



EDGEWOOD LAKE, BOATHOUSE & GAZEBO
FRANKLIN DELANO ROOSEVELT PARK, PHILADELPHIA
————— PRESERVATION PLAN —————

Preservation Studio, Fall 2012

Graduate Program of Historic Preservation
University of Pennsylvania School of Design

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PART I

I.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This preservation plan explores the history, use, and future potential of the Edgewood Lake boathouse and gazebo in Franklin Delano Roosevelt Park in South Philadelphia. Because the design and history of the buildings are so connected to the water, the site considered by this preservation plan also includes Edgewood Lake and the land around its perimeter. FDR Park is one of Philadelphia's most frequented public spaces, and it boasts one of the only fully-accessible water recreation spots in the city.

FDR Park, originally League Island Park, was designed by the Olmsted Brothers in 1914 and was part of the larger City Beautiful Movement that spread across the country in the early twentieth century. The boathouse and gazebo were built in 1916 and the park was complete by 1923. FDR Park was the site of the Philadelphia Sesquicentennial International Exhibition in 1926. The period of significance for this site is between 1914 and 1926, a period that incorporates the historical vision for the park and the boathouse as well as their original uses. This period of significance combines the importance of landscape, ecological, and architectural values with the rich history of the boathouse in the early twentieth century. The boathouse and gazebo contribute to the FDR Park Local Historic District, designated in 2000, and arguably deserve their own recognition as historic landmarks in a culturally and environmentally significant landscape.

This preservation plan outlines character-defining features of the site, which inform the values and goals proposed in this report and aid in the understanding of the significance attributed to the site. Defining the historic, environmental, and social values that are integral to the park is important for establishing preservation goals and a guiding philosophy for future use, interpretation, and improvements to the site. This plan lists these goals and describes the important considerations in our preservation philosophy. Case studies are included to compare similar sites and situations. Consulting case studies not only inspired recommendations for the Edgewood Lake boathouse, but also helped the team

identify the strengths and challenges the site will face and to determine the possibilities for preservation and historic interpretation.

This preservation plan aims to renew the historical awareness and proposes reuse of the site that remains sensitive to current popular uses. Ending in specific recommendations for the site, this preservation plan proposes five detailed, individual avenues of action that could be pursued to enhance the park in different ways that would improve the overall quality of FDR Park, the experience of park users, and the communities that surround it. These proposals serve as options that can stand alone or be used in combination as future planning sees fit. Above all, the goals and recommendations for the site should be used as a guideline for design, use, and preservation in the park.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Site Orientation

Edgewood Lake, Boathouse and Gazebo are located in FDR Park, one of the most heavily used public recreational areas in South Philadelphia (Figure 2.1.1). Originally named League Island Park, the park was designed in the early twentieth century by the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architecture firm. This 348-acre park is operated by the Fairmount Park system, one of the largest park systems in the country. The site is bordered by South Broad Street to the east, Pattison Avenue to the north, and freight rail owned by CSX that leads to the Delaware River to the west and south. The southern edge of the park is truncated by Interstate 95, which cuts off users from approximately 17 acres of park land while providing a unique recreational space for skateboarders (Figure 2.1.2).

Just east of FDR Park is Philadelphia's Stadium District. The Citizen's Bank Stadium for the Phillies, the Lincoln Financial Field for the Eagles, and the Wachovia Center for the 76-ers and Flyers are the prominent buildings rising out of a sea of parking lots. This area has been targeted by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission in Philadelphia 2035's Lower South District Plan as a site for future transit-oriented development. Currently, the stadium district has cyclical life. On game days, tens of thousands of people flood the area and breath life into the vast swaths of asphalt. On non-game days, the area is barren, but full of unknown potential for commercial and residential uses (Figure 2.1.3).

To the north of FDR Park sits the site of the former Naval Hospital, owned by the Philadelphia Industrial



Figure 2.1.1. The boathouse and gazebo at FDR Park as viewed across Edgewood Lake. (A. Kress)

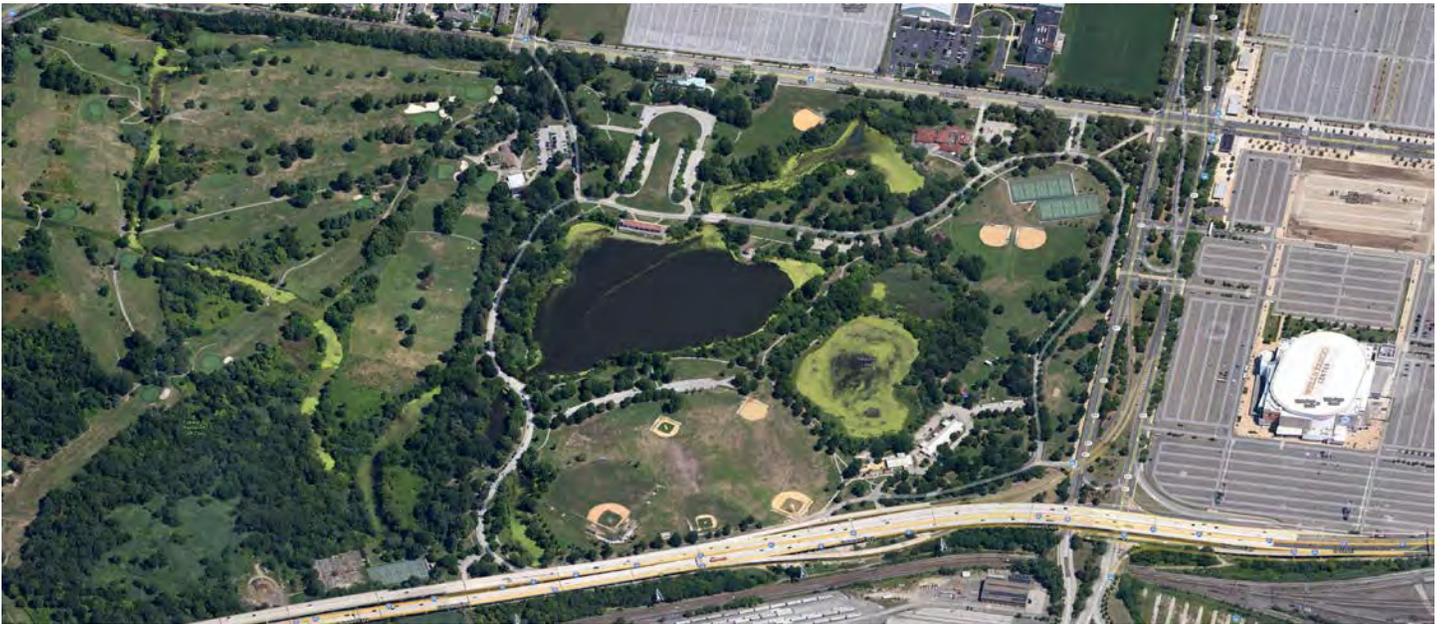


Figure 2.I.2. Aerial view of FDR Park. The site has been bisected at the south end by the construction of I-95. (Google Maps)

Development Corporation and used periodically as a parking lot, the Eagle’s training field, and the Packer Park neighborhood. Despite job loss in the district, the neighborhood’s residential population continues to grow. The two most recent housing developments in the neighborhood, the Reserve and Siena Place, both added more than 300 units of market-rate housing in the past decade. The 2010 census reported that 60 percent of the homes in the district are owner-occupied, and the average house sells for \$374,000. Packer Park’s suburban-style residences, with off-street parking and back yards, will attract more young urbanites looking for more space in the coming years. To accommodate this continued demand, the site of the formal Naval Hospital is currently zoned

residential and could be used for residential development in the future.

The freight rail line cuts FDR Park off from the Sunoco oil refineries and heavy industrial complexes to the west. Bus 61, however, cuts through the industrial land and connects FDR Park with Lower Southwest Philadelphia via Passyunk Avenue. To the south of the park, accessible via Broad Street, is the Philadelphia Navy Yard. Thanks in part the relative proximity and accessibility to Center City, the Navy Yard in a historic economic hub currently experiencing a resurgence of development (Figure 2.I.4). There are currently 115 companies and three Navy activities located in the Navy Yard, and more economic and residential growth is anticipated. Though the Navy Yard is currently only served by a shuttle connecting the area with the Broad Street Line, grandiose future plans for the site include extending the subway to the Navy Yard’s historic center.

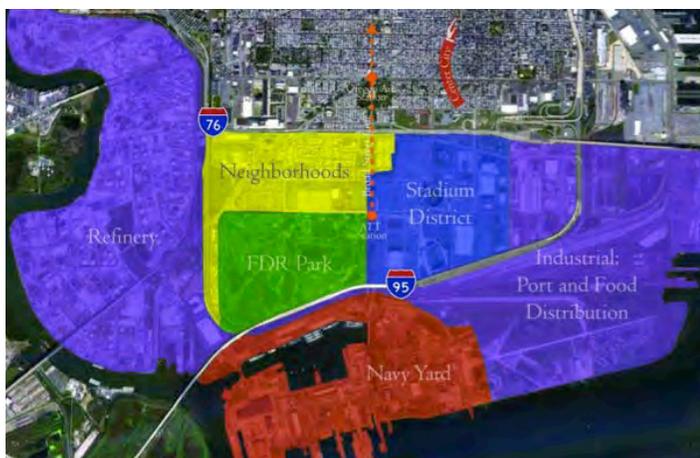


Figure 2.I.3. This area has been targeted by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission in Philadelphia 2035’s Lower South District Plan as a site for future transit-oriented development

FDR Park is easily accessible via the Broad Street SEPTA line at AT&T Station at S. Broad St. and Pattison Ave, located 0.3 miles from FDR Park’s boathouse. It takes roughly 11 minutes to travel from the AT&T Station to City Hall. The park is also very amenable to car, which is the primary means of access for current users. The site provides ample parking for visitors and encourages biking and outdoor recreational.



Figure 2.I.4. Thanks in part the relative proximity and accessibility to Center City, the Navy Yard in a historic economic hub currently experiencing a resurgence of development. (Google Maps, with areas highlighted)

FDR Park features a public golf course (Figure 2.I.5), recreational sports fields that include soccer, baseball, and tennis courts, children’s playgrounds, picnic areas, skate park, scenic bridge overlooks, a variety of locations from which to fish, and numerous trails on which users walk, run, bike, or walk their dogs. The park is also home to The American Swedish Historical Museum; the oldest Swedish Museum in the United States founded in 1926 dedicated to preserving and promoting Swedish and Swedish-American cultural heritage (Figure 2.I.6), and several buildings that are currently used for park management and facilities. Since 2000, FDR Park has been listed the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places



Figure 2.I.5. The golf course at FDR Park. (E. Lissy)



Figure 2.I.6. The American Swedish Historical Museum, located to the north of Edgewood Lake. (E. Lissy)

as a local historic district, for its contributing architecture, for its exploration significance, for education, and for its cultural heritage.

A series of interconnected engineered lakes and water systems are a main feature of the park and provide the setting for the boathouse and gazebo, which are the focus of this preservation plan. These two structures are perched on the northern banks of Edgewood Lake, the most central body of water. Together with Meadow Lake, these two bodies of water and the systems that connect them are remnants of an early tidal marsh system that connects the site to the Delaware River and predates early Swedish settlement in southeastern Pennsylvania. This connection to the Delaware River directly impacts the ecological systems of the park, and the site is home to a number of rare plant and animal species.



Figure 2.2.1. The north facade of the boathouse at FDR Park (A. Kress)

2.2 Description

The Edgewood Lake Boathouse was built in 1916 designed by Philadelphia architect Ralph E. White, according to the Philadelphia Architects and Buildings database, who received his Building Construction Certificate from Drexel University in 1901. White designed many community centered buildings including St. Joseph's Church in Trenton in 1904, the Free Library of Philadelphia Oak Street Branch in 1910, select buildings at the Seaview Country Club in 1914, and many other church buildings, schools, and country club additions in the Greater Philadelphia and New Jersey area.

