

CULTURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY – LANDSCAPES * OLMSTED PROJECT ADDENDUM

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

PROPERTY NAME (Current/Historic) Edgewood Park / Edgewood Park		
COUNTY New Haven	TOWN/CITY New Haven	VILLAGE
JOB NUMBER Primary: 05311 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: 1911 SUBSEQUENT PROJECTS:		

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DESIGNER(S) (primary)

- Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr.
- John Charles Olmsted
- Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.
- Other firm member(s): Percy Reginald Jones (1860-1941)
- Other notes: N/A

Other Designers (prior to or following Olmsted project): Donald Grant Mitchel (1822 – 1908)

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

Surviving features resulting from the Olmsted firm's design work include: Expanded circulation from the entrance at Hobart Street to the lower park area (Duck Pond) with possible tree planting to supplement existing trees.

Frederick Law Olmsted Jr. was charged with completing a park initiated by Donald Grant Mitchell by making it more accessible through the addition of an entrance from Chapel Street and broadened views and vistas along what is now West Park Avenue to allow scenes of the West River Valley along the route to Whalley Avenue. These recommendations are in support of the general findings in the New Haven Plan.

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I D E N T I F I C A T I O N	PROPERTY NAME (Current/Historic) Edgewood Park / Edgewood Park (Job #05311)													
	COUNTY New Haven	TOWN/CITY New Haven	VILLAGE											
	STREET AND NUMBER (and/or location) Edgewood Avenue at Ella T. Grasso Boulevard													
	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													
	LAT/LONG COORDINATES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Center Point <input type="checkbox"/> Polygon 41.320208, -72.957325													
	PARCEL INFORMATION Acres: 111 PID(s): 23722, 23723, 22778 MBLU(s): 373 1106 00100, 375 1096 00100, 350 1097 00100													
	USE (Present) City park		(Historic) City 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) 1911 Olmsted Research Guide Online												
DESIGNERS (Entities that created, designed, constructed, or shaped the landscape) Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects (following upon work completed by Donald Grant Mitchell)														
DESIGN SCOPE (For designed landscapes, explain what work was commissioned) Layout and development of Edgewood Park as a result of proposed improvements in Olmsted and Gilbert 1910 plan for the City of New Haven														
LOCATION OF DRAWINGS/IMAGES/SOURCE MATERIAL Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, Library of Congress – Olmsted Associates Resources														
VISUAL ASSESSMENT SUMMARY (Check boxes for the qualities that are key features of this landscape. If attaching descriptive narrative, consider these categories.) <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Layout & Spatial Relationships</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water Features</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Circulation</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drainage</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Topography</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Buildings/Structures/Objects</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plantings/Vegetation</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreational Space</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Views & Vistas</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Other:</td> </tr> <tr> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Boundaries</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/> Design Style:</td> </tr> </table>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Layout & Spatial Relationships	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water Features	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Circulation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Drainage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Topography	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Buildings/Structures/Objects	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plantings/Vegetation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreational Space	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Views & Vistas	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	<input type="checkbox"/> Boundaries	<input type="checkbox"/> Design Style:
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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: Improved (new) playground equipment, installation art/sculpture, boardwalk into marsh		
	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 type="checkbox"/> Vandalism <input type="checkbox"/> Overuse <input 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) Upper (more active recreation and lawn) and lower (river and marsh) park with path transition path/road		
	VEGETATION <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Maintained Open Land <input checked="" 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): 6-123'		
	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: Varied soils, with Rippowam fine sandy loam and Penwood-Urban Land complex among the most significant; varied drainage.		
H I S T O R Y	SUMMARY (Provide a brief overview in this space. More detailed narrative can be attached.) First (park) project commissioned from 1910 Plan for city improvement. See <i>Continuation Sheet</i>		
	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 current nomination does not mention the work of the Olmsted firm NR Listed: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District-Contributing <input type="checkbox"/> District-Non-Contributing <input type="checkbox"/> Individual <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Insufficient Documentation		
R E P O R T E R S H I P	NAME Lucy Lawliss	ORGANIZATION Red Bridge Group	DATE December 2021
	ADDRESS 2100 Green Street, San Francisco, California 94123		
	PHOTOGRAPHER Lucy Lawliss	DATE September 13, 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

NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY (Visual Assessment Summary)

Layout & Spatial Relationships: The upper level of Edgewood Park along Edgewood Avenue to Ella T. Grasso Boulevard is more formal with lawn, groupings of specimen trees, benches, and monuments/sculptures. The lower area, which is approached along gently sloped and winding paved road/trail that descends to the West River and marshes. The road/trail continues north on flat terrain with a steeply wooded bank along the eastern edge that continues between the upper and lower park to the crossing at Edgewood and Yale Avenues. Pedestrians continue to the north end of the park, which is mostly trails for passive recreation and at the far north end a contemporary recreation building and skate park have been added near at the intersection of the park and Whalley Avenue.

