

**CULTURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY – LANDSCAPES \* OLMSTED 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

<b>PROPERTY NAME</b> (Current/Historic) City of New Haven Plan		
<b>COUNTY</b> New Haven	<b>TOWN/CITY</b> New Haven	<b>VILLAGE</b>
<b>JOB NUMBER</b> <b>Primary:</b> 03352 <b>Related Job Numbers:</b> 05311, 05312, 05313, 05314, 05315, 05316		
<b>Landscape Type</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Park, Parkway, Recreation Area, Scenic Reservation <input checked="" 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		
<b>DATE OF ORIGINAL PROJECT:</b> 1908–1924; 1931		
<b>SUBSEQUENT PROJECTS:</b>		

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**DESIGNER(S) (primary)**

- Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.
- John Charles Olmsted
- Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.
- Other firm member(s): George Gibbs
- Other notes:

Other Designers (prior to or following Olmsted project): Cass Gilbert, architect

**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**

This is the catch-all job number for the 1910 *Plan for New Haven* (Report) and the associated *Map* that was produced by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and Cass Gilbert for the New Haven Civic Improvement Commission. The Report is full of suggestions for the Commission to act on, but only those projects that became individual job numbers (e.g., the five park projects) were surveyed for this project.

The report appears to be largely the work of Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. as a planning document that combines his experience at Chicago's Columbian Exposition, where he worked with his father as well as in Burnham's office, and was then followed by his time on the McMillan Commission for Washington, D.C. To quote from the title of the new (2022) Elizabeth Hope Cushing's biography of Jr., the Report is an example of Olmsted's ideas of "Beauty, Efficiency and Economy" and bridges the Beaux-Arts inspired architecture and civic art urban plan to the "City Practical" plan driven by broader social and environmental concerns.