White's commission for the boathouse led him to design the structure in the style and spirit of the Academic Eclecticism. The structure itself is composed of a four bay rectangular concrete base clad with brick, centrally interrupted by a wide staircase leading to an open-air pavilion. The open-air pavilion is symmetrical in both plan and elevation, holding strong horizontal lines, with a low-hipped roof and seven bays of massive semi circular arches that frame views of the lake. The pavilion is constructed completely of brick with a red tile roof. The



Figure 2.2.2. The interior of the pavilion is embellished with a groin vaulted ceiling, structural brick arches, and a grand floor to ceiling brick fireplace to the east. (E. Lissy)

exterior brick elevations of the pavilion are ornamented with brick pilasters topped with stone-carved capitals (Figure 2.2.1). The interior of the pavilion is embellished with a groin vaulted ceiling, structural brick arches, and a grand floor to ceiling brick fireplace to the East (Figure 2.2.2). On the same level as the pavilion, a balustrade wraps around the entire structure, creating a wide balcony space, where the lake and adjacent gazebo can be viewed (Figure 2.2.3). The lower level of the boathouse, a large divided rectangular space sits on a slight slope which



Figure 2.2.3. On the upper level of the boathouse, a balustrade wraps around the entire structure, creating a wide balcony space, in which the lake and adjacent gazebo can be viewed. (E. Hessmiller)

allows for direct water access to its surrounding wooden dock from its five wide openings on its' South facade. Currently, the lower space consists of multiple small rooms, including rest rooms, showers, and storage areas which were fully used when the boathouse functioned as a boathouse, however remain unused today. The five wide openings, which were direct access points for the boats to be drawn into and out of, are now closed with cinder blocks.

In close proximity to the boathouse, sits the classically designed gazebo (Figure 2.2.4). The gazebo was assumed to be built at the same time and by the same architect, as part of the master plan of Olmsted Brothers' park design. No documented evidence of its construction have been found to date. The gazebo itself is mounted upon a limestone platform with decorative slate floor tiles (Figure 2.2.5). The gazebo is constructed of eight Doric



Figure 2.2.5. The gazebo is mounted upon a limestone platform with decorative slate floor tiles. (S. Park)

columns made of sandstone, which support a circular-domed roof clad in red tiles. At the intersection where the columns meet the dome, ornate decorative details adorn the stone, in the form of dentals and cooper lion head spouts. Internally, the dome ceiling is covered in blue ceramic tiles, most likely associated with Guastavino tiles and carved stone trim (Figure 2.2.6).



Figure 2.2.4. The classically designed gazebo, located to the east of the boathouse, as seen from the docks. (E. Maust)

The boathouse and gazebo were designed in consideration of one another, and are closely linked by their viewsheds across Edgewood Lake. The lake itself is easily accessible from the boathouse dock, and the dock is frequently used by fishermen. This accessibility to water is an important aspect to the site, as it remains one of the only areas in the city where bodies of water are publicly accessible



Figure 2.2.6. The dome of the gazebo is covered in blue ceramic tiles, most likely associated with Guastavino tiles, and carved stone trim. (A. Kress)

for recreational and cultural use. Originally built as a boathouse in 1916, it is currently vacant and available for lease by the City of Philadelphia Fairmount Park Commission through Cushman & Wakefield Realtors.

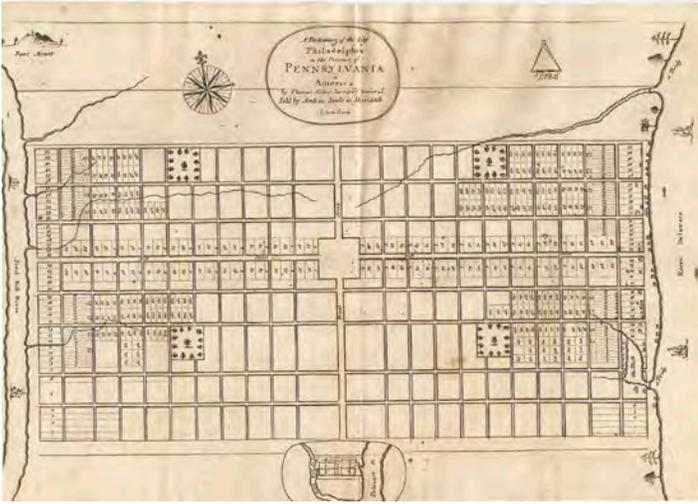


Figure 2.3.1. Locations of the first parks in Philadelphia. (Map drawn by Thomas Holme, 1681 Plan of Philadelphia)

2.3 History

Planning for parks in Philadelphia began as early as 1681. The first planned parks are shown in the center, southwestern, southeastern, northeastern, and northwestern of today’s Center City district, featuring Rittenhouse, Washington, Franklin, and Logan squares (Figure 2.3.1) After that, with the privately owned Lemon Hill was dedicated as a public park in 1855, the Fairmount park thus appeared in the east side of Schuylkill river (Figure 2.3.2). Before Fairmount Park became its current shape, it had been stretched to the north and south, and then to east and west across the river (Figures 2.3.3 and 2.3.4).

Between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the nationwide City Beautiful movement appeared and a trend in urban planning to rectify the decay and demoralization of communities through the beautification of the city. It was America’s first important contribution to urban design. After the launch of the nationally popular City Beautiful movement, Benjamin Franklin Parkway construction officially began in 1917 and came to completion in 1926, ten years after the ground-breaking (Figures 2.3.5 and 2.3.6). The parkway stretched between Philadelphia City Hall and the Philadelphia Museum of Art passing through the Logan square. Shortly before the construction of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway, FDR Park was designed by the Olmsted brothers, proponents of the City Beautiful movement.



Figure 2.3.2. 1856 Map of Fairmount Park.



Figure 2.3.3. The expansion of Fairmount Park as shown by an 1862 Atlas of Philadelphia drawn by Samuel L. Smedley.

Planning for League Island Park began in the late nineteenth century, and the earliest outlines of the park can be seen in an 1895 city atlas (Figure 2.3.7). In March 1899, a *New York Times* article reported that Samuel Parsons, Jr, a Yale-educated landscape architect “of considerable repute” in New York City, had been awarded first prize in a competition for “the best plans for the improvement of a down-town tract of land purchased for League Island Park.” According to the *Times*, however, the site’s potential was unpromising: “the territory where it is proposed to lay out this park consists of 300 acres of low-lying land on the Delaware River.... Irrigation ditches, a sluggish, winding stream,

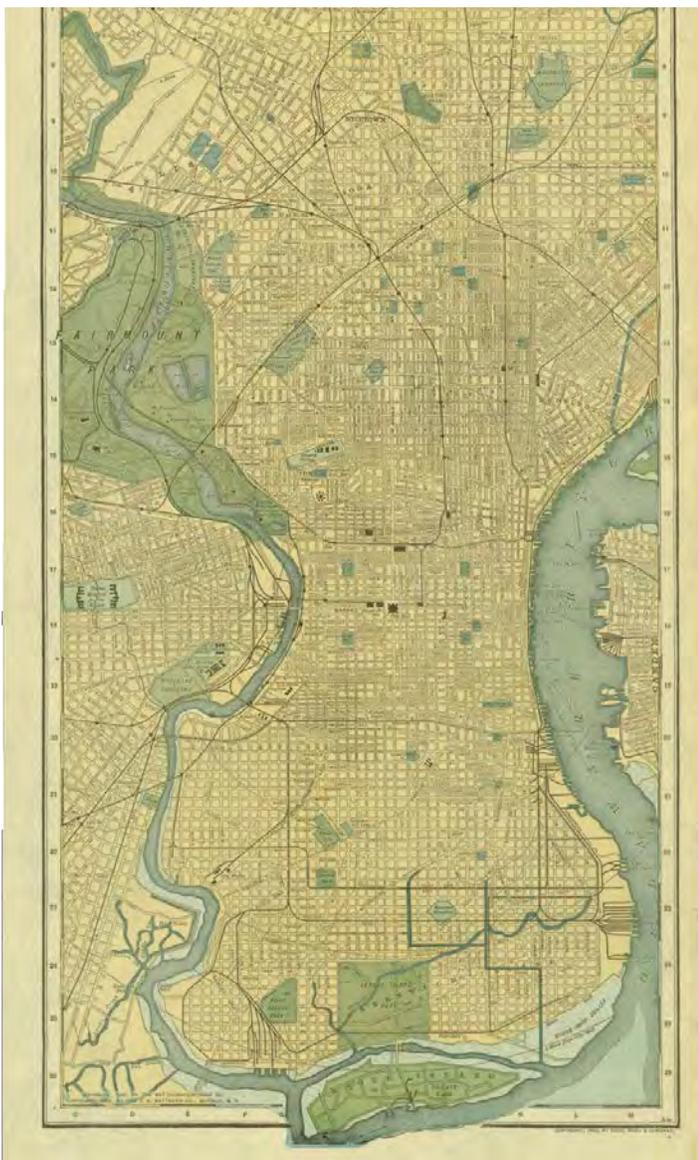


Figure 2.3.4. The expansion of Fairmount Park. (Dodd, Mead & Company, 1903)

and a small amount of what may be termed upland are all that at present represent the park” (Figure 2.3.8). Work on the park began, with Parson’s design published by city planners in *Plan of Park and Parkway Improvements in South Philadelphia* in 1904. According to historian Christopher Dougherty of The Philly History Blog, by 1910, work on the site had come to a halt, and in 1912, the Olmsted Brothers landscape architecture firm were asked by the city to design new plans for League Island Park, as well as for Oregon (now Marconi) Plaza, and for the stretch of Broad Street that still connects the two parks (referred to as the Southern Boulevard) (Figure 2.3.9).



Figures 2.3.5 and 2.3.6. Plans of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway. (Jacques Greber, 1917)



Figure 2.3.7. 1895 Atlas of Philadelphia, showing the planned League Island Park. (Walter S. Bromley)

PRIZES WON BY NEW YORKERS.
Drew the Best Plans for Land Improvement in Philadelphia.

PHILADELPHIA, March 1.—A committee of citizens has awarded a first prize of \$750 and a second of \$250, respectively, to Samuel Parsons, Jr., and R. Ulrich, both of New York, for the best plans for the improvement of a down-town tract of land purchased for League Island Park.

Samuel Parsons, Jr., is a landscape architect of considerable repute in this city, and is connected with the Park Department. He is a graduate of Yale and a member of the Century Club. **R. Ulrich** is also an architect here, having an office in Cortlandt Street.

Figure 2.3.8. “Proposed League Island Park at Philadelphia,” *The New York Times*, 2 April 1899.

