

CULTURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY – LANDSCAPES * OLMSTED PROJECT COVER SHEET

Please submit completed form to: Architectural Survey Coordinator
State Historic Preservation Office, Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development
450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 5, Hartford, CT 06103

I D E N T I F I C A T I O N	PROPERTY NAME (Current/Historic)		
	Pope Park		
	COUNTY	TOWN/CITY	VILLAGE
	Hartford	Hartford	
	JOB NUMBER		
	Primary: 00805 Related Job Numbers:		
	Landscape Type <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park, Parkway, Recreation Area. Scenic Reservation <input type="checkbox"/> City/Regional Plan, Improvement Project <input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision, Suburban Community <input type="checkbox"/> College/School Campus <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds of Residential Institution <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds of Public Building <input type="checkbox"/> Private Estate / Homestead <input type="checkbox"/> Cemetery / Burial Lot / Memorial / Monument <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds of Commercial / Industrial Building <input type="checkbox"/> Country Club / Resort, Hotel, Club <input type="checkbox"/> Grounds of Church <input type="checkbox"/> Arboretum, Garden <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibition, Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Miscellaneous		
	DATE OF ORIGINAL PROJECT: 1892 SUBSEQUENT PROJECTS: 1900		

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DESIGNER(S) (primary)

- ☐ Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.
☐ John Charles Olmsted
☐ Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.
☐ Other firm member(s):
☒ Other notes: Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects

Other Designers (prior to or following Olmsted project):

Repositories consulted with source materials

- ☒ Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, Olmsted Archives (online albums)
☒ Library of Congress
☒ Olmsted Online (OlmstedOnline.org)
☐ National Archives and Record Administration
☐ Connecticut State Library
☒ Hartford History Center
☐ Other:

Observations regarding features characteristic of Olmsted firm design

The Olmsted firm was commissioned in 1892 to prepare designs for Pope Park. The plans addressed site design, grading, planting, circulation, and the establishment of water features. Land for the park was donated to the City of Hartford by Col. Albert Pope, an industrialist who owned the Pope Manufacturing Company, in 1895. Pope intended to establish outdoor recreation space for his employees as well as City residents to enjoy.¹ The initial park totaled 90.5 acres and was composed of three distinct areas: Hollowmead (73 acres), Bankside Grove (13 acres), and Pope Park North (4 acres).² The designs prepared by the Olmsted firm included a long meadow encircled by trees, two overlooks—High Mall and Cathedral View—that provided sweeping views, and areas or rooms for specific uses. Named spaces included the Flower Garden, Little Folks Lawn, and Tennis Courts.

¹ Hartford Parks, "Pope Park." Available at Pope Park – City of Hartford, Hartfordct.gov. Accessed on December 6, 2021.

² Hartford Parks, "Pope Park History." Available at Pope Park History | Pope Park. Accessed on December 6, 2021.

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Over time, portions of the park have been deaccessioned, while the Park River has been channelized and culverted, and Interstate 84 built along the western side, impacting the soundscape. Otherwise, the land that survives within the park today retains a relatively high degree of integrity. Surviving features include the overall form of the park, which continues to be edged by Park Terrace and Park Street to the east and north, the central open meadow or greensward, the semi-circular space atop High Mall Hill, a double row of sugar maple trees, a pond in the north central portion along Park Street, and tree plantings along the southwestern, eastern, and northeastern edges of the park. A monument honoring Colonel Pope was installed in the park circa 1913. Late twentieth and early twenty-first century changes to the park have included the addition of parking, active recreation fields and a recreation facility, and a playground.

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I D E N T I F I C A T I O N	PROPERTY NAME (Current/Historic) Pope Park (Job #00805)		
	COUNTY Hartford	TOWN/CITY Hartford	VILLAGE
	STREET AND NUMBER (and/or location) 30 Pope Park Drive		
	OWNER(S) <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUNICIPAL <input type="checkbox"/> STATE <input type="checkbox"/> FEDERAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRIBAL <input type="checkbox"/> EASEMENT City of Hartford Parks Department		
	LAT/LONG COORDINATES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Center Point <input type="checkbox"/> Polygon 41.756332, -72.697408		
	PARCEL INFORMATION Acres: 60.1 PID(s): MBLU(s): 329001001		
	USE (Present) Public park		(Historic) Public park
	SURVEY TYPE <input type="checkbox"/> Reconnaissance-Level <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Intensive-Level		
D E S C R I P T I O N	LANDSCAPE TYPE (Check all that apply) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Designed <input type="checkbox"/> Vernacular <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural/Ethnographic <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Linear <input type="checkbox"/> System/Multi-Site <input type="checkbox"/> Residential <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Institutional <input type="checkbox"/> Maritime <input type="checkbox"/> Green <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park- Active Recreation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park-Passive Recreation or Commemorative <input type="checkbox"/> Other – specify:		
	DATE OR PERIOD (Include source of date) 1892; 1900		
	DESIGNERS (Entities that created, designed, constructed, or shaped the landscape) Olmsted firm		
	DESIGN SCOPE (For designed landscapes, explain what work was commissioned.) Site planning, with circulation, grading, planting, and water feature design		
	LOCATION OF DRAWINGS/IMAGES/SOURCE MATERIAL Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site; Library of Congress		
	VISUAL ASSESSMENT SUMMARY (Check boxes for the qualities that are key features of this landscape. If attaching descriptive narrative, consider these categories.) <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Layout & Spatial Relationships <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Circulation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Topography <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plantings/Vegetation <input type="checkbox"/> Views & Vistas <input type="checkbox"/> Boundaries </div> <div> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water Features <input type="checkbox"/> Drainage <input type="checkbox"/> Buildings/Structures/Objects <input type="checkbox"/> Recreational Space <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="checkbox"/> Design Style: Picturesque </div> </div>		