Circulation: It would appear that, what was once a road allowing vehicle traffic through the park from the upper level, beginning at the park's intersection at Hobart Street, is now blocked for pedestrian use only, but this path is still in use as one way to the lower area of the park to Edgewood Park Pond and the West River. An alternate path system is set inside a bollarded edge and parallels Edgewood Avenue to its north intersection with Ella T. Grasso Boulevard. Here pedestrians exit to a city sidewalk that travels south along the boundary of the park and Ella T. Grasso Boulevard until it meets a second road/pedestrian entrance from Ella T Grasso Boulevard and a bit further south, a pedestrian-only entrance at the southeast corner of Ella T Grasso Boulevard and Chapel Street. The Ella T. Grasso Boulevard's road/pedestrian access is where one picks up the road/trail from Edgewood Avenue and can follow its curved descent to the road and path system that travels along the Edgewood Park Pond and straightened West River, with boardwalk access out to the wetlands. The road and trails continue north—traveling under Edgewood Avenue—until it reaches their terminus at Walley Avenue.

Topography: The southeast end of Edgewood Park adjacent to the Edgewood Park residential area has an upper and lower park setting, separated by a steep and wooded bank that is negotiated by either the road/path that curves down to the lower level, or a broad set of railroad tie steps near the Edgewood Avenue underpass, which seem to be the formalization of a desire-line path and not a planned egress. The bulk of the park land, which is north of the Edgewood Avenue underpass, is a low lying mostly forested area with wetlands along the river.

Plantings/Vegetation: The natural areas dominate the landscape of the park with the river and its marshes—now mostly dominated by the invasive exotic phragmites (*Phragmites australis*) also known as common reed, in the lower zones, and the steeply mixed deciduous—oak dominated—wooded bank that provide the transition from the lower park to higher ground. This area was the focus of inventory and planting work by Olmsted Brothers. The upper level at the southeast end of the park is open lawn with clusters of specimen trees, mostly oaks with a few specimen evergreens, mostly Eastern Red Cedar that are located along Ella T Grasso Boulevard.

Views & Vistas: The primary views are into the park from along Edgewood Avenue and from West Park Avenue. There are also open and closed views along the pond and river throughout the lower park.

Water Features: The Edgewood Park Pond and the West River are the primary water features of the park.

Drainage: There were no obvious drainage structures in the park and most of the storm water would seem to be handled by sheet flow with water from the upper level draining to the lower-level water systems of the pond and river.

Buildings/Structures/Objects: There is one small building called the Edgewood Ranger Station in the upper park just inside the Edgewood Avenue entrance. It appears to be of some age (construction date TBD) and in good condition. Other structures and objects in this area are Spanish American military memorial stature and at the intersection of the upper road and its descent to the lower park, there is a contemporary interactive sculpture that appears to be a sundial (date TBD). This is a contemporary recreation building at the north end of the park off Whalley Avenue (construction date TBD).

CONTINUATION SHEET Edgewood Park (#05311) / Edgewood Ave at Ella T. Grasso Boulevard, New Haven

Recreational Space: A contemporary playground was developed just off the intersection of Edgewood and Ella T. Grasso Boulevards and a skate park and tennis courts have been added at the north end of the park off Whalley Avenue.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Edgewood Park was the first independent project, and the closest area into the city, that followed the completion of the Olmsted and Gilbert 1910 Plan for the City of New Haven. The graphic presentation with the New Haven Plan showed this area to already be a named park, but proposing land be added to it creating a continuous park edge along both sides of the West River (area 45) with proposed additions north and south recommended as additions. It is unclear from the Olmsted firm correspondence file, how much of the park had previously been developed by Donald Grant Mitchell (1822 – 1908), but the road/path from the upper park that begins at Hobart Street and Edgewood Avenue to the lower park is shown terminating at the Edgewood Avenue bridge over the park.