During the last decades of the nineteenth century, the Olmsted Brother firm became established as the leading landscape design office in America, with hundreds of commissions ranging from small private gardens to municipal park systems and large-scale institutional

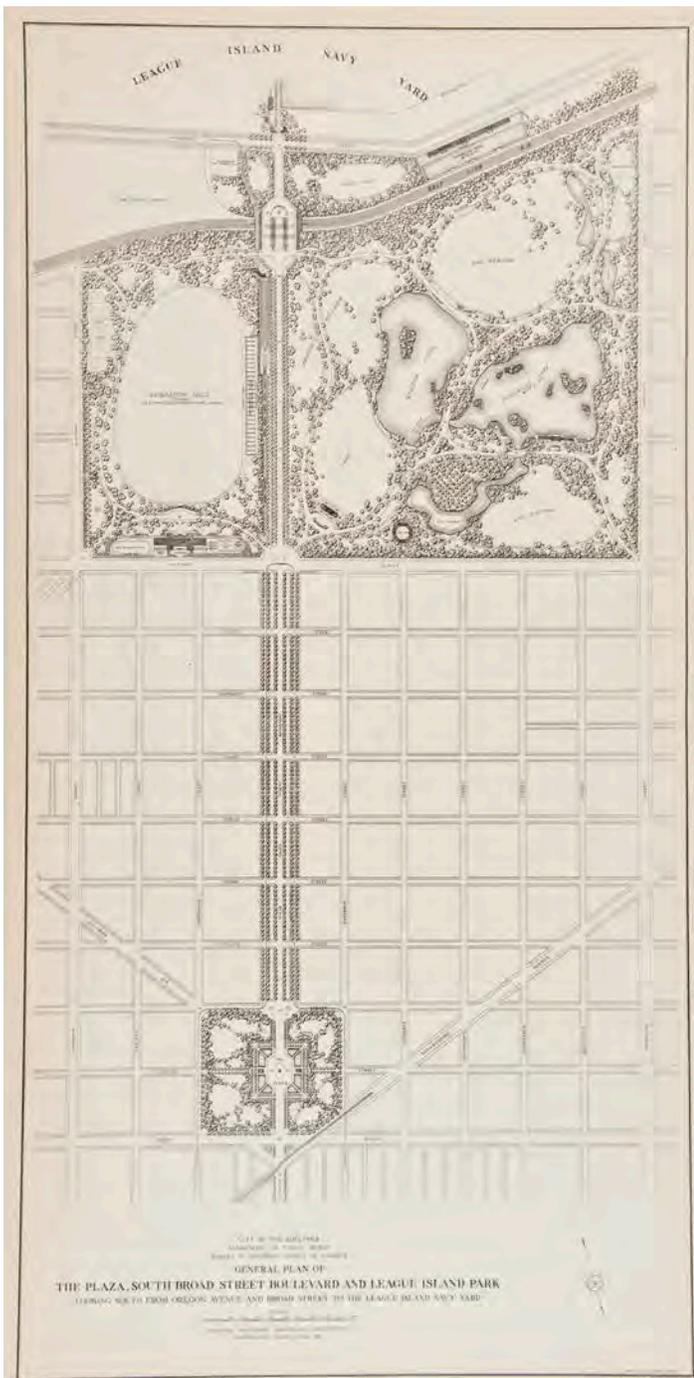


Figure 2.3.9. 1914-1916 League Island Park plans by Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects. (Courtesy of the Frederick Law Olmsted Archives, Brookline, MA.)

planning. At the beginning of the twentieth century, world's fairs and expositions were rampant across the country. Olmsted designed the fairgrounds for the 1893 Chicago World's Fair, gaining enormous recognition for exposition grounds landscape design, and continued to advise site selections for several expositions in America. The Olmsted brothers, John Charles Olmsted and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., carried on their father's

firm after he passed in 1903, and went on to design the Lewis and Clark Centennial Exposition in Portland, Oregon, which opened in 1905, and the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition World's Fair in 1909. The brothers' park planning paid special attention to specific environmental conditions, climate, and natural features. This is demonstrated in their design for League Island Park, in which the natural landscape and tidal marshes allowed for a system of flowing lakes, connecting to the Delaware River. With the established connection of Olmsted design and World's Fairs, it is no surprise that League Island Park would be the future site of the Philadelphia Sesquicentennial International Exhibition. The design and philosophy of the park very much follow the popular beliefs of cleanliness, openness and creating an intimacy between man and nature in landscape design. League Island Park was complete by 1923. This same year, the park was approved by the city for the future site of the Sesquicentennial Celebration, as recorded in the Philadelphia Inquirer in March of 1923.

Arguably the most lively moment in the history of the boathouse and gazebo was the Philadelphia Sesquicentennial International Exhibition in 1926. The Sesquicentennial International Exposition marked the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. It was Philadelphia's responsibility to make plans for this celebration, which would offer the world the opportunity to see the scientific, spiritual, economic, artistic, and industrial progress that has been made in the United States since the Centennial Celebration in 1876, also held in Philadelphia. Forty-three foreign nations participated in the Sesquicentennial, either officially through their governments, such as Japan, Spain, and Argentina, or unofficially through industry groups, such as Germany, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia (Figure 2.3.10).

At the time, an exposition of such large scale constructed in such a short time was an astonishing feat. There were five main exhibit palaces erected for the fair, sixty-seven buildings, hundreds of booths, along with administration and personnel buildings, and a 80-foot tall reproduction Liberty bell near the entrance which was the largest electrical structure to have ever been presented. There were a series of buildings, each being a copy of the originals



Figure 2.3.10. This souvenir from the Exposition listed featured buildings and activities and participating countries.

from Colonial and Revolutionary history, forming a reproduction of High Street (present-day Market Street), Philadelphia. Most fairground architecture is meant to be temporary, save a few planned buildings. The American Swedish Historical Museum was the only permanent structure built for this fair in 1926, erected for John Morton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, who was a Swedish descent. The building was sponsored by the Swedish-American Society and was not complete until the fair was over. During the celebration, the Boathouse on Edgewood Lake was transformed into a Russian Tea Room and the perched gazebo was a featured view on the gondola rides winding throughout the lakes of the park (Figures 2.3.10-12). The Russian Tea Room hosted many luncheons for public officials during the fair. However, little else is known about the Tea Room's organization or function in the fair besides its serving of "oriental food" and that the restaurant was situated in the "Canoe House, a permanent building", as Erastus Long Austin describes in 1929 of the fair. Based on one of few known existing interior photographs of



Figure 2.3.11. The boathouse as the Russian Tea Room at the 1926 Sesqui-centennial.

the Tea Room during the Sesqui-centennial, the ground floor level also entertained visitors with live music. At the close of the fair, the buildings were packed up and people gone, the magical feeling and excitement in the park disappearing with it. There is always something tragic in the impermanence of fairs. Unfortunately, the fair left the city of Philadelphia in debt, receiving only a quarter of the visitors the fair planner anticipated. The media exploited the failures of the exposition and blamed the fair and city officials for allowing it. Some blamed the rainy weather or the marshy lands and mosquitoes. The park grounds were abandoned, left a mess, and largely unused for years after the Sesqui-centennial. According to *The Philadelphia Evening Bulletin*, in 1934 the boathouse was almost deserted; only an occasional boat paddled out on the lagoon.

By 1936, the park had been cleared and cleaned up, and drawings and plans were made for improving the park (see 1935-36 plans for League Island Park). Shortly



Figure 2.2.11. A view of the Fairgrounds showing the Boathouse on the right and the Palace of Fine Arts on the left.



Figure 2.3.12. Postcard from the Sesquicentennial in 1926.

after, the park returned to the community use it was planned for and even added a golf course. The boathouse was once again used for boating and fishermen were able to return to the lakes.

In the 1940s, the name of the park was changed from League Island to Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) Park to commemorate Roosevelt's third term in office. A golf course, planned in the 1930s, also opened in 1940 and remains an accessible recreational site for Philadelphia golfers (Figure 2.3.13). Throughout the mid-twentieth century, the park was used by veterans staying at the nearby Naval Hospital (since demolished). An article in *The Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* from June 4, 1946 reported that the State Fish Commission stocked the lakes at FDR Park with bluegills, sunfish, and catfish for the neighboring veterans, who took advantage of State-issued free fishing licenses that same summer.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the park was actively used, with rowboats and canoes available on the lower level of the boathouse, and the addition of a new park swimming pool in 1956-58 (Figure 2.3.14). Beginning in 1960, construction of the Delaware Expressway bisects the south portion of the park, demolishing picnic shelters and causing the removal of over 400 trees. A 1969 FDR Park Master Development Plan done by Adelman, Seigel & Associates noted that boating at the Lakes was too expensive, although the fishing pier was heavily used, and the boathouse was home to two refreshment stands.

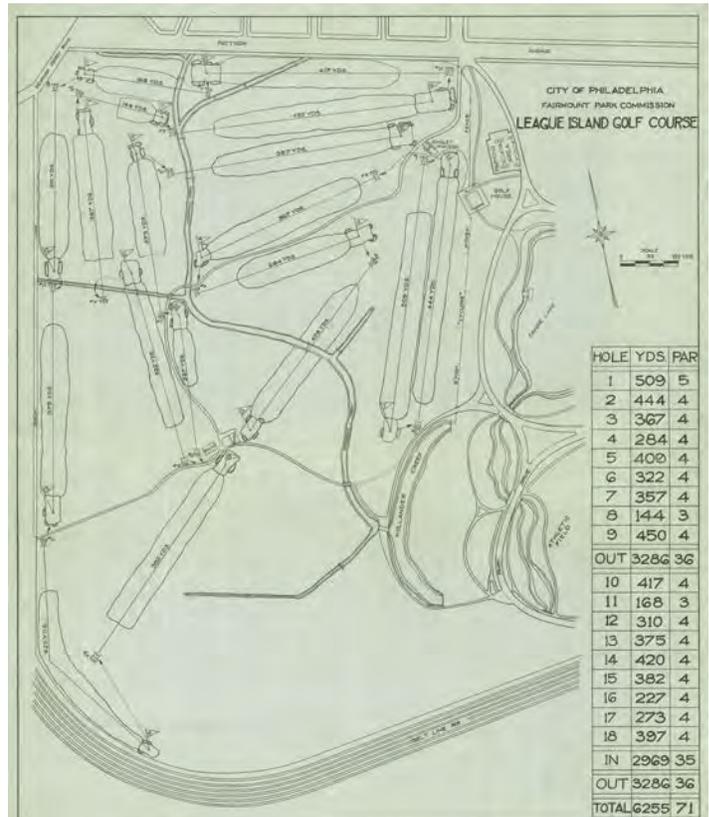


Figure 2.3.13. League Island Golf Course, circa 1930.



Figure 2.3.14. 1955 use of the lakes. (Courtesy of Temple Urban Archives)



Figure 2.3.15 and 2.3.16. 1988 boathouse conditions. (Courtesy of Fairmount Park Archives)

Boating at the Park declined over the next few decades, as did park safety and cleanliness (Figures 2.3.15 and 2.3.16). In 1999, FDR Park was listed to Philadelphia Register of Historic Places, with Edgewood Boathouse and Gazebo listed as contributing features to the Park's historic integrity.

In 2011, an application for a building permit was submitted to the PHC through Fairmount Park, with conceptual plans to rehabilitate the Boathouse to serve as a restaurant and boating facility. Project costs were estimated at more than \$5,000,000, but the designs and plans were denied by the Philadelphia Historical Commission due to irreversibility of the design and its lack of compliance with the Commission's call for historic integrity (Figure 2.13.17).

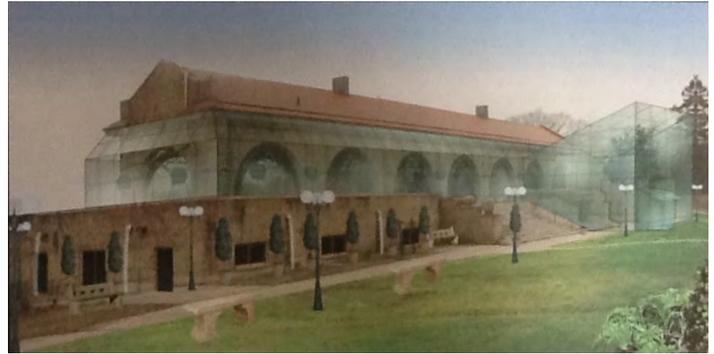


Figure 2.3.17. Proposed 2011 Waterworks Restaurant additions. (Courtesy of the Philadelphia Historical Commission)

Currently, there are no clear programming objectives for either the boathouse, gazebo, or series of lakes within the park. While all are informally, but frequently, used the sites are not used to their full potential. Few park users are aware of the history of the buildings or the landscape, and there is no readily accessible site information for park visitors.