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C O N D I T I O N	EXISTING CONDITION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recognizable <input type="checkbox"/> Not Extant/Not Recognizable Changes: Boundary modifications and the addition of active recreation facilities and parking		
	POTENTIAL THREATS <input type="checkbox"/> None Known <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure Improvements <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Onsite Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Adjacent Development <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Vandalism <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Overuse <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deferred Maintenance <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Invasive Vegetation <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental – specify: <input type="checkbox"/> Other – specify:		
E N V I R O N M E N T	SETTING (One sentence description) The park is edged to the west by Interstate 84, elsewhere by residences and multi-use development		
	VEGETATION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maintained Open Land <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Open Land <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Woodland/Forest <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Wetland <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Specimen Plants <input type="checkbox"/> Other – specify:		
	SLOPE <input type="checkbox"/> Level/Nearly Level <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moderate Slope <input type="checkbox"/> Steep Slope Elevation (ASML): 44-90'		
	CONNECTICUT PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCE (Eco-Region) <input type="checkbox"/> Northwest Highlands <input type="checkbox"/> Western Uplands <input type="checkbox"/> Western Coastal Slope <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Central Valley <input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Coastal Slope <input type="checkbox"/> Eastern Uplands Soil Description: Dominated by Udorthents, Elmridge, and Wethersfield loamy soils, generally well drained.		
H I S T O R Y	SUMMARY (Provide a brief overview in this space. More detailed narrative can be attached.) Pope Park was one of the initial parks established in Hartford to reflect the park and parkway plans proposed by Frederick Law Olmsted in 1870 to form a network around the city. It was built on land donated by industrialist Col. Albert Pope to provide his employees with a connection to nature, open space, and a tranquil retreat. The designs prepared by the Olmsted firm included a long meadow encircled by trees, two overlooks, igh Mall and Cathedral View) providing sweeping views, and areas or rooms for specific uses.		
	NATIONAL REGISTER RECOMMENDATION Entered by: <input type="checkbox"/> Recommended Eligible (Criterion <input type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D) <input type="checkbox"/> Not Eligible <input type="checkbox"/> Not Evaluated Explanation: The park falls within the Frog Hollow Historic District; the landscape is contributing NR Listed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District-Contributing <input type="checkbox"/> District-Non-Contributing <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient Documentation		
R E P O R T E D B Y	NAME Liz Sargent and Maeve Corcoran	ORGANIZATION Red Bridge Group	DATE December 2021
	ADDRESS 2100 Green Street, San Francisco, California 94123		
	PHOTOGRAPHER Liz Sargent	DATE September 16, 2021	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Permission to use photographs (public domain)
	SURVEY METHOD <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site Visit/In-Person Walkover <input type="checkbox"/> Drive-through/Windshield <input type="checkbox"/> Digital Review Only		

ATTACHMENTS (Include the following items in the PDF)

- ☒ Location Map ☒ Site Map ☒ Photographs with captions ☒ Historic Images (if applicable)
☒ Narrative Description of Property ☒ Historical Narrative of Property ☒ References

CONTINUATION SHEET Pope Park (#00805) / 30 Pope Park Drive, Hartford

DESCRIPTION (Visual Assessment Summary)

Layout & Spatial Relationships: The main unit of Pope Park is set between Interstate 84 to the west, Park Street to the north, Park Terrace to the east, and Hamilton Street to the south. The park is accessed by an entrance road—Pope Park Drive—that terminates in two loop drives edged by parking areas. An asphalt walkway connects the entrances to the south and north along Park Terrace and to the north at Park Street. A knoll set above the meadow, or greensward, to the west overlooks the park as well as Interstate 84. Atop the knoll is an allée of oak trees and a basketball court. A large recreation complex edges Pope Park Drive to the east that includes two buildings that comprise the Arroyo Recreational Center and a swimming pool edged by a fence. A playground, baseball field, and soccer field are located within the greensward that comprises the eastern half of the property. A pond is in the north central part of the park. Mature shade trees and woodland edge the park to the west, south, and east, as well as the walk connecting to Park Street to the north.