According to the 1986 National Register of Historic District listing, Mitchell is called a landscape architect and is the only person credited with the development of the Edgewood park and neighborhood in 1899. The nomination also notes that he went on to write a book under the pseudonym I. K. Marvel about planning that used Edgewood Park as a model. The fact that the park was largely developed may explain why there are no design plans for the park in the Olmsted job file and the drawings and correspondence focuses on creating a new entrance to the park from Chapel Street (which seems not to have happened) and to open views and vistas of the West River valley from W. Park Avenue.

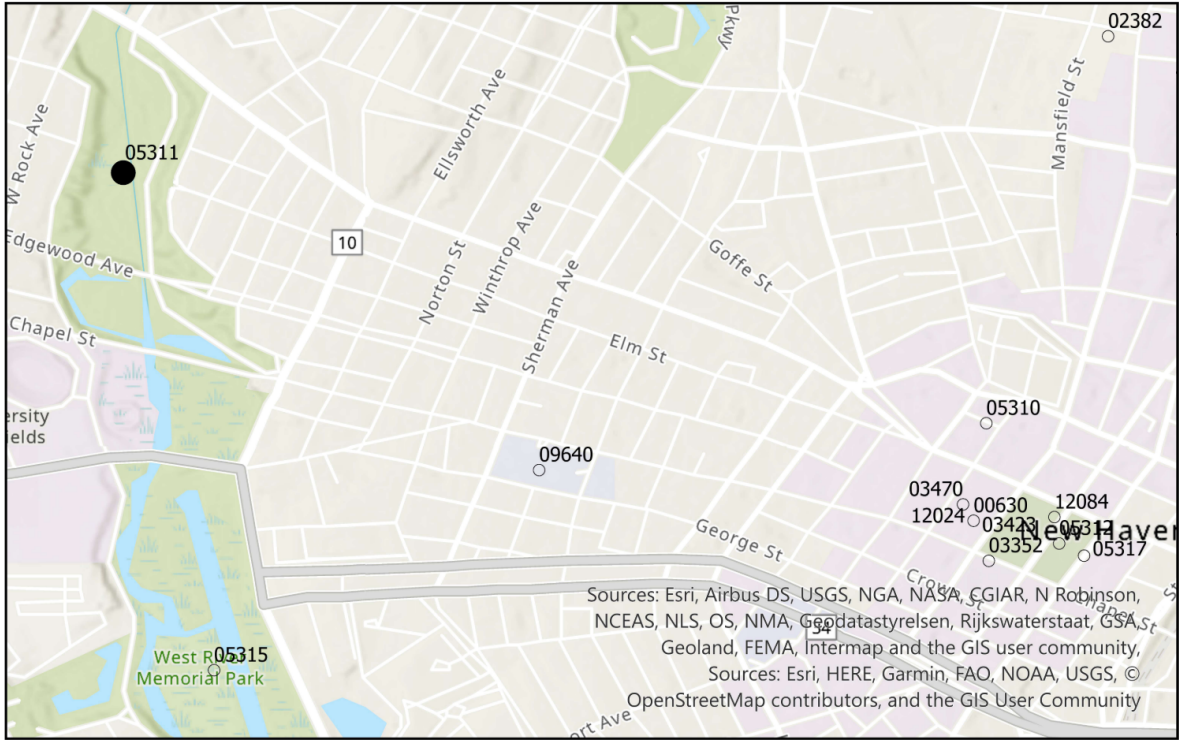
REFERENCES

National Register of Historic Places Nomination, Edgewood Park Historic District, 1986.

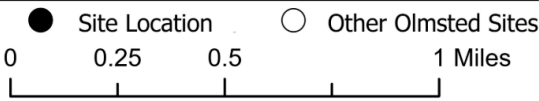
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CONTINUATION SHEET Edgewood Park (#05311) / Edgewood Ave at Ella T. Grasso Boulevard, New Haven