This preservation plan aims to renew the historical awareness and proposes reuse of the site that remains sensitive to current popular uses.

2.4 The Evolution of League Island/FDR Park

As illustrated in this series of comparative maps, this area of South Philadelphia transitioned dramatically from early marshland to picturesque park to exhibition site to finally an actively used community park. These transitions have had a profound effect on the site's topography, shorelines, vegetation, and ecosystems.

(All maps drawn by E. Hessmiller.)



Figure 2.4.1. South Philadelphia, circa 1750.



Figure 2.4.2. 1914-1916 plans for League Island Park, as designed by Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects.

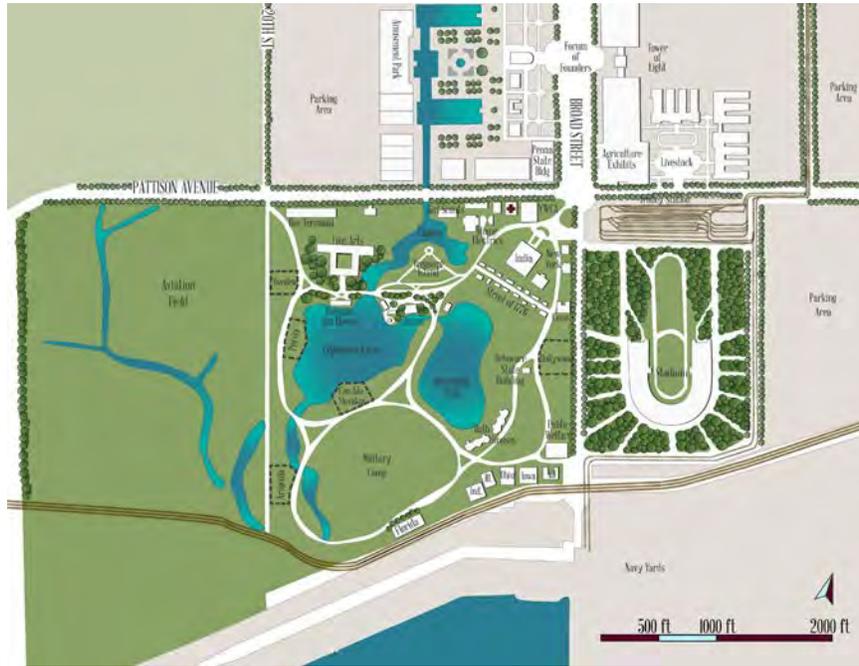


Figure 2.4.3. League Island Park as the site of the 1926 Sesquicentennial.



Figure 2.4.4. FDR Park as it exists in 2012.

3.0 STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The boathouse and gazebo on the banks of Edgewood Lake in FDR Park form a centralized place for neighborhood activity and contribute to the overall park landscape. The site is at the heart of one of Philadelphia’s most used public parks and locally-designated historic districts. Frequent community use of the boathouse, gazebo, and surrounding lakes, as well as their ecological values and historical legacy, give local, citywide, and regional significance to the site.



Figure 3.I.1. Fishing at FDR Park is a common activity for local community members. (E. Hessmiller)



Figure 3.I.2. Public accessibility to water is one of the Park’s most significant features. (E. Maust)

3.1 Public Use

The site is significant as a public asset for the citizens of Philadelphia. The three elements of the site provide a public good that improve the health and well-being of park users and neighboring communities. The boathouse on Edgewood Lake is one of the only publicly accessible areas for recreational water use in the city. Other bodies of water are either inaccessible or too dangerous for activities like canoeing and fishing. Similarly, the site gives unrestricted access to open space and nature in one of the densest neighborhoods in Philadelphia. The fact that the park is very accessible to the Broad Street subway line enhances its citywide significance as an open space. Indeed, the Edgewood Lake boathouse serves as a destination and a landmark for the city. Philadelphians come from many neighborhoods to fish in the lake, to kiss in the gazebo, and to meet up in the boathouse. Every community member has their own story about something that happened at “the Lakes.” Finally, the boathouse and gazebo are contributing elements to the FDR Park local historic district. The site’s specific historic significance is detailed below, but acknowledging that historic districts are a public good (as deemed by the National Historic Preservation Act) reinforces the significance of the boat house, gazebo, and lake as a public asset.



Figure 3.2.1. A Great Blue Heron at Edgewood Lake, FDR Park, Philadelphia. Fall 2012. (E. Hessmiller)



Figure 3.2.2. Flora found along the shorelines of Edgewood Lake. (A. Kress)

3.2 Environmental Significance

Edgewood Lake and the surrounding areas within FDR Park have important environmental qualities that are unique to Philadelphia and rare to the state of Pennsylvania. The Park is located on the Coastal Plain, a hydrographic province that supports different plant and animal life than adjacent regions of Pennsylvania. Due to the dramatic and impacting development of Philadelphia and the surrounding region, many of these plants and animals are extremely rare in the city and especially so within the state. The ponds, lagoons, and waterways at the site are remnants of the tidal marsh and channel system that once connected this area to the Delaware River. The installation of a tide gate in the late nineteenth century was meant to restrict inflow to the engineered water systems, although tidal exchange does occur because of incomplete sealing, as evidenced by the rare tidal species of flora and fauna that are found in the park. This diverse wildlife population contributes to the Park's environmental significance, and in May 2005 the Audubon Society of Pennsylvania named FDR Park (as part of the Fairmount Park system) an Important Bird Area in Pennsylvania, designating it as a significant and valuable area for birds within the state.



Figure 3.3.I. “A View in League Island Park, Philadelphia.” Postcard circa 1920.

3.3 Historic Value

The boathouse and gazebo were planned elements of the Olmsted Brothers’ landscape vision for the then League Island Park in South Philadelphia. The area was especially planned with its unique tidal marsh wetlands in mind, influencing the flow of the waterways of the park. The relationship of the boathouse and gazebo to the lakes in the park expresses the design intent of an early 20th century picturesque park following in the fashion of the national City Beautiful Movement. The architectural style of the boathouse lends to the historical context, as the building demonstrates academic eclecticism in a public boathouse design, the only boathouse of this type in Philadelphia. The boathouse and gazebo were also used as central exhibit spaces during Philadelphia’s 1926 Sesquicentennial celebration. The boathouse served as the Russian Tea Room for dining and live music entertainment. The gazebo was one of the featured locations in the park for inspiring viewsheds and the gazebo was also a planned architectural view on the gondola boat rides on the lakes. For these historical events and architecture, the boathouse and gazebo are listed as contributing features to the FDR historic district, designated in 2000. In addition to these historic values as emphasized in the Park’s official designation, FDR Park also boasts a unique ecological history. The land has transitioned from open tidal marshland to early Swedish farmland to a landscape shaped by an engineered system of lakes and waterways. These ecological features ultimately transformed the Park’s early design for a variety of uses: as League Island Park, as the site for the 1926 Sesquicentennial, and later as the continually evolving FDR Park. These evolutions have had a profound influence on the way in which it is used today. On a larger, citywide scale, FDR Park and its connections to Marconi Plaza via Broad Street are arguably the most important surviving efforts of the City Beautiful movement in Philadelphia apart from the Ben Franklin Parkway.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

Developing recommendations for the boathouse and gazebo began with creating a methodology for understanding the complexities of the site. The methodology adopted for the project included multiple types of research, documentation, and analysis.

Research

Research began by identifying the site boundaries. The original proposal was to study the boathouse and gazebo buildings, but after considering the site, it became clear that the built structures only held historic significance in conjunction with Edgewood Lake. The site boundaries thus expanded to include the boathouse, gazebo, and lake. The areas of the park and of the city outside of these boundaries were considered as factors affecting the site; therefore, some of these spaces are addressed in the recommendations despite not being included in the site itself.

Archival research followed the site definition. The Philadelphia Fairmount Parks Archive, the Temple Urban Archive, and the Olmsted Archives held critical information pertaining to the site which allowed for a better understanding of the historic use and design of the site. The archival research enabled the creation of a site timeline and building chronologies. Establishing this timeline proved to be an integral part of the research process. Historic maps from the archives informed a series of evolutionary maps detailing the spatial changes in FDR park and Lower South Philadelphia from 1750 to today. Finally, research concluded with a series of stakeholder interviews. Representatives from the Philadelphia Historic Trust and the Fairmount Park Commission as well as many park users of different demographics shared their vision for the future of the boathouse, gazebo, and lake. This was an integral part of the research process that tied the site's history to the site's present use.

Documentation

As research about the site took place, documentation of the site also occurred. The current conditions of the site, including the state of the building materials

and systems, changes to design of the boathouse and gazebo, and environmental conditions of the lake and surrounding area, were documented. Measured drawings of all elevations and plans of the boathouse and gazebo were produced. Experts in the fields of biology and Philadelphia history were consulted to better document the site's historic and current architectural and ecological conditions.

Analysis

Site documentation and archival research contributed to the formation of the statement of significance for this site. The statement of significance was guided by the selection of character defining features, which are the elements of the site that most contribute to its significance. The comparisons to similar sites and the identification of strengths and weaknesses of this site are used to analyze the possibilities for preservation and for future use. Together, the character defining features and the statement of significance inform the goals and guidelines of this preservation plan. Complimentary SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis was performed to better inform the situation of the site through the lens of its' local communities, stakeholders, historical background, and other context related topics. Through all forms of analysis, the team was able to produce informed decisions about the potential options for this site's future.

(All graphics supporting the methodology can be found in Appendix A.2.)

5.0 CHARACTER-DEFINING ELEMENTS

As character-defining elements for the Park were identified, it became clear that many of the Park’s interesting and unique features did not fit strictly into only one of the established criteria. The following graphic (Figure 5.I.1) illustrates the shared criteria of many of the character-defining elements. Each of the five criteria (Historic, Public Asset, Environmental, Landscape, Architectural) is notated with a color. Elements that the team identified as most strongly befitting of the individual criteria are listed to the right of each. Those elements that also met other criteria are denoted by corresponding colored circles. This identification and organization of character-defining elements and features of FDR Park was instrumental in determining the site’s importance and in drafting the Statement of Significance (3.0).



Figure 5.I.1. Character-defining elements as determined and illustrated by the studio team. A larger version of this graphic can be found in Appendix A.2.

6.0 COMPARABLE SITES

To develop an understanding of the role of the Boathouse and Gazebo's significance placed landscape of FDR Park on Edgewood Lake, members of the team explored sites with comparable site locations (recreational area within an urban context/proximity to the waterfront), architectural form, creative adaptive reuse programming, and public/private partnerships. The types of sites that were chosen for this study were adaptively reused boathouses/pavilions and previously public spaces converted into privately owned entities. The combination of these two types of sites, gave us a clear understanding of ideas we wished to pursue for our site and those to be avoided as we make decisions for reuse of the Boathouse, Gazebo, and Edgewood Lake. Each comparable site was evaluated for its similarity with Edgewood Lake's Boathouse and Gazebo, and its philosophy behind adaptively reusing its existing historic space. These comparables in turn stimulated creative ideas about how the Boathouse and Gazebo could be re-used, and ways in which public awareness of these buildings historical significance could be reawakened.



Figure 6.I.1. The Prospect Park Boathouse.

6.1 Prospect Park Boathouse

The Prospect Park Boathouse on Lullwater Lake was built in 1904 and replaced Olmsted and Vaux's original structure, built in 1876 during the creation of the park (Figure 6.I.1). The current building was designed in the Beaux Arts style by architects Frank J. Helmle and Ulrich Huberty. The architects used a 16th century Venetian building, the Sansovino's Library of St. Mark,



Figure 6.I.2. The second level open pavilion of the boathouse.

as inspiration for the first floor. The first floor ceiling is vaulted and covered in deep green tiles. A carved wooden staircase leads up to the second floor. Tuscan columns flank the white matte-glazed terra cotta façade, and doorways pierce through arches on every wall of the boathouse. A balustrade wraps around the entire second floor of the building creating a wide balcony facing Lullwater Lake and providing a vantage point for sunset views over the water (Figure 6.I.2).