Circulation: Pope Park Drive is the park entrance road, which arises from Park Terrace near its intersection with Hillside Avenue. The road ends in a loop turnaround edged by parking. A second loop edged by parking is located to the south. Pedestrian asphalt walks lead from the loop road north to Park Street and also connect the park entrance with the Arroyo Recreation Center. A walk leads from the southern entrance at Park Terrace with the northern entrance at the intersection of Park Street and Park Terrace.

Topography: An elevated knoll edges the park to the west. The topography declines toward the center and rises again to the east toward Park Terrace.

Plantings/Vegetation: There are numerous large mature shade trees located along the paths and along the western and eastern margins of the park. A double row of mature sugar maple trees forms a half circle atop the knoll. Plantings of ornamental shrubs and herbaceous species are located along the walk near the pedestrian entrance at Park Terrace.

Views & Vistas: Views are afforded across the greensward within the park and from the adjacent roads. Views to the west are limited by dense woody vegetation.

Water Features: A pond is located in the north-central portion of the park.

Buildings/Structures/Objects: Two buildings comprise the Arroyo Recreation Center. There is a brick picnic shelter near the pond. Play equipment forms a playground in the southeast corner of the park. A monument to Colonel Pope, installed circa 1913, edges the visitor parking area.

Recreational Space: The greensward contains a baseball field, soccer field, swimming pool, and playground set within the southern portion of the park.

CONTINUATION SHEET Pope Park (#00805) / 30 Pope Park Drive, Hartford

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Pope Park is located in the Frog Hollow residential neighborhood of Hartford. The land for the park was originally donated to the City of Hartford by Col. Albert Pope, owner of Pope Manufacturing Company, known for manufacturing bicycles and automobiles. Pope intended for the land to serve “park purposes only,” and provide his employees, as well as other city residents, with access to outdoor space where they could enjoy their leisure time and recreational activities such as games and walking outdoors.¹ Pope, like Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., believed in the healing power of nature and open space. The original park was composed of 90.5 acres of land edged to the west by the southern branch of the Park River, and composed of three distinct sections. The first section, 73 acres located in the southern portion of the park to the west of Park Street, was known as Hollowmead. The second section, known as Bankside Grove, was 13 acres laid out along the Park River. The third section, known as Pope Park North, was the smallest at 4 acres in size. It was located north across Park Terrace from Bankside Grove.²

Although the Olmsted Brothers were commissioned to design the park as early as 1892, the Pope family did not deed the land to the City of Hartford in 1895. Records indicate that a parkway was also proposed to be built in honor of Colonel Pope. Drawings dated 1894 illustrate the proposed parkway. These were not prepared by the Olmsted firm, but by David Hill Coolidge, Jr., Landscape Architect, of Boston, Massachusetts.³ The parkway paralleled Zion Street from the vicinity of Trinity College, and then split into two sections, one of which extended west beyond the Park River and the other that extended through the eastern portion of the future park parcel. The portion west of the river later became known as Park Highway No. 4. Other portions of the parkway appear not to have been built.

The Olmsted firm completed plans for the park in 1898. Among them was a General Plan that addressed how the natural topography might serve the site plan, while also addressing places where grading would help to define landscape spaces. The plans also addressed how plantings should be used in formal arrangements as well as informal groves. Within Hollowmead, the designs showed the proposed western entrance into the park, located at Wellington and Hamilton streets. From the entrance, the park landscape opened up to a small green space labeled “Thithermead.” Behind this space was a dense wooded grove referred to as the Hillside Bramble. Past the grove, the park landscape opened up to a large meadow, which contained Hollowmead Pool. The meadow area was enclosed by Bourne Grove to the north. At Parkside Road was a proposed formal garden known as High Mall Hill to the south. The garden formed a semi circle with a fountain at the center. Paths surrounded the fountain and helped to reinforce the garden’s geometric form. A double row of trees edged the garden along the straight edge, while a flower garden occupied the round side. A shelter/music pavilion was indicated to be sited north of the flower garden. From the pavilion, visitors were afforded views from the elevated terrain to the park’s central meadow. Nearby to the east was a small meadow intended for family gatherings referred to as the “Little Folks Lawn.” South of High Mall Hill, a small field labeled Nethermead adjoined the Park River and completed the Hollowmead section of the park. East of Park Street, Bankside Grove consisted entirely of winding paths extending through a wooded area edging the Park River. Pope Park North was designed to feature three tennis courts. Historic photographs illustrate that much of the Olmsted plan was implemented at Pope Park. Early photographs show that Trinity College was visible from some parts of the park.