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I D E N T I F I C A T I O N	<b>PROPERTY NAME</b> (Current/Historic) City of New Haven Plan (Job #03352)													
	<b>COUNTY</b> New Haven	<b>TOWN/CITY</b> New Haven	<b>VILLAGE</b>											
	<b>STREET AND NUMBER (and/or location)</b> City-wide project													
	<b>OWNER(S)</b> <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 New Haven													
	<b>LAT/LONG COORDINATES</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Center Point <input type="checkbox"/> Polygon 41.306956, -72.92819													
	<b>PARCEL INFORMATION</b> <b>Acres:</b> N/A <b>PID(s):</b> Numerous <b>MBLU(s):</b> Numerous													
	<b>USE (Present)</b> Mixed		<b>(Historic)</b> Mixed											
	<b>SURVEY TYPE</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reconnaissance-Level <input type="checkbox"/> Intensive-Level													
	D E S C R I P T I O N	<b>LANDSCAPE TYPE</b> (Check all that apply) <input type="checkbox"/> Designed <input type="checkbox"/> Vernacular <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural/Ethnographic <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Linear <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> Park- Active Recreation <input type="checkbox"/> Park-Passive Recreation or Commemorative <input type="checkbox"/> Other – specify:												
		<b>DATE OR PERIOD</b> (Include source of date) 1908–1924, 1931 (Olmsted Research Guide Online)												
<b>DESIGNERS</b> (Entities that created, designed, constructed, or shaped the landscape) Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects, Cass Gilbert, architect														
<b>DESIGN SCOPE</b> (For designed landscapes, explain what work was commissioned) City plan that covers a wide range of improvements including streets, parks, architecture, etc.														
<b>LOCATION OF DRAWINGS/IMAGES/SOURCE MATERIAL</b> Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site and Library of Congress – Olmsted Associates Records														
<b>VISUAL ASSESSMENT SUMMARY</b> (Check boxes for the qualities that are key features of this landscape. If attaching descriptive narrative, consider these categories.)  <table border="0"> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Layout &amp; Spatial Relationships</b></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Water Features</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Circulation</b></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Drainage</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Topography</b></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Buildings/Structures/Objects</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Plantings/Vegetation</b></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Recreational Space</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Views &amp; Vistas</b></td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other:</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Boundaries</b></td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Design Style:</b> City Beautiful Movement</td> </tr> </table>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Layout &amp; Spatial Relationships</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Water Features</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Circulation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Drainage</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Topography</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Buildings/Structures/Objects</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Plantings/Vegetation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Recreational Space</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Views &amp; Vistas</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Boundaries</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Design Style:</b> City Beautiful Movement
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<b>C O N D I T I O N</b>	<b>EXISTING CONDITION</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recognizable <input type="checkbox"/> Not Extant/Not Recognizable Changes: Century of New Haven's continued development		
	<b>POTENTIAL THREATS</b> <input type="checkbox"/> None Known <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure Improvements <input type="checkbox"/> Onsite Development <input type="checkbox"/> Adjacent Development <input type="checkbox"/> Vandalism <input type="checkbox"/> Overuse <input type="checkbox"/> Deferred Maintenance <input type="checkbox"/> Invasive Vegetation <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental – specify: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other – specify: _____		
<b>E N V I R O N M E N T</b>	<b>SETTING</b> (One sentence description) 1910 planning study for the city of New Haven with a broad scope		
	<b>VEGETATION</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Maintained Open Land <input type="checkbox"/> Natural Open Land <input type="checkbox"/> Woodland/Forest <input type="checkbox"/> Wetland <input type="checkbox"/> Specimen Plants <input type="checkbox"/> Other – specify: _____		
	<b>SLOPE</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Level/Nearly Level <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moderate Slope <input type="checkbox"/> Steep Slope                      Elevation (ASML): Varied		
	<b>CONNECTICUT PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCE (Eco-Region)</b> <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: Varied		
<b>H I S T O R Y</b>	<b>SUMMARY</b> (Provide a brief overview in this space. More detailed narrative can be attached.) Civic Improvement Commission contracts with Cass Gilbert and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. to prepare a comprehensive plan for New Haven. See <i>Continuation Sheet</i>		
	<b>NATIONAL REGISTER RECOMMENDATION</b> 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Evaluated Explanation: The scope of the 1910 plan and assessing its status 2021-2022 is beyond the scope of this survey but is worthy of being done		
	NR Listed: <input type="checkbox"/> District-Contributing <input type="checkbox"/> District-Non-Contributing <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient Documentation		
<b>R E P O R T E D B Y</b>	<b>NAME</b> Lucy Lawliss	<b>ORGANIZATION</b> Red Bridge Group	<b>DATE</b> December 2021
	<b>ADDRESS</b> 2100 Green Street, San Francisco, California 94123		
	<b>PHOTOGRAPHER</b> Lucy Lawliss	<b>DATE</b> September 13 & 16, 2021	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Permission to use photographs (public domain)
	<b>SURVEY METHOD</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site Visit/In-Person Walkover <input checked="" 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

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY (Visual Assessment Summary)**

**Layout & Spatial Relationships.** The comprehensive planning effort undertaken by Cass Gilbert and Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. took all of the following visual assessments into consideration in the 1910 report. Related projects carried out by Olmsted Brothers for the parks (#05311 Edgewood Park, #05312 New Haven Green, #05313 East Rock Park, #05314 Beaver Pond Park, #05315 West River Memorial Park, and #05316 East Shore Park/Townsend Tract) are applications of these visual assessments at a site level and are covered on separate survey forms.

**HISTORICAL NARRATIVE**

In 1908, the New Haven Civic Improvement Commission, largely under the leadership of the Commission's Secretary, George Dudley Seymour, undertook a comprehensive study for the city with architect, Cass Gilbert, and landscape architect, Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. The plan followed on the heels of two other major urban planning efforts accomplished by Olmsted father and son: Olmsted Sr. for his part in planning the Beaux-Arts composition for the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893, and Olmsted Jr. for his role as a member of 1901 McMillan Commission that produced a plan for Washington, D.C., a direct outcome of the Exposition's success. The Columbian Exposition which launched the national "City Beautiful" style is one of two major projects where the young Olmsted learned his craft under his father's direction: The other being Biltmore estate at Asheville, N.C.