The boathouse was originally used for boat rentals, but when boating facilities moved to another location in the early 20th century, the boathouse was used as the park visitor center and café. By the 1960s, the building was in disrepair and the city was planning to demolish it. The community protested the demolition, and managed to save the boathouse and put it on the National Register of Historic Places in 1972. After extensive renovation between 1997 and 2002 that cost the city five million dollars, the site was reopened as the nation's first urban Audubon Center. Today, the boathouse combines uses as the Audubon Center, small café, public seating area, and private event location (Figures 6.I.3 and 6.I.4).

The Prospect Park boathouse and the Edgewood Lake boathouse have many similarities. Both are part of an Olmsted park design. Though the Prospect Park boathouse is not the original in the Olmsted design, they both serve the same function in the park – they



Figure 6.I.3. Wedding in the boathouse. (On Point Images)

create moments for recreation, rest, and appreciating the landscape. They two boathouses are similar in their design – both are two stories with a very open floor plan. Both were originally used as boat rental facilities and have since stopped being used for that function. Finally, the water surrounding both boathouses is full of duckweed and in need of aeration.

The difference between the two boathouses start with the nature of the parks they are in. While FDR Park is well used, it is located at the edge of Philadelphia and only interfacing with residential fabric on its northern side. Prospect Park is located in the center of Brooklyn in the middle of very dense residential neighborhoods. Additionally, the Edgewood Lake boathouse, especially the second floor, is larger than the Prospect Park boathouse and could potentially handle more uses within the space.

From the Prospect Park boathouse we learn that beautifying the buildings will encourage passive use of the site, even without cleaning the water surrounding the site. Small café operations can exist in the same space as other uses, it will draw people to the site, and it will earn revenue for the park. Branding the site as a place to host events can be a successful income generator, and using the building for an educational use can reconnect the site to the landscape in which it is located.



Figure 6.I.4. Private Event in the boathouse. (www.prospectpark.com)

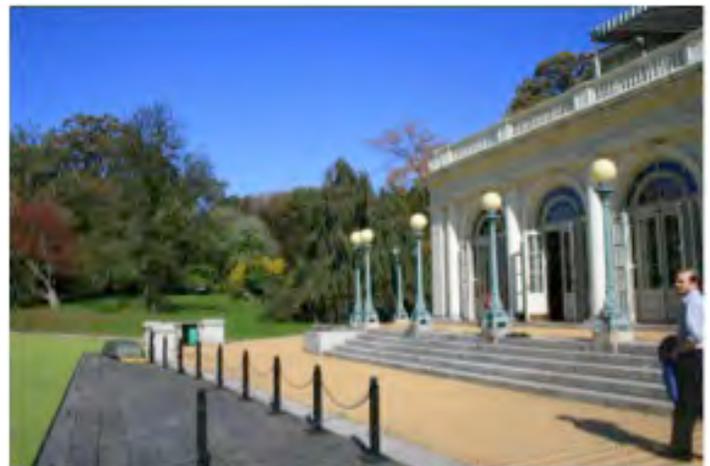


Figure 6.I.5. The boathouse dock: perfect for a stroll.



6.2.1 Current Image of Fairmount Waterworks
(Courtesy of Bela Gutman)

6.2 *Fairmount Water Works*

The Fairmount Water Works was Philadelphia’s second municipal water works built on the east bank of the Schuylkill River, far from the original site in the center of the city. Frederick Graff designed the buildings in 1812, but construction did not end until 1872. Throughout the late 19th century, the Water Works was a popular tourist attraction due to its picturesque location, beautiful Classical Revival architecture, and ingenious use of technology. The Water Works consists of several buildings. The main building is enclosed and housed the boiler system and turbines. Other buildings on the site were open structures made of Doric colonnades offering views of the river. The buildings operated as the city’s Water Works until 1909 when several newer, more technologically advanced facilities replaced it.

After it closed as a Water Works, the buildings were reused as the City of Philadelphia’s aquarium until 1962 and an indoor municipal swimming pool until 1973. Today, part of the site is used as an interpretive center which addresses the history of the Water Works, the present system for circulating water through the city, and the environmental concerns facing the regional watershed. In 2004, the City of Philadelphia gave a 25-year lease on the main building of the Water Works to a local businessman, Michael Karloutsos, for \$120,000/

year. The envelope of the building has been preserved, and Karloutsos has turned the interior of the building into a restaurant called the Water Works Restaurant and Lounge. He bills his business as “Philadelphia’s Landmark Dining Experience.” The city hopes to revive the touristic appeal of the Water Works through these interventions. However, since the conversion of the site into a restaurant, the Water Works is only lively at night and there is no public use of the space.

The Water Works and the Edgewood Lake boathouse have similar ownership – both are owned by the City of Philadelphia, managed by Fairmount Parks, designated as national historic places, and able to be leased by a private company. Indeed, Michael Karloutsos tried to lease the Edgewood boathouse and turn it into a restaurant similar to the Water Works, but he ended up pulling out of negotiations. Both buildings are located in public spaces and near water. They are also both located near major institutional uses – the art museum in the case of the Water Works and the stadiums in the case of the Edgewood Lake boathouse.

One difference between the two sites is that the Water Works building was more amenable to a restaurant and lounge than the Edgewood Lake boathouse due to the boathouse’s open floor plan and lack of walls.



6.2.2 North Engine, Fairmount Waterworks (Courtesy of Historic American Engineering Record, U.S. Department of the Interior)



6.2.3 Current Image of Fairmount Waterworks
(www.thewaterworksrestaurant.com)



6.2.5 Dinners at the Waterworks (www.uptake.com)



6.2.4 An Exhibit at the Waterworks Museum
(www.visitphilly.com)



6.2.6 Users of the Schuylkill River Trail do not cross that parking lot to access the seemingly private Waterworks facility
(Courtesy of Hidden City Philadelphia)

Additionally, the boathouse at FDR Park is still used in a very public way whereas the Water Works had been closed to the public for several years before its conversion. Finally, the Edgewood Lake boathouse is a contributing part of a locally designated historic district, so there are greater limitations to altering the building than there was on the Water Works buildings.

This case study shows us how a private company and lease a city-owned and park-managed property and by doing so increase the number of people who use the site. The money from the lease helps maintain the historic fabric of the buildings. This case also shows us how multiple uses can exist in the same site. Lastly, the example of the Water Works exhibits how the public's relationship to the historic site changes when a private company leases the space.

6.3 Humboldt Park Boathouse

The Humboldt Park Boathouse Pavilion is located on the main lagoon in Chicago's Humboldt Park. William Le Baron Jenney established the Humboldt Park in 1870, an inspired Victorian landscape park design. In the early 1900s, park alterations were taken on by Jens Jensen, which included the construction of the boathouse in 1907. The boathouse was and currently still is designed in the style of Prairie School architecture. Capturing all elements of this style with its broad horizontal lines, low-hipped roof, and massive semi circular arches. The first floor, which was primarily used in the 1920s for boat rentals, now serves as storage space. However, remnants of the previous use for boat storage can be seen through its six bays of wide double door openings that flank the edge of the wooden dock on the backside of the boathouse pavilion. The second floor, can be accessed through a grand central staircase on the opposite side of the pavilion, which upon entering, you are greeted with three massive semi circular arches that frame the view of the open balcony space with a stone carved balustrade which provides views of the lagoon. On either side of the three central arches, there are small-enclosed two story spaces for public and private use.



6.3.1 Map of Humboldt Park (Courtesy of Chicago Park District)



6.3.2 Postcard View of Humboldt Park Boathouse c. 1923 (Courtesy of John Chuckman)

The Humboldt Pavilion was originally used as a boathouse in the early 1920s, yet when boating facilities ceased to exist within the park, the building turned into concessions and a public gathering space for events at the park. However, during the years when the park use declined, the boathouse pavilion remained vacant and un-maintained for over a decade. As attention turned back onto the park, and awareness of the structures and their importance increased, many of Humboldt Park and its building were placed on the National Register of Historic Places and designated as Chicago Landmarks list in 1992, including the boathouse pavilion. In 2002, the boathouse pavilion had a major restoration campaign completed by BauerLatoza Studio. After the restoration was complete the building was completely upgraded in compliance with the Secretary of Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and a programming a concept plan for the adaptive reuse of the space was provided. Today, the boathouse functions as many things; a concession area, office and meeting spaces, a nature center exhibit, an interactive children's classroom space, and space for public use and private rental space events throughout the year.

The Humboldt Boathouse Pavilion and Edgewood Lake Boathouse share a couple similarities. First and foremost the two boathouses are similar in design and size-both having two stories, central entrance staircases, semi-circular arches, open floor plan, and room for multiple activities. Both were originally used as boathouses and



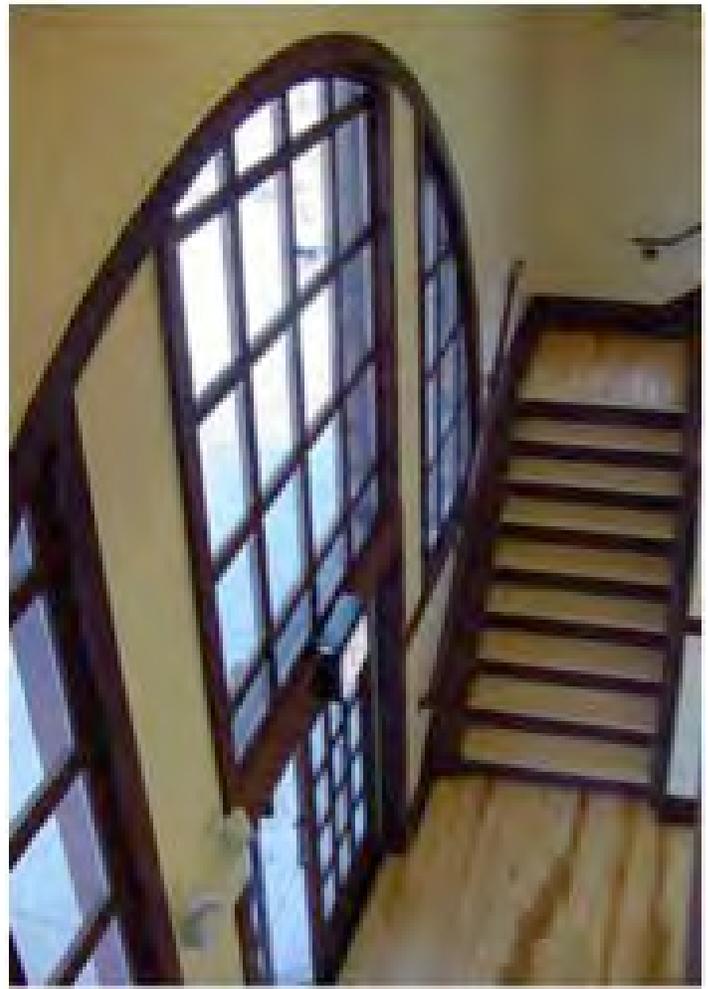
6.3.3 Exterior View of Humboldt Boathouse
(Courtesy of Bauer Latoza Studio)



6.3.4 Front Entrance View of Humboldt Boathouse
(Courtesy of Bauer Latoza Studio)

currently no longer do, but still maintain public access to the water. The two structures serves as a venue for public usage. Lastly, each boathouse sits on a lake's edge that is full of duckweed and unrefined plant species that requires maintenance.