During the early to mid twentieth century, Pope Park was a popular place where city residents congregated for celebrations and events, such as fireworks on the 4th of July and band music, and for passive as well as active recreation. In 1912, a memorial honoring Colonel Pope was designed and installed in the park circa 1913. The Board of Park Commissioners report of 1930 indicates that a baseball diamond and large water area were added to the park to help relieve congestion. The report suggests that consideration was being paid to building a swimming pool as well.⁴ In 1934, architectural drawings were prepared for a recreation and tool house that was later built within the park.⁵ The building is no longer extant.

¹ Hartford Parks, “Pope Park.” Available at Pope Park – City of Hartford (hartfordct.gov). Accessed on December 6, 2021.

² Hartford Parks, “Pope Park History.” Available at Pope Park History | Pope Park. Accessed on December 6, 2021.

³ Hartford Town and City Clerk’s Office records.

⁴ Hartford Board of Park Commissioners, Annual Report, 1930, 40. Hartford History Center.

⁵ Hartford Town and City Clerk’s Office records.

CONTINUATION SHEET Pope Park (#00805) / 30 Pope Park Drive, Hartford

Changes in urban demographics, and city infrastructure took their toll on the park. The surrounding neighborhood declined to a degree in terms of the economy, while the park declined in quality and utility. Portions of the park have been deaccessioned, while others have been impacted by the construction of Interstate 84 and culverting of Park River to the west that began in 1959 and was completed in 1969. Plans were prepared to relocate Park Highway No. 4 in 1959. In 1962, plans were prepared to relocate the Colonel Pope Memorial.⁶

Later, active recreational facilities in the form of a swimming pool complex and indoor athletic facility, as well as ballfields, altered the character of the meadow forming the heart of the park. Parking was also added to accommodate visitors.⁷

In 2002, landscape architect Carol R. Johnson and Associates worked with the Friends of Pope Park, and the Knox Parks Foundation, to create a Pope Park Master Plan. The project involved research into the history of the park and documentation of its contemporary and historic features, identified current and desired uses for the park and its facilities, and suggested potential areas for improvement. The plan provided estimates of probable construction costs and a three-to-five-year process for implementation of recommended restoration and enhancement improvements.⁸ Most of the historic restoration centered around the formal garden at High Mall Hill and the winding paths of Bankside Grove. Goals included restoring the fountain and central features of the garden, including the ornamental garden plots and the double row of sugar maple trees that together formed the original semi-circular design. Additional goals included managing and preserving wildlife habitat, supporting park recreation programs, and improving safety conditions. Since the plan was developed, four phases of rehabilitation and reconstruction have been completed in the park. As of 2022, plans were being completed for renewal of the Bankside Grove area of the park.⁹

REFERENCES

Hartford History Center. Annual Reports of the Board of Park Commissioners.

Hartford Parks. "Pope Park." Available at Pope Park – City of Hartford, Hartfordct.gov. Accessed on December 6, 2021.

Hartford Parks. "Pope Park Master Plan." Available at hartfordinfo.org. Accessed on December 6, 2021.

Hartford Town and City Clerk's Office records.

⁶ Hartford Town and City Clerk's Office records.

⁷ Hartford Parks, "Pope Park History." Available at Pope Park History | Pope Park. Accessed on December 6, 2021.

