. Fire can be used effectively in and around built landscape features (stonewalls, pavilions, buildings) but fire can also threaten surviving historic plant material. OCR should be consulted to determine whether fire is an appropriate treatment (and how to protect historic plants), or if the potential damage to the landscape outweighs any benefit.
- **Priority areas** for controlling or eliminating invasive species and volunteer plants include designed gardens, and grounds around historic buildings, open agricultural fields, lawns, and recreational fields, formal entrance roads, parkways, pond shorelines, and vistas and overlooks.

### Trees

- Preserve the location, species, form and arrangement of trees within a historic landscape
- Prune for tree health and public safety according to professional arboricultural practices
- Avoid root collars during mowing and leaf clean up and any work involving motorized equipment
- Protect the tree's critical root zone. Avoid activities that might compact the soil in the root zone (driving, storing heavy equipment, trails). The protection zone should be as wide as the drip line of the tree canopy and should be clearly marked during major construction projects or events
- Plan for the replacement of mature trees that decline due to age or are lost to natural disaster; consult with OCR on options
- Replace historic trees in kind; if an alternate plant is needed, replacements should retain the size, form and location of the historic plants

### Lawn and Grasses

- Mow formal lawn areas regularly achieve a clean, clipped lawn look. These include lawn in formal gardens, designed cemeteries, golf courses, building grounds, training/parade grounds, and some campgrounds.
- Formal lawns in high traffic areas and on steep slopes may also require aeration, fertilizer and reseeding to reverse effects of erosion and compaction
- Mulch leaves directly into turf, adding a source of nutrients and eliminating waste
- Use mowers and line trimmers with care, avoiding damage to the bark and root systems
- Large meadows, recreation fields and farm fields are not meant to be formal lawns and can be mowed less frequently. Wide paths can be cut to provide recreational access and prevent tick exposure, but most areas can be left to grow higher.

## Shrubs

- Several DCR facilities have extensive horticultural collections, including rhododendron, azalea, mountain laurel and other shrubs. These collections should be managed not only for the visual character, but also for their botanical identity.
- Shrubs should be pruned to maintain their historic form and size. Overgrown shrubs can change the character of a historic landscape. If historic shrubs cannot be pruned back to their intended form, they should be replaced in kind.
- Select replacement shrubs to maintain the overall character, size, shape function and location of historic plants whenever possible.

## Perennials and annuals

- Historic landscapes can include perennials, bulbs and annuals, but not all do. Before planting any new plants, consult with OCR.
- Divide perennials every 3-5 years to ensure plant health and to retain landscape character
- Annuals may be planted only in existing plant beds and/or containers in historic landscapes

## Vines and Ground covers

- Historic vines include Boston ivy, wisteria, climbing roses, climbing hydrangea; ground covers include pachysandra, periwinkle, and wintercreeper (to name a few). Vines can exert excessive weight, increase moisture and directly grow into historic structures and should be trained onto secondary supports whenever possible.
- Provide adequate support for climbing vines
- Prune vines regularly to avoid overgrowth onto historic structures and plantings or
- Root prune or install root barriers around plants that are particularly aggressive (wisteria)
- Cut back groundcovers that are impacting pathways, encroaching on plant beds, or otherwise spreading beyond their original borders