The differences between the two boathouses begin with their current use. Humboldt Boathouse Pavilion has gone under necessary restoration changes to become a viable park asset for small businesses. The Humboldt Pavilion is a National Historic Landmark, whereas Edgewood Lake Boathouse remains without such status. The water surround the boathouse at Humboldt Pavilion has gone under a restoration and rehabilitation campaign to remove non-native plant species, reintroduce a native wetland, and has installed a water circulation system powered by solar energy and a wind turbine to improve water quality and efficiency.



6.3.5 Interior Shot of Humboldt Boathouse
(Courtesy of Bauer Latoza Studio)

From Humboldt Park's Boathouse and Pavilion we learn that maintenance to the site, will encourage outside users to invest in using the space passively and actively. Various activities can occur within one space on different levels of the structure, which can produce revenue for upkeep of the building and create a sense of awareness users outside the park's close proximity. Guiding potential clients on how to use the space and generating ideas for its re-use, can spark interest for possible investors, and potentially create a second life for the building. Cleaning up the water through means of solar energy, can interest a whole new crowd of park users, producing a healthier life for the fish and plant species, with an additional benefit of drawing people to the use the water more actively.



6.4.I Union Square Pavilion (Courtesy of Rob Moody)

6.4 Union Square Pavilion

The Union Square Pavilion is located at the North end of Union Square Park, in Manhattan, bounded by 14th Street and Broadway. The limestone pavilion was constructed in 1934 as a later addition to the park, which was established in 1908 and designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1997. The pavilion is a single story structure with a basement, constructed completely of limestone. There is a central archway flanked by two pronounced wide stone pilasters in the pavilion topped with a square hipped roof that sits higher than its two columned arms, which are composed of four Doric columns on each side and a small-enclosed room at the end. Above the structure, closer to the roofline, lies a stone card balustrade around the upper edge of the pavilion. The long and narrow interior space of the pavilion is left completely open to frame views of the surrounding park area and office buildings.

Historically, the pavilion was considered a public space within the park that was often a backdrop for hundreds of Socialist, Communist, and labor union demonstrations. Until the 1980s, it was also used as a bandstand and an unofficial indoor/outdoor sheltered play space for children within the park. Currently, the building provides office space for the Parks Department, however the rest of the structure remains with a chained linked fences between its columns and is currently inaccessible to the public due to the current battle of its future between the city and the Union Square Community Coalition. In the past few years, bid have been made to convert the open-air pavilion into a seasonal restaurant. Many

are opposed to this transition, as they wish it to remain true to its historical founding as a public space as a children's pavilion, available for free-speech rallies and demonstrations, community events, and exhibit space for permanent and temporary art installations.

The Edgewood Lake Boathouse and the Union Square Pavilion have a few commonalities. Firstly, they are both open-air pavilions and currently function as public space for park users of all ages. Their open spatial arrangement allows for both of them to develop programs for reuse, if chosen to do so. Lastly, both buildings are historically significant, however currently un-maintained.

The differences between the two buildings begin with the nature of the park they are in. Edgewood Lake Boathouse is located at located in a more rural park setting with lakes at the edge of the city of Philadelphia, in an area largely of residential and recreational space. Union Square Pavilion is within the heart of the New York City, with commercial establishments surrounding its every edge, making it a very different recreational area. Additionally, the Edgewood Lake Boathouse has a past of reuse, as the Union Square Pavilions seems to be less altered over time.

From the Union Square Pavilion we were able ask ourselves serious questions that pertained to the pros and cons of private and public ownership. Allowing us to understand that sometimes, architecturally prominent structures within a public park setting, may be better left open and free with flexible programming versus a fixed plan. However, along those lines, a seasonal private ownership may be a beneficial asset to the longevity of the structure and awareness of its placement within the city. Along with the notion that to maintain and manage a park, lively activities must be kept and improvements to the park itself is critical versus business improvements.

7.0 PRESERVATION PHILOSOPHY

The philosophy behind the preservation plan for Edgewood Lake, Boathouse, and Gazebo focuses on maintaining all open aspects of these spaces in FDR Park: the architectural form and plan of the boathouse and gazebo, the surrounding landscape, and the current uses of the park. In addition, any reuse options for the boathouse and gazebo should enhance the overall quality of FDR Park, the experience of park users, and the communities that surround it. Given that the Park is currently owned by the City of Philadelphia, operated by Fairmount Park and provides a public asset to the city, continued public accessibility and use is a primary goal for the reuse of the site.

7.1 Preservation Goals

1. Increase awareness of the site's history and significance as a current public asset to surrounding neighborhoods and the wider city population. This will garner community support for preservation-related projects and ongoing site use.
2. Develop an interpretive plan for the site in order to educate and inform park users about the Park's historic and environmental significance.
3. Make recommendations and complete feasibility studies for future boathouse reuse to allow for continued public accessibility to waterfront activities and recreation.
4. Create partnerships with local businesses, institutions, and community members in order to benefit all users of the site and stakeholders of the Park, while also securing funds for boathouse and gazebo restoration and maintenance.
5. Address necessary steps for immediate environmental remediation and preservation. This will enhance visitor experience, allow for continued usability and recreation at the site, and maintain the site's ecological significance.
6. Protect current park users and maintain existing cultural activities to ensure that the Park's character is retained for future use and recreational activities.
7. Increase awareness for the importance of public stewardship to protect architectural and environmental values.
8. Reclaim viewsheds around Edgewood Lake to enhance visitor experience, increase safety of the Park, and control wildlife populations.
9. Restore architectural integrity of boathouse and gazebo to make the site more visitor-friendly and accessible, and protect the structures from further deterioration.
10. Preserve the public accessibility of the gazebo and increase accessibility to the immediate surrounding landscape to maintain current uses and encourage new cultural activities.

7.2 General Recommendations

These recommendations are meant to serve as a general guide for future park planning and use ideas. Many of these recommendations and guidelines are developed upon further in the Individual Projects portion of this report (Part II). These recommendations are meant to complement already existing city and neighborhood plans.

- More comprehensive planning and circulation within the general neighborhood. The site as it exists today is heavily car-oriented, making it difficult for pedestrians to enjoy the park as intended. Possible ways to alleviate this include:
 - Instituting better parking policies within the park by not allowing gameday or overflow stadium parking;
 - Alleviating parking problems by construction of an underground parking garage to the north of Pattison Avenue when new infill development is planned;
 - Creating more options for public transit to FDR Park and South Philadelphia and making these options more accessible to park users.
- Architectural and materials and conservation, including:
 - Installation of a drainage plane away from the building or already installed drainage
 - Repair or replacement of damaged bricks, vault covering, slate floor, and other materials

- Graffiti removal
- In addition to materials conservation, it is worth investigating the legitimacy of the Boathouse and Gazebo to be undocumented domed and vaulted interiors by Raphael Guastavino, who patented flat-vaulted techniques in the United States after participating in the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia. Gaustivino held exclusive rights to these construction techniques from 1886 up until 1916, and his personal work contributed to over 1000 buildings in 14 countries, with a majority of them in the United States. We recommend visual inspection and professional assistance of Fernando Vegas who will be a visiting professor to Penn's Historic Preservation program in the Spring (2013) and consult by Professor of Architecture at MIT, John Ochsendorf, a published Guastavino scholar.
- Initiate better programming and opportunities at the Park In addition to these suggestions and the avenues explored in the individual proposals, the case studies presented in this report are useful in considering options for reuse. Brief examples include:
 - Audubon Center for bird watching
 - Small cafe
 - Event space
 - Boat rental
 - Fishing piers, stocking the lake on designated day(s)
 - American Swedish Historical Museum partnership (event coordinating)
 - Increased park security
 - Site Interpretation
- Allowing a variety of potential reuse options for the boathouse that retain architectural form and historical integrity on the exterior and allow some degree of change to occur to the interior (especially the lower level).

PART II

8.0 INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS & RESEARCH

- 8.1 *Relinking to History: Connecting Beyond the Park*
(Lizzie Hessmiller)
- 8.2 *Landscape Conservation and Design Management at FDR Park* (Erica Maust)
- 8.3 *Interpreting the Sesquicentennial Celebration and the Russian Tea Room at Edgewood Lake Boathouse*
(Liz Lissy)
- 8.4 *Design of Future Boathouse Reuse for Recreation and Cafe with Cost Estimate* (Soeun Park)
- 8.5 *Reconnecting the Boathouse and Park Through Design*
(Alix Kress)

8.I RELINKING TO HISTORY: CONNECTING BEYOND THE PARK

Individual Studio Project - Lizzie Hessmiller

The boathouse and gazebo in FDR Park are particularly significant because they provide park users with constant public access to historic structures important to Philadelphia's history. The structures connect city residents with the era of picturesque landscape architecture and City Beautiful urban design. The park itself was built in 1914 to connect Center City Philadelphia with the developing southern part of the city and link new residential neighborhoods with recreational space worthy of one of the wealthiest cities in the country. The Sesquicentennial Exhibition in 1926 was meant to tie the stories of Philadelphia's immigrants into the history of the city, and enable the whole world to experience the story. FDR Park and its boathouse have always thrived on the connections they established with their surroundings.

When Interstate 95 was built along the southern edge of the park in the 1960s, the Philadelphia athletic stadiums moved to the park's immediate east in the 1970s, and the Navy Yard's production stopped completely in the 1990s, the connections the park once had deteriorated. Though FDR Park is still heavily used, especially by residents of South Philadelphia, most city residents are unaware of the recreational activities offered by the park. Other

potential users feel that the park is uninviting because its entrances accommodate cars and their drivers instead of pedestrians. Hardly anyone is aware of the park's history which links it to the Philadelphia story.

In order to improve public access to the boathouse and gazebo and interpret their history, it is necessary to rebuild the connections between FDR Park and the surrounding neighborhoods. This aligns with the preservation goal of increasing awareness of the site's history and significance as a current public asset to surrounding neighborhoods and the wider city population.

While there continue to be obstacles to this goal – in particular, the presence of the auto-oriented stadiums and their parking lots to the east, the barrier that I-95 creates, and the impassable industrial fields to the west – there are also several opportunities that designers can build on to create a more accessible park. The first is the growth of the Navy Yard as an economic hub. The second is the development opportunities on the former Naval Hospital property and on some of the stadium parking lots as proposed by the Philadelphia 2035 city plan. Finally, the presence of the Broad Street Line's terminus across from the park's main entrance presents an opportunity to make the park more visible and accessible.

The goals of this individual project are to propose ideas for FDR park's entrances that will help the park become more pedestrian-friendly, more visible and identifiable, and more connected to its historic legacy as the most important City Beautiful picturesque park in Philadelphia.

This project focuses on developing connections at three entrances to FDR Park.

The first is the southern-most entrance on South Broad Street. This entrance will build the link with the Navy Yard and take advantage of the growing economic hub



Figure 8.I.1. The threats (in red) and opportunities (in yellow) for creating better connections in FDR Park.



Fig. 8.I.2. Focus areas for creating new connections

there.

The second is the park’s main entrance at the corner of Broad Street and Pattison Avenue. This entrance faces the ATT Station and will develop a connection to the former Olmsted Broad Street promenade.

The third is a new entrance on Pattison Avenue across from the former Naval Hospital site. Currently, there is no entrance to the park between Broad Street and 20th Street. This entrance will connect to new development at the site and will calm traffic on Pattison Avenue.

Developing these entrances reflects the original Olmsted plan for the park.



Fig. 8.I.3. Corresponding entrances in Olmsted’s original plan

NAVY YARD CONNECTION

The Philadelphia Navy Yard, the first naval shipyard in America, experienced difficult times throughout the second half of the 20th century and finally ended its operation in the 1990s. The city of Philadelphia took over management of the land in March 2000, and since then, the Navy Yard has experienced steady redevelopment as an economic hub. Today, several corporations have their headquarters in the Navy Yard, including Tasty Baking Company and Urban Outfitters. The Navy Yard master plan states that the area will someday have commercial, residential, and retail activities. The master plan also lists the presence of FDR Park as an asset for the development of the Navy Yard.