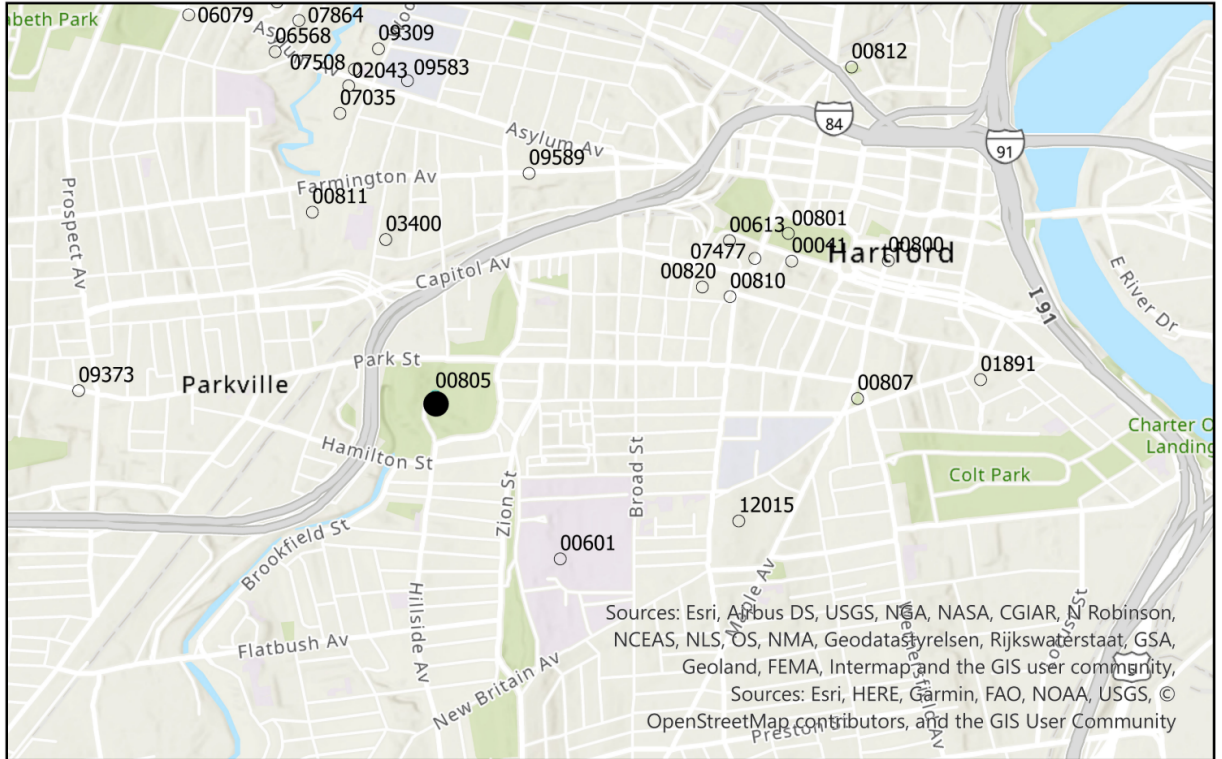
⁸ Hartford Parks, "Pope Park History." Available at Pope Park History | Pope Park. Accessed on December 6, 2021.

⁹ Hartford Parks, "Pope Park." Available at popepark.org. Accessed April 25, 2022.

CULTURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY – LANDSCAPES * OLMSTED PROJECT

CONTINUATION SHEET Pope Park (#00805) / 30 Pope Park Drive, Hartford

GRAPHICS



JOB: 00805 LOCATION: Hartford

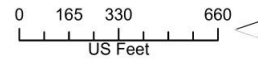


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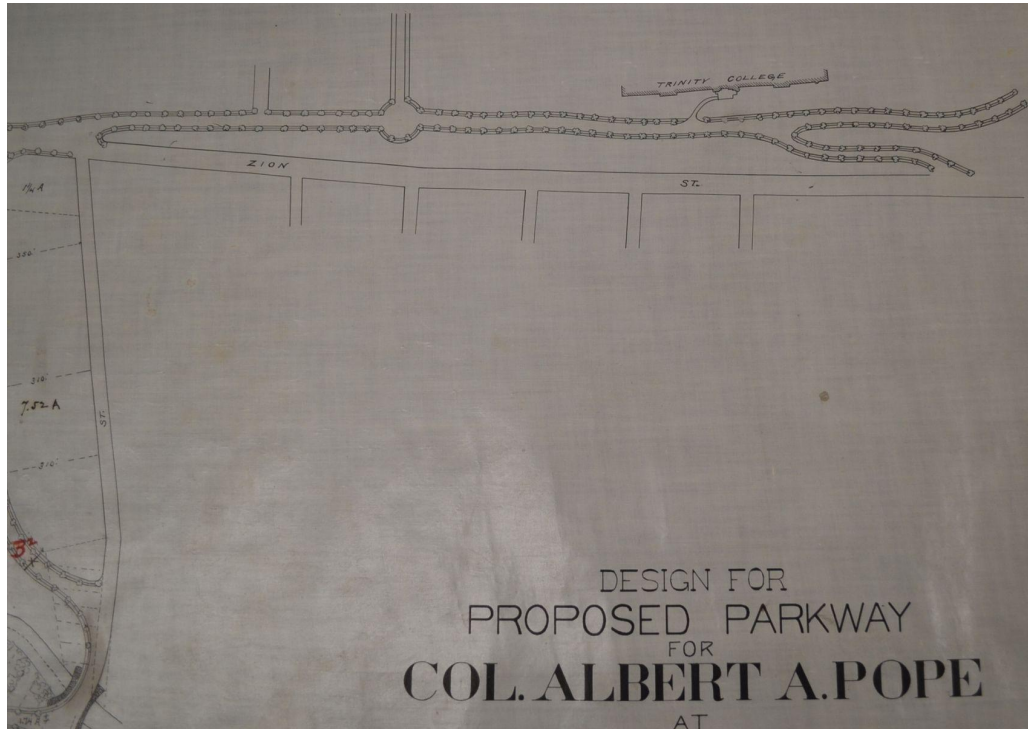
CONTINUATION SHEET Pope Park (#00805) / 30 Pope Park Drive, Hartford