While Cass Gilbert had done some campus planning, there would seem to be no question that Olmsted took the city planning lead for New Haven and yet, receives very little credit for his work: None of the parks that are first described in the plan have been nominated to the National Register of Historic Places and national significance as an urban and conservation planner are just beginning to be recognized.<sup>1</sup>

The success of what became known as the McMillan Plan was followed by Olmsted Jr.'s appointment by President Taft to Washington D. C.'s newly created Commission of Fine Arts in 1910, to oversee the plan's implementation, which is the same year that the New Haven plan was published and the year that Olmsted Jr. delivered the first concept plan to the Sage Foundation Realty for Forest Hills Gardens. The breath and richness of Olmsted Jr.'s planning work is worthy of study and this first highpoint of work in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that includes the City of New Haven is significant.

It is interesting to see that the first piece of correspondence in the Olmsted Brother's New Haven job file is a short note from June 1907, presumably written by Olmsted Jr (although unsigned) reads: "I have been much interested in reading your [George Dudley Seymour] letter in the New Haven Register—"to make New Haven a City Beautiful"—and thank you for sending it to me." It is immediately followed by a letter from Mr. Seymour hoping he can secure Olmsted's expertise along with architect, Cass Gilbert's and "Mr. McKim's" to create an improvement plan for the city. Mr. Seymour also asks for Olmsted to "send me the 'story of your life'" because "the New Haven public will be very much interested now in you . . . I tell people that you are the first landscape architect in the country and find them immediately interested."

Along with a contract to secure "Mr. Olmstead", the firm has pasted a small article from the newspaper that reads "George Gibbs, the assistant of Frederick Law Olmstead, is here working on the city beautiful plans. Mr. Olmstead in touring the city found a most interesting situation and an opportunity at small cost to beautify and make more convenient the parks around the city. He paid particular attention to the parks and boulevards . . . he had not finished his touring when he was obliged to go to Boston. . . Cass Gilbert will come next week to this city to submit a preliminary draft of plans for the Ives library."

In addition to George Dudley Seymour, a Yale graduate and New Haven patent attorney, the commission included city leaders such as Judge John P. Studley who was elected mayor and served three, two-year

CONTINUATION SHEET New Haven Plan / Commission on Improvement of the City (#03352) / New Haven

terms from 1901-07; Rollin S. Woodruff, who became Connecticut's governor in 1907; industrialist, Frederick F. Brewster, whose home, Edgerton, has since become a city park; and Anson Phelps Stokes, Jr., brother to Isaac Newton Phelps Stokes (Khakum Wood, Job # 02924), and was second in command to Yale University president and assistant rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church from 1900-18.

Although Olmsted Jr. acknowledges to Seymour in an article that is published in New Haven's *Morning Journal* in January of 1908 that neither he nor Gilbert have skills as "municipal diagnosticians," Olmsted has an amazing grasp on the kind of information that will be needed in order to make recommendations that "would contribute most to the satisfaction of its citizens." In the same article he proceeds to make an exhaustive list of all the information they will be gathering from population statistics to areas of the cities occupied by "streets and squares . . . by parks and public grounds . . . by cemeteries . . . by water and marshes."

After two years of work the *Plan for New Haven* was delivered as a report (Report) with detailed recommendations with photographs from around the city to illustrate the recommendations along with a color-coded "Plan to Accompany Report of Improvement Commission" (Plan) of the city of New Haven with city streets, topography, and a key of existing and proposed work. Numbers on the Plan coordinate with descriptions in the Report. Because the Plan is really an illustration and discussion of two green belts of parks and reservations proposed to circle the city, taking in West and the Quinnipiac Rivers into the scheme, it must be largely a production of the Olmsted firm. Of the 82 circled numbers, six parks became separate job numbers for the Olmsted Brothers: #05311 Edgewood Park, #05312 New Haven Green, #05313 East Rock Park, #05314 Beaver Pond Park, #05315 West River Memorial Park, and #05316 East Shore Park/Townsend Tract

The subsequent thorough analysis of the New Haven plan and the impact of the landscape recommendations does not seem to have been done.<sup>2</sup> The focus of reviews and analyses to date have been around the successes and failures of the architectural recommendations, many of which were in the works as the planning work began—including the railroad station and public library, both designed by Cass Gilbert. More emphasis has been placed around the politics-of-the-day that did not support construction of the proposed plaza and boulevard—the most Beaux-Arts recommendation in the plan—that would have connected the new train station to downtown.