The development of the Navy Yard is, of course, an asset for the park. As more people find employment in the area, more people will use the park. Walking from the Navy Yard to the park takes approximately 15 minutes. The sidewalk that connects the two points is

in good condition, the path is well lit, and the trees that line the path make for an enjoyable walk. Looking east across wide landscaped medians, pedestrians can see the stadiums crowning the other side of Broad Street. To the north, there is a misty view of Center City's skyline. It is a pleasant walk until the traveler reaches the dark passage under I-95.



Fig. 8.I.4. The stadiums seen from the sidewalk to the park



Fig. 8.I.5. The Navy Yard entrance, 10 minutes from FDR Park



Fig. 8.I.6. Scenes along the sidewalk on South Broad Street



Fig. 8.I.7. The sidewalk leading from the Navy Yard to FDR Park passes underneath Interstate 95

The highway creates a physical barrier between the Navy Yard and the park. It is easy and safe to pass under it; there are crosswalks and pedestrian signal lights that help travelers traverse Broad Street, and the sidewalk under I-95 is continuous. The aspect of the area underneath the highway, however, is that of a no-man's land. It is very poorly lit. The darkness is the first noticeable part of this segment. There is a chain-link fence capped with barbed wire on the other side of the sidewalk that allows pedestrians to see a mound of dirt and debris stored behind it. It is a very ugly sight. Surrounding the pillars that support I-95, there are highway barriers. Their presence makes the whole passage seem uninviting and uncomfortable. This underpass is a deterrent for encouraging Navy Yard employees to come to FDR park during their workday.

There are opportunities to turn this spot into a place that draws people up from the navy yard, however. The highway could provide shade on hot summer days or

shelter when caught in a rainstorm. It could be outfitted with artistic signage and lighting to make it an interesting place to pass through, if not a place where people stop to enjoy. The sound of traffic passing overhead would, in theory, make this area an undesirable rest stop, but a new interest in the forms of urban infrastructure (such as old train corridors and industrial landscapes) could inspire the young professionals at the Navy Yard to stop and appreciate the underbelly of I-95 before continuing on to the park, which is located only seconds away.



Fig. 8.I.8. Redesigning the I-95 underpass to make it more inviting

A redesign of the underpass should contain creative light fixtures that will brighten the passage and make for an interesting installation. These light fixtures should be made in cooperation with a local artist so that the lights are not only functional and beautiful, but also genuinely Philadelphian.

Once the area is lit, it will be even easier to see the ugly pile of debris behind the chain-link fence. A new wall should be erected to beautify the underpass, and artwork celebrating the history of FDR Park, including images of the boathouse and gazebo, should adorn the wall. In addition to making the underpass more pleasant, this artwork would promote use of the historic structures in the park.

Finally, the highway barriers that protect the columns should be replaced with structures that invite pedestrians into the underpass while still serving their protective function. One possibility is wide concrete slabs decorated with mosaics that can be used as benches.

When pedestrians sit on the benches and look up at the highway, they can see the intricate patterns of concrete that support I-95. Even if the underpass is not used as a place to rest or take in the architecture of infrastructure, the mosaics will create a much more inviting area to pass through.



Fig. 8.I.9. Interesting architecture under the highway can be viewed from the Navy Yard to FDR Park sidealk

Only a few steps north of the I-95 underpass, the first entrance to FDR Park appears. An unassuming yellow metal gate opens up to a cracked macadam surface made for cars to drive on. There is no sign that designates that this is an entrance to the park, only a sign that mandates that there is no parking for sporting events though this entrance. There is absolutely no pedestrian or bicycle infrastructure here.

It is important that this entrance is reimagined because it is the entrance that would be used by Navy Yard employees. This southernmost entrance should be treated as a gateway to the park so that visitors from the Navy Yard know that they have entered a historic site full of exceptional recreational activities.



Fig. 8.I.9. The S. Broad St. entrance to FDR Park



Fig. 8.I.10. The South Broad Street entrance to FDR Park seen from inside the park

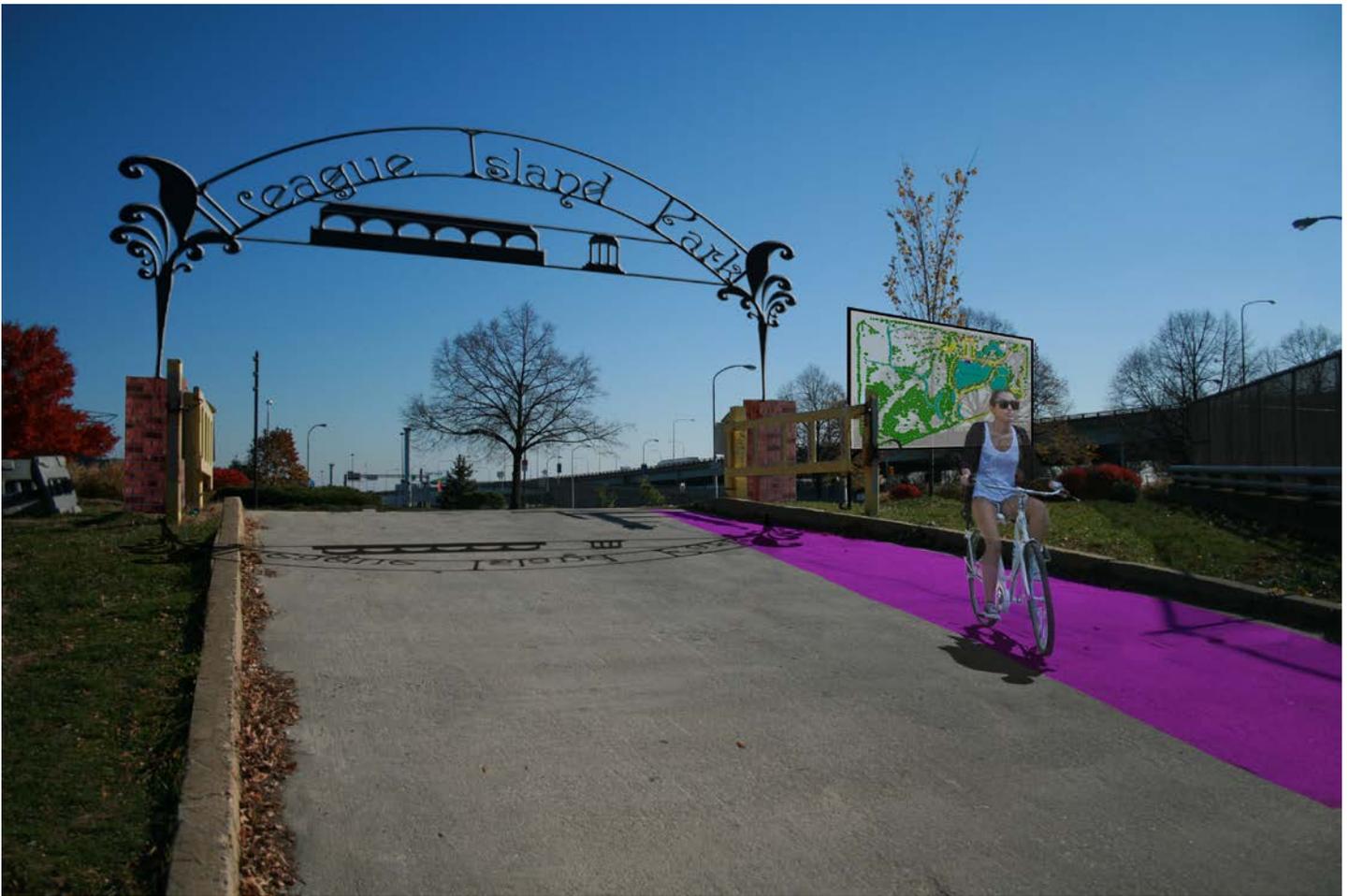


Fig. 8.I.II. The redesigned South Broad Street entrance to FDR Park seen from inside the park

An iron entrance gate would let visitors know they have arrived at the park; it would refer back to the period of significance of the site (1914 – 1926) through its style; and it would brand the boathouse and the gazebo as iconic structures in the park.

An informational sign would also be placed at the entrance to let park users know where different recreational activities are located as well as giving information about the park's history. The original Olmsted trails would be overlaid with the current trail system, and information about FDR Park's local historic district designation would also be included. Furthermore, it is recommended that the name of the park reverts to the historic League Island Park. The history of the name is important to recall not only the period of the park's significance, but

also the ecological and cultural history of Philadelphia before development of the southern portion of the city. The name League Island Park also conveys the presence of nature better than the name FDR Park, which may inspire more visitors to enjoy what the park has to offer.

The macadam would be repaired, and a bike lane would be introduced for the safety of bikers. The bike lane could be implemented using a color of paint not often used for bike paths, such as purple, to further brand FDR Park as a unique place in the city.

These improvements would make the South Broad Street entrance a much more inviting gateway to one of the city's great parks.

BROAD STREET CONNECTION

Directly across Broad Street from the entrance is the terminus of the Broad Street subway line: ATT Station. There are four portals, but only two are opened when there are no sporting events happening in the stadium district. Directly behind the ATT Station portals is a sea of parking lots for the stadiums. At the intersection of Broad and Pattison, Broad Street is eight lanes with a significant median down the center and Pattison Avenue is 6 lanes. Though there are crosswalks and pedestrian signals, it takes about 7 minutes to cross from one corner to the corner diagonal to it due to the infrequency of pedestrian right of way. The ATT Station serves as a pick-up and drop-off point for shuttles going to and from the Navy Yard transporting Navy Yard employees who take public transportation to work.

The wooded median down the center of Broad Street is a remnant of the Olmsted Brother's original 1914 plan for League Island Park and the Broad Street promenade. Some of the trees lining the median are original plantings. The integrity of the Olmsted design is still visible in some areas. While Olmsted's promenade went from Oregon Avenue to the Navy Yard with very few interruptions, frequent turning lanes slice today's medians into many small pieces. Nevertheless, the median directly across from the park's main entrance has a significant width and could accommodate a new walkway.

The median between the park's historic main entrance and the ATT station that serves the stadiums and the Navy Yard is ripe with potential for interventions that would connect the park with the Broad Street line and interpret

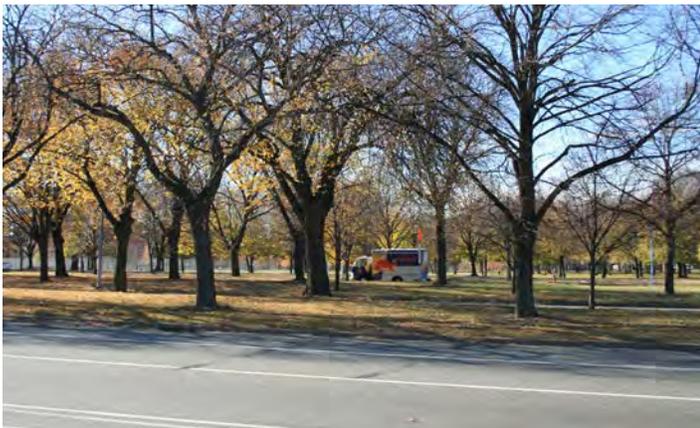
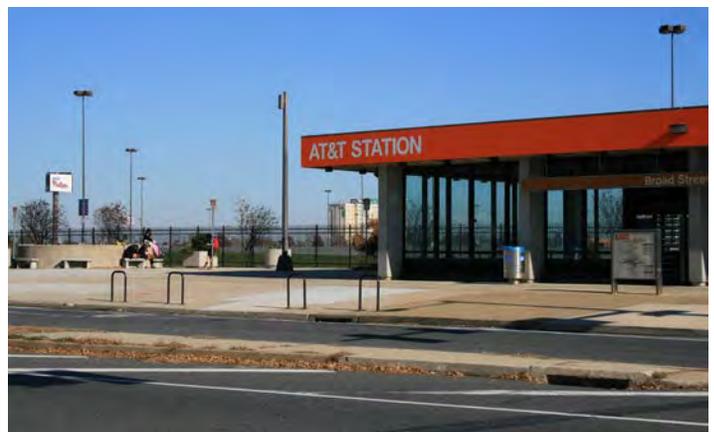


Fig. 8.I.12. Views of the main entrance to the park, the Broad Street Line's ATT station, and the Broad Street median



Fig. 8.I.I3. The median between FDR Park’s main entrance and the ATT Station exhibits remnants of Olmsted’s original park plan

the history of Olmsted’s Broad Street promenade.