JOB: 00805 LOCATION: Hartford PROJECT: Pope Park

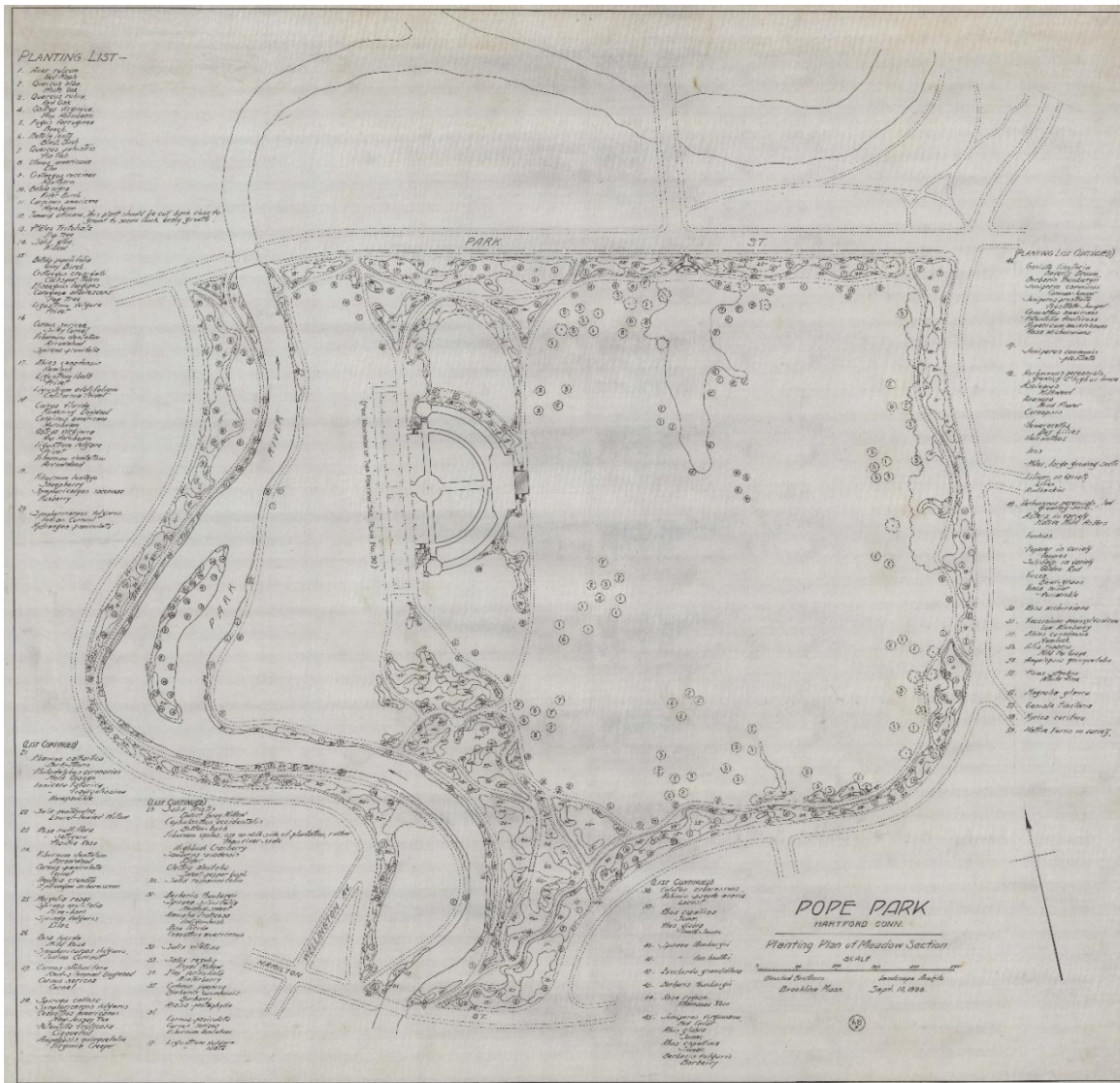


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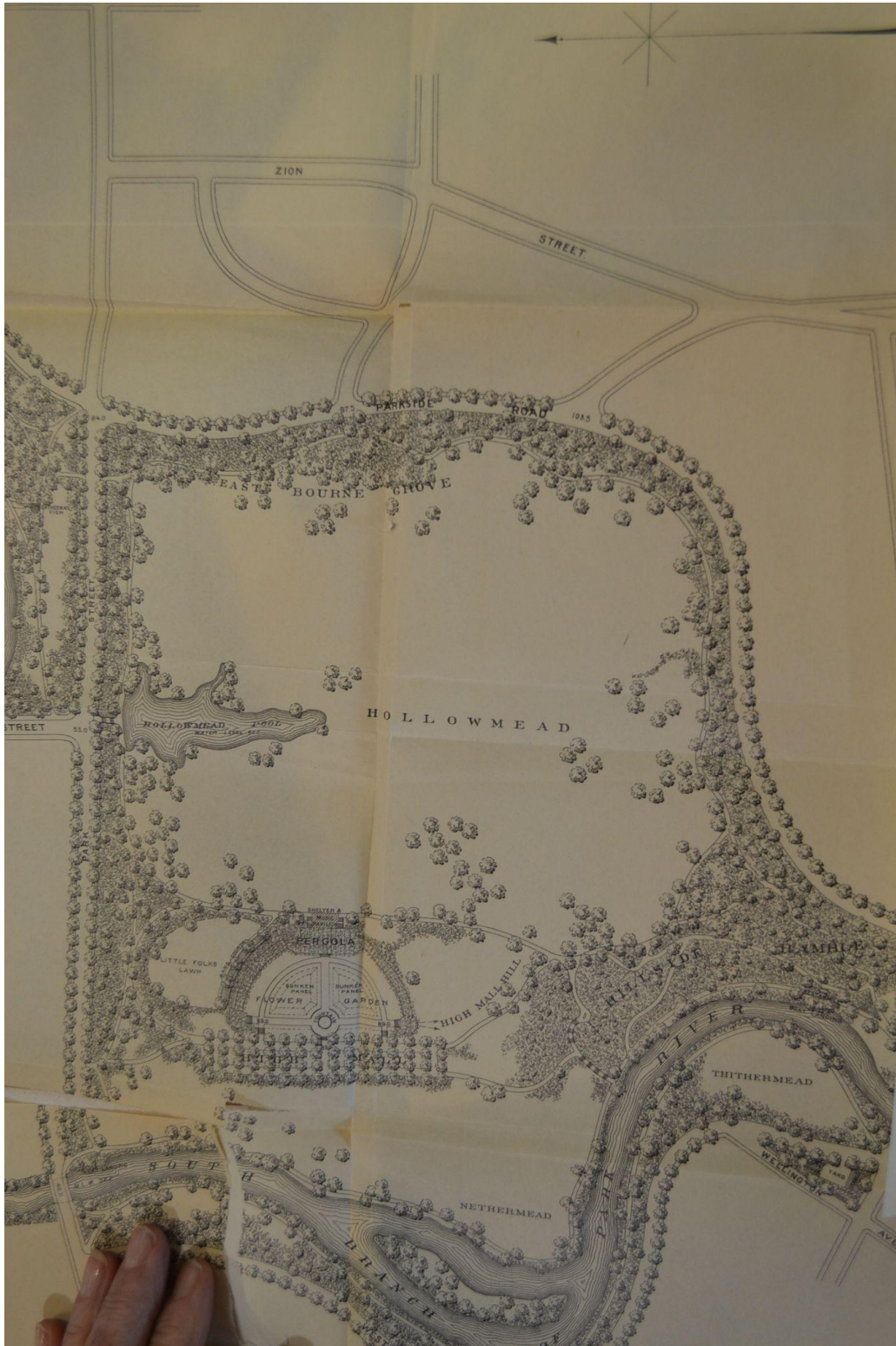
Details, drawings illustrating the Proposed Parkway for Col. Albert A. Pope, 1894. (Source: courtesy Hartford Town and City Clerk's Office)