The scope of the 1910 plan and assessing its status 2021-22 is beyond the scope of this survey but is worthy of being done. As stated, the individual projects for Olmsted Brothers that arose from this plan are surveyed but their cumulative value and significance is still to be recognized and valued.

<sup>1</sup> The first full-length biography of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. is about to be published (2022) by Elizabeth Hope Cushing, titled: *Beauty, Efficiency and Economy: A Life of Frederick Law Olmsted Jr., Landscape Architect, Planner and Conservationist*

<sup>2</sup> A facsimile edition of the *Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. & Cass Gilbert Plan for New Haven* was produced in 2012 with a preface by Yale University art historian, Vincent Scully (1920-2017) and with an introduction by Alan J. Plattus, Yale University professor of architecture and urbanism and founding director of the Urban Design Workshop.

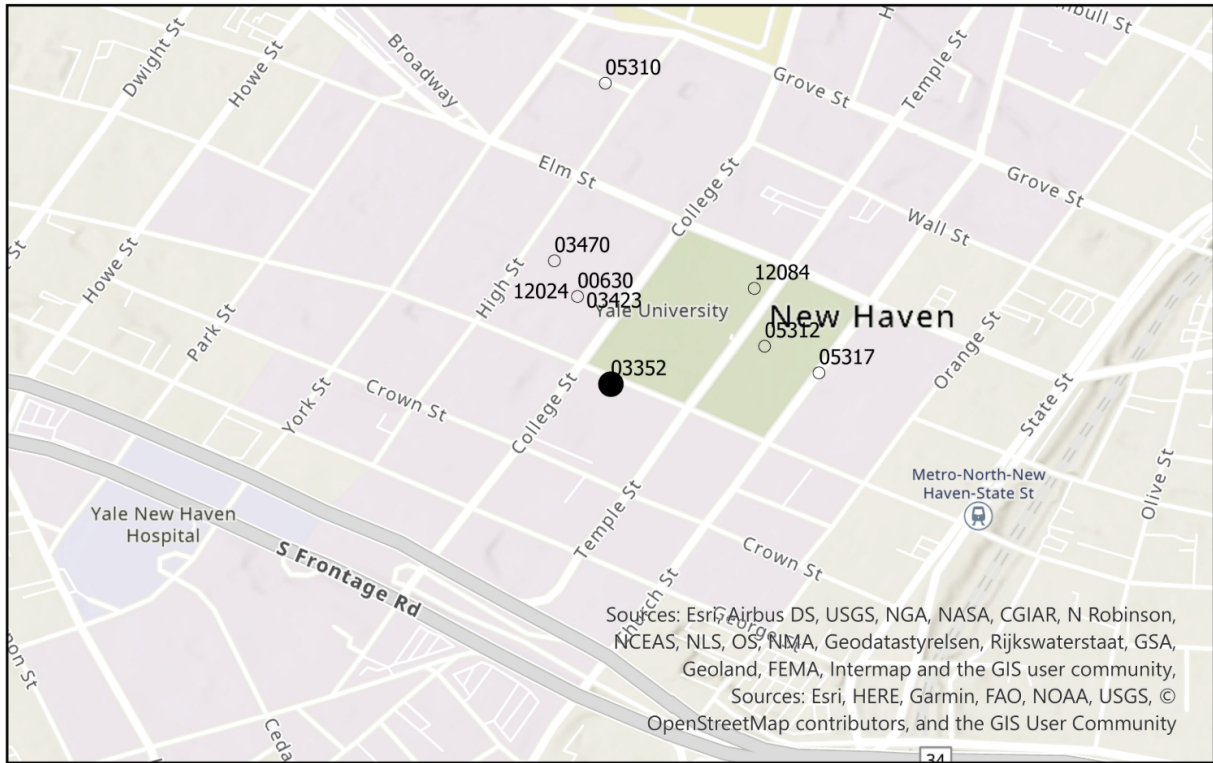
## REFERENCES

*Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. & Cass Gilbert Plan for New Haven*. Preface by Vincent J. Scully; Introduction by Alan J. Plattus; Afterword by Douglas W. Rae. Trinity University Press. 2012

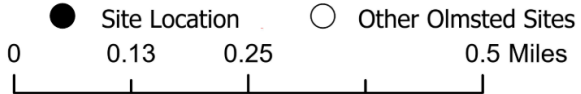
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**GRAPHICS**

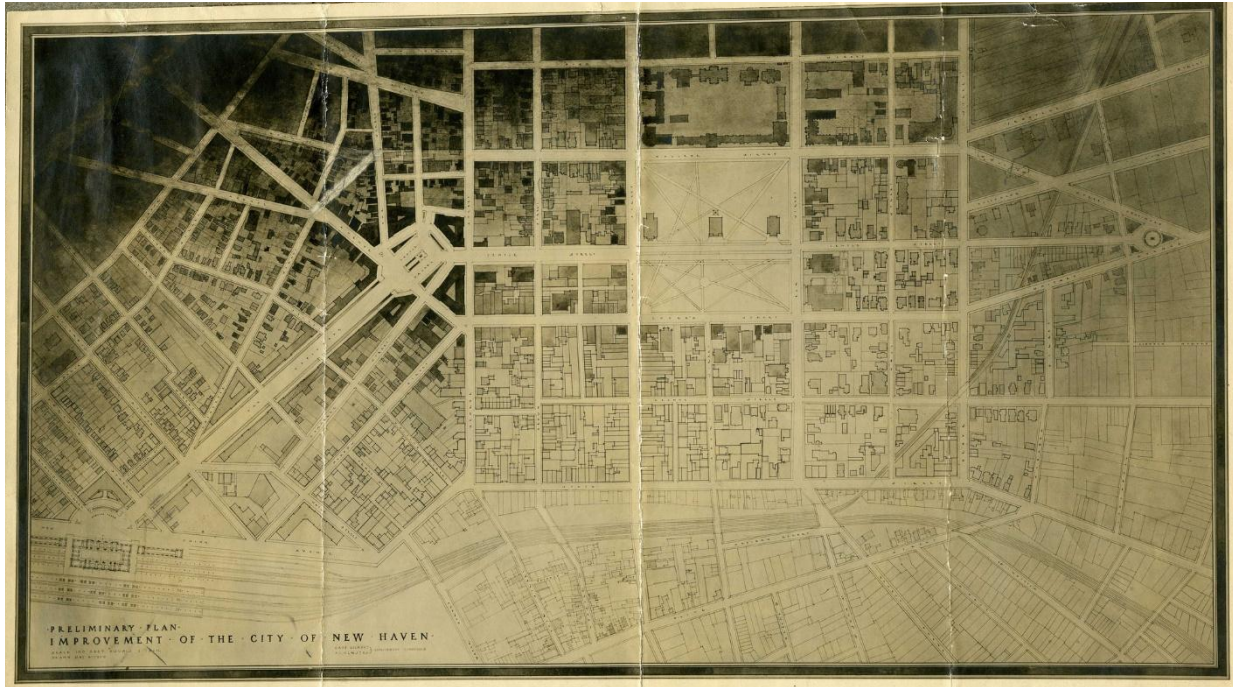


JOB: 03352 LOCATION: New Haven



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Preliminary Plan, Improvement of the City of New Haven, 1908, Cass Gilbert and F.L.O. (illegible). (Source: courtesy Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site)



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New Haven in 1748, from Olmsted Firm files. (Source: courtesy Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site)

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View looking northwest along Edgewood Avenue at Edgewood Park. (All photographs taken by the author in 2021 unless otherwise noted)



Preserved view of the West River at Edgewood Park, as recommended in the 1910 plan.



Another view of the marshes at West River from Edgewood Park.



Upgraded crossing at East Rock Road at East Rock Park.



Preserved view looking south along Mill River from East Rock Park.