GRAPHICS

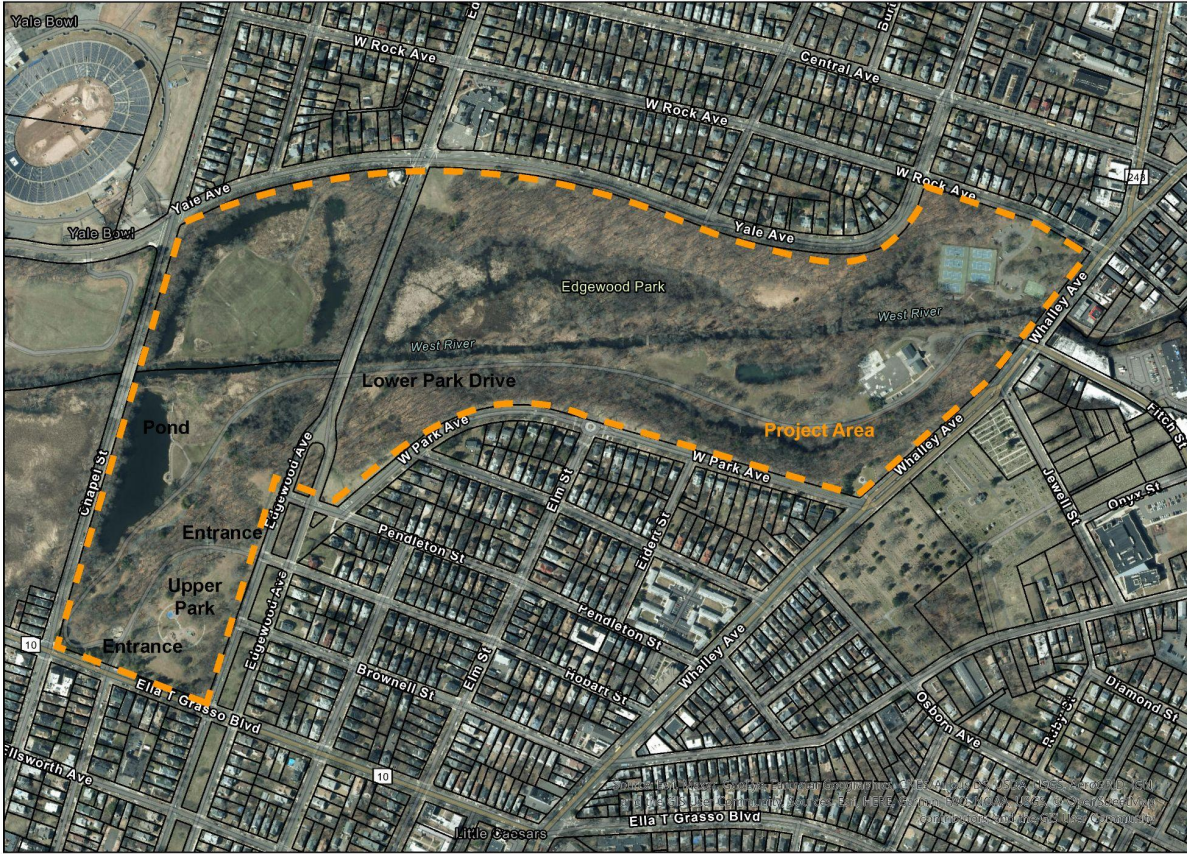


JOB: 5311 LOCATION: New Haven

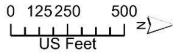


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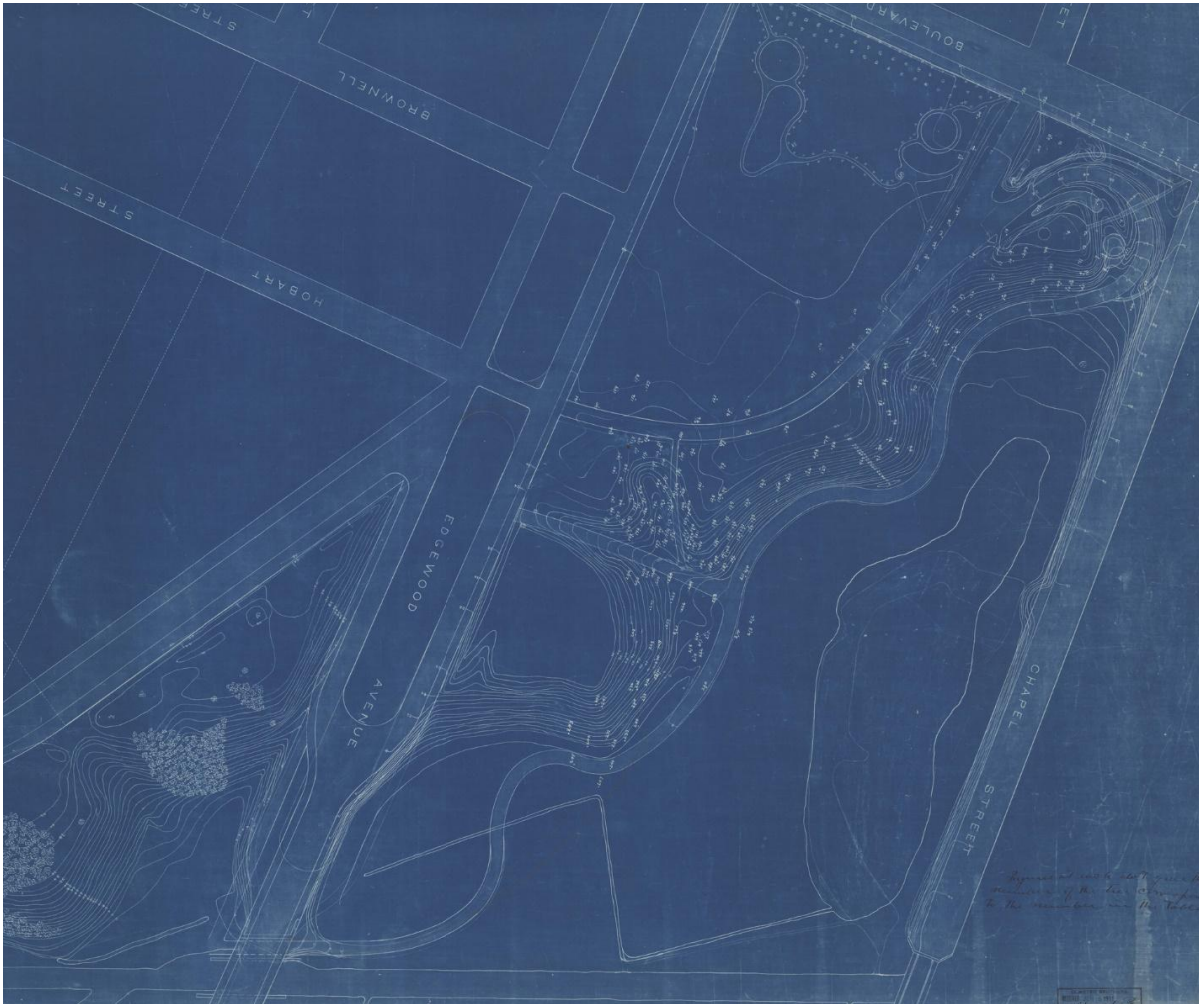