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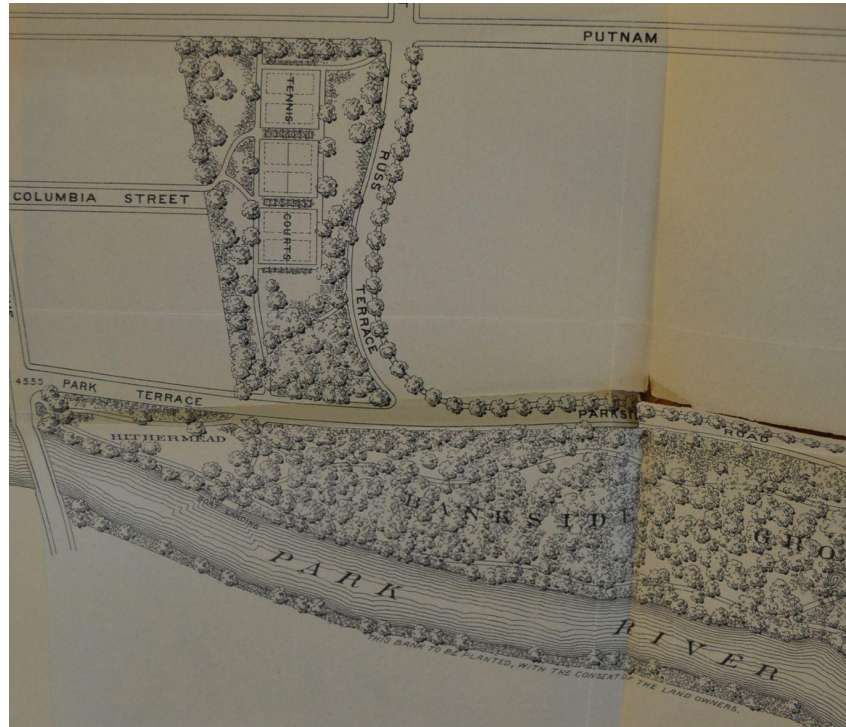
Pope Park Planting Plan of Meadow Section, 1898, prepared by Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects.
(Source: courtesy Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site)