Currently, there is a very poor connection between the park and the subway portal. Though the subway can be seen from the park entrance, there is no visible thread that connects them. This is especially true because the entrance to the subway faces the stadium parking lots, not the park.

Additionally, there is a great deal of unused green space that is overlooked by visitors to this area and preservationists alike. The entire park is designated as a historic landscape, but the Broad Street median, which contains remnants of Olmsted’s Broad Street promenade and is an example of City Beautiful urban design, is not part of the designation. Leaving the space empty and unused is missing an opportunity to interpret part of the original park plan.



Fig. 8.I.I4. The cross alk between FDR Park’s main entrance and the Broad Street line’s ATT station



Fig. 8.I.15. The median redesigned to create an experiential interpretation of Olmsted's Broad Street promenade

The redesign of the Broad Street median includes laying pavers between the rows of trees to recreate a promenade along one part of Broad Street. While this promenade is significantly shorter than the original Olmsted design, it would allow users to experience what was once there. The walkway connects two Broad Street crosswalks and could be used by people crossing Broad Street to catch a Navy Yard shuttle or a subway. The placement of this promenade is strategic because it enables people who are coming to the area for work or for a sporting event and use the median to see FDR Park. The visual connection is important for inspiring new users to visit and use the park.

The Broad Street median can also be used as a pick-up spot for shuttles heading toward the Navy Yard. The turning lane that cuts into the median can be repurposed as a shuttle stop. The bus shelter can be designed to reflect the history of FDR Park. Modeling the shelter after a traditional onion-shaped Russian dome would create a

link with the boathouse's history as a Russian tearoom and add color and humor to an area that is dominated by parking lots.

New pavers should be laid from the ATT station to the park's main entrance to create a visible link between the two places and encourage pedestrian traffic.



Fig. 8.I.16. Design proposal creating a visible and unified path between FDR Park's main entrance and the ATT station

PATTISON AVENUE CONNECTION

Pattison Avenue stretches its six lanes from Broad Street to 20th Street without as much as a stop sign to calm traffic. In a city where nearly every intersection has a place for pedestrians to cross, it is a strange pro-automobile anomaly. On days when there is a sporting event happening in one of the nearby stadiums, all six lanes are packed with fans trying to reach the parking lots east of Broad Street, in the former naval hospital site, or in FDR Park. On non-game days, traffic is sporadic, but crossing the six lane avenue is still difficult, especially considering there is more than a half mile between safe intersections.

To access the sports fields that are in the middle of FDR Park, far from the park's parking lots, people have started to drive into the middle of the park and park their cars on the grass. This is detrimental to the environment of the park and causes confusion about where designated parking is located. It is necessary to put additional informational signs in this area of the park to help visitors orient themselves.

In the original Olmsted plan for League Island Park, there was an entrance located where 18th Street would intersect with Pattison Avenue. Today, the site of the former Naval Hospital, now a large, underused parking lot, cuts 18th Street off from Pattison Avenue. The neighborhoods behind the former Naval Hospital site are also cut off from having direct access to FDR Park. Fortunately, the Philadelphia 2035 Lower South District Plan proposed developing the Naval Hospital site into housing. This development would provide an opportunity to build street connections from the current neighborhoods and the new communities to Pattison

Avenue. New development along Pattison could be a mix of residential and commercial, which would not only attract new community members, but it would also attract sports fans west of Broad Street and closer to the park. FDR Park must seize the opportunity to create new connections to the areas developing around it.

The design proposal builds off the assumption that



Fig. 8.I.I7. The Naval Hospital, 49 acres, demolished in 2001



Fig. 8.I.I8. Cars parked on the grass near the Swedish Museum



Fig. 8.I.I9. Current conditions of Pattison Avenue looking west



Fig. 8.I.20. Current conditions of Pattison Avenue looking east



Fig. 8.I.2I. Redesigning Pattison Avenue includes traffic calming and creating a new vantage point for the park

development will occur on the former Naval Yard site. A pedestrian bridge is proposed which would take park users from the inside of the new development over Pattison Avenue's six lanes and into the park. This bridge would not only give pedestrians a unique way to reach the park, it would also enable a new vantage point for seeing the park design. The height granted by the bridge would allow pedestrians to see the boathouse and gazebo, and thus be inspired to visit them. The bird's eye view would also enable users to see the parts of Olmsted's original plan that are still visible in the landscape. This vision would be aided by new signage, described in section 8.5, which transposes the Olmsted plan on the current park map.

Underneath the bridge there will be traffic lights and a crosswalk that will calm the traffic along Pattison. Instead of cars driving six blocks without stopping, they will be confronted with a traffic light at 18th Street. This traffic calming will make Pattison Avenue safer for pedestrians crossing the street at grade. Another proposal for Pattison

Avenue is to install bollards along the southernmost lane of traffic and turn it into a bike lane on non-game days. When there is no sporting event and little traffic on Pattison Avenue, the lane will be closed to cars, but when traffic increases on weekends, the lane will be opened to automobile traffic.

Redesigning the connections between FDR Park and its surroundings is imperative to interpreting the boathouse and gazebo. The two buildings are important because of their open plans and their openness to the public, but the park they are situated in has become isolated and closed off to pedestrians and new users due to design that favors cars and a lack of informational signage. To truly build on the open nature of the historic buildings situated at the heart of FDR Park, the park must also become more open. As new users increase pressure on park resources, however, it is imperative to also create a management and interpretation plan for the natural environment that makes the boathouse and gazebo's landscape so unique within Philadelphia.

8.2 LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION AND DESIGN MANAGEMENT AT FDR PARK

Individual Studio Project - Erica Maust

FDR Park is a palimpsest of landscape history and design interventions. Understanding these different layers of the site's ecological history and design interventions is vital to the processes of landscape conservation and design management for future preservationists and park managers. Past and future interventions shape the way visitors use and interact within the Park's boundaries, and environmental changes outside the Park can have a dramatic impact on the delicate ecosystems that exist within.

This individual report proposes to treat the Park and its environs as a cultural landscape. Using the framework and guidelines provided by the National Park Service to develop an environmental conservation plan that sensitively addresses the site's historic landscape associations while allowing for change and natural development, this report is guided by the following three goals:

- I. As a historically designed landscape, the original Olmsted Brothers plan for League Island Park has shaped the current uses of FDR Park. Knowledge and interpretation of their intentions behind certain



Figure 8.2.I. Despite a number of inappropriate design interventions and water pollution from outside sources, the system of lakes at FDR Park retain some of their picturesque qualities from the Olmsted Brothers design. (A. Kress)

design choices and plantings is an important part of the site's ecological history and current systems (Figure 8.2.I).

2. As a remnant of the historic tidal marshes that once connected what is now FDR Park to the Delaware River, the site is home to plant and animal species that are incredibly rare in both the city of Philadelphia and the state of Pennsylvania. Environmental restoration is a necessary step toward the continued existence of these species at the Park
3. As a rare ecological site in the region, a historically-designed landscape, and a public park with a variety of uses and users, a conservation plan that respects all aspects of this dynamic relationship between the landscape and its users is an important and necessary implementation. The development of such a plan should allow and enhance continued positive visitor experience, respect the Park's existing ecological systems and importance, and honor the historic landscape design while anticipating environmental changes.

Methodology

This section of the report was heavily influenced and inspired by earlier research by the studio team and frequent park visits. The research methodology for the development of an environmental conservation plan is as follows:

1. Significance: Establishing the Olmsted Brothers park design from 1914-16 as the most significant aspect of the Park's history as a designed landscape, and as source for how the park exists and functions today.
2. Research: Exploration into the history of the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architecture firm, designed parks and early twentieth century landscape ideals, as well as environmental restoration techniques and case studies.
3. Fieldwork: Frequent visits to the site to document landscape qualities and physical attributes.

Identification and documentation of existing tree and plant species along the shorelines of Edgewood Lake was also conducted to compare with the Olmsted Brothers planting lists for the Park.

4. Development: Creation of evolutionary maps to compare the Park's development and change over time.
5. Recommendations: Establish recommendations for adaptations to park circulation to subtly interpret the Olmsted Brothers design and enhance visitor experience; generate possible tools for environmental restoration based on comparable case studies; develop recommendations for future environmental conservation plans for the site that are sensitive to the historic landscape design and current uses, while maintaining that change in the natural environment is inherent.



Figures 8.2.3 and 8.2.4. The system of lakes in the Park are covered by a mixture of algae and *Lemna minor* (top image). Close proximity to I-95 and railways also leads to a high level of pollutants related to traffic (bottom image). (A. Kress; E. Maust)

Park Ecology

As noted earlier in this report, the systems of lakes at FDR Park are the remnants of a tidal marsh and channel system. Some sources suggest that the draining and filling of these original marshes probably began by Swedish settlers in the early seventeenth century, when the area was used as farmland. In the early twentieth century, a tide gate was installed at the Philadelphia Navy Yard, restricting most of the tidal flow between the Delaware River and the Park water systems. The gate is designed to prevent inflow from the Delaware River while allowing drainage from Park waters, but incomplete sealing allows some tidal exchange to occur, as demonstrated by the number of rare intertidal plant species that can be found



Figure 8.2.2. The south connection within the Park to the tide gates at the Navy Yard. (E. Maust)

at the Park (Figure 8.2.2).

The water quality of the systems of lakes is environmentally compromised (Figures 8.2.3 and 8.2.4). The water is extremely eutrophied (contains a high level of nutrients), allowing for the overproduction of algae, *Lemna minor* (duckweed), and high densities of nitrogen-fixing plant life (Figure 8.2.5). While providing some nutrients for bird life, this cover can lower food quality for other aquatic organisms and results in decreased availability of oxygen. Above the surface, it is also incredibly unappealing to visitors and park users.

More information about hydrology history, species surveys, and Park ecology can be found in the *Fairmount Park System Natural Lands Restoration Master Plans*, a report prepared by The Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia and the Patrick Center for Environmental



Figure 8.2.5. High concentrations of *Lemna minor* can be found seasonally in the water systems at the Park. (A. Kress)

Research and Biodiversity Group in 1999, and in *A Natural Heritage Inventory of Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania*, prepared by the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program in 2008. (Both are contained in the appendix to Section 8.2.)

Olmsted Brothers Design (1914-1916)

As was noted earlier in this report, the Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architecture firm did not begin work at League Island Park until well after the system of lakes had been established by dredging earlier in the twentieth century, around the same time as the installation of the tide gate. Taking into account the history, legacy, and philosophy of their father Frederick Law Olmsted, it is probable that the firm based their designs for the Park on preexisting landscape features at the site (Figure 8.2.6). Recognized as the founder of landscape architecture, Olmsted bequeathed to his sons (and to generations of landscape architects and designers) a set of guiding design principles (as listed on the website for The National Association for Olmsted Parks) that have inspired some of the most well designed and beautiful parks and landscapes that exist today:

1. A Genius of Place: The design should take advantage of unique characteristics of the site, even its disadvantages. The design should be developed and refined with intimate knowledge of the site.
2. Unified Composition: All elements of the landscape design should be made subordinate to an overarching design purpose. The design