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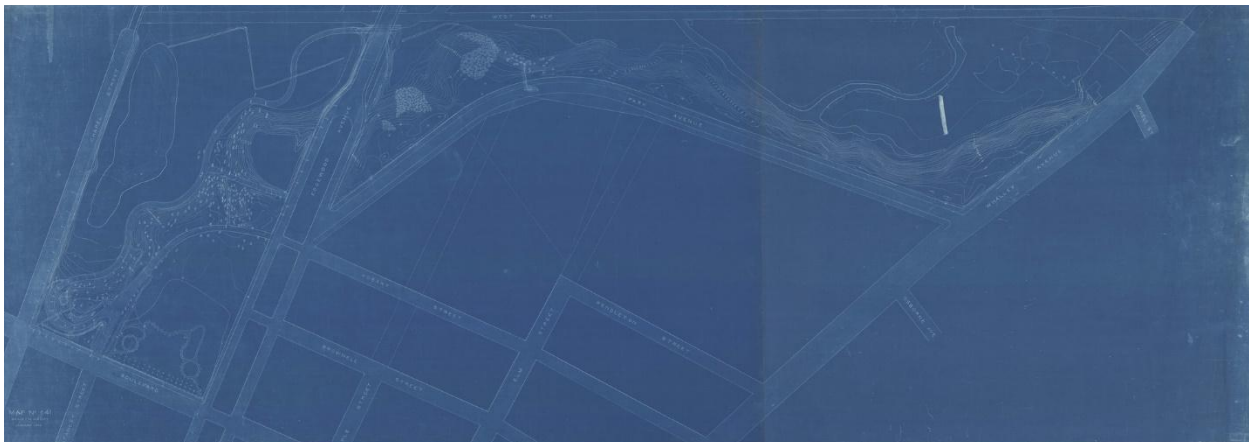
JOB: 05311 LOCATION: New Haven PROJECT: Edgewood Park



CONTINUATION SHEET Edgewood Park (#05311) / Edgewood Ave at Ella T. Grasso Boulevard, New Haven