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Illustrative map of the Hollowmead section Pope Park, 1898. (Source: Annual Report of the Board of Park Commissioners)

CONTINUATION SHEET Pope Park (#00805) / 30 Pope Park Drive, Hartford



Illustrative map of the Pope Park North section Pope Park, 1898. (Source: Annual Report of the Board of Park Commissioners)

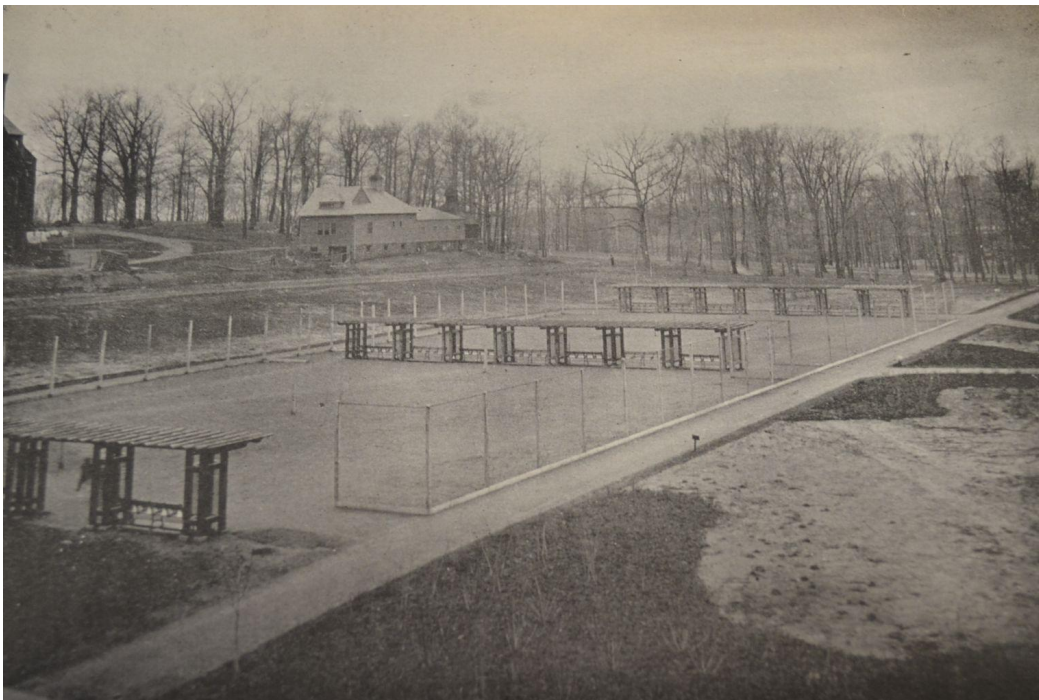


Pope Park, lawn and stroll paths between Park River and Parkside Terrace, 1899. (Source: courtesy Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site)

CONTINUATION SHEET Pope Park (#00805) / 30 Pope Park Drive, Hartford



Park River, with park land to the left, circa 1900. (Source: courtesy Hartford History Center)



Tennis courts, Pope Park North, undated, circa 1900. (Source: courtesy Hartford History Center)

CONTINUATION SHEET Pope Park (#00805) / 30 Pope Park Drive, Hartford



Photograph of children wading in a "lakelet" in Pope Park, 1914. (Source: Annual Report of the Board of Park Commissioners)



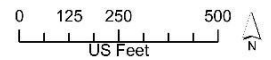
Photograph of Pope Park, 1930. (Source: Annual Report of the Board of Park Commissioners)

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Aerial photograph overlaid with the Olmsted plan. (Source: Kevan Klosterwilll)

CONTINUATION SHEET Pope Park (#00805) / 30 Pope Park Drive, Hartford



View north along the double allée along the upper terrace within the park. (All photographs taken by authors in 2021 unless otherwise noted)



View east toward the greensward from the upper terrace framed by tree plantings.

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View north toward the pond within the north central portion of the park.



View north across the greensward.

CONTINUATION SHEET Pope Park (#00805) / 30 Pope Park Drive, Hartford



View north along the walk leading into the park from the north.



View northeast of the contemporary recreation center.

CONTINUATION SHEET Pope Park (#00805) / 30 Pope Park Drive, Hartford



View west of the monument honoring Colonel Pope from the adjacent parking area.