Survey of Edgewood Park, stamped received by Olmsted Brothers, June 5, 1911. (Source: courtesy Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site)



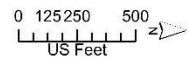
Map No. 641 of Edgewood Park, date not legible. (Source: courtesy Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site)

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JOB: 05311 LOCATION: New Haven PROJECT: Edgewood Park



Contemporary aerial photograph overlaid with historic Olmsted Brothers plan. (Source: Kevan Klosterwill)



View looking northwest along the south side of Edgewood Avenue and Edgewood Park at Hobart Street.
(All photographs taken by the author in 2021 unless otherwise noted)



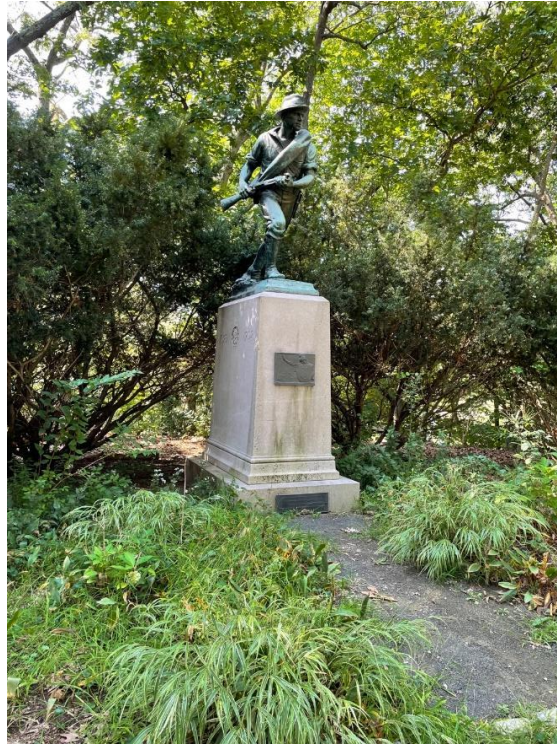
View looking south into park at Hobart Street entrance.



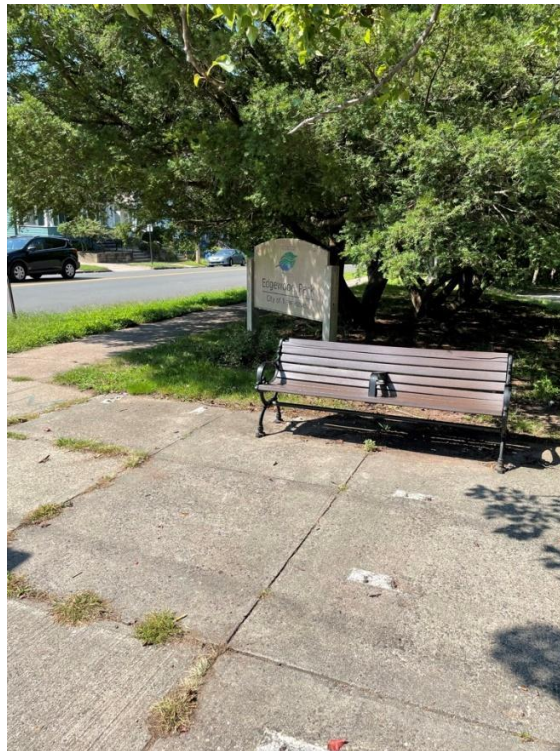
View looking west along gravel pedestrian path that parallels Edgewood Avenue.



View of park façade of Edgewood Park Ranger Station.



Spanish American War Memorial statue at upper level of Edgewood Park.



Park entrance at Ella T Grasso Boulevard with sign and typical park bench.



View looking west into park from Ella T Grasso Boulevard entrance. Sundial sculpture at turn to lower park.



View looking down road/path to lower park. Cars in distance are parked along Chapel Street.



View looking west along lower park road/path with marsh and Edgewood Park Pond on the left.



View of contemporary interpretive boardwalk into West River marsh from lower road/path.



View of steep, wooded bank that is the transition along the upper to lower park. Note wooden stairs in middle distance to accommodate informal foot traffic on slope and ranger station in far distance.



Character view of lower park road/path as it travels north along the West River.



Wooden steps to accommodate pedestrians who want to circle back to upper park near Hobart Street.



Character of upper park with clusters of deciduous trees and playground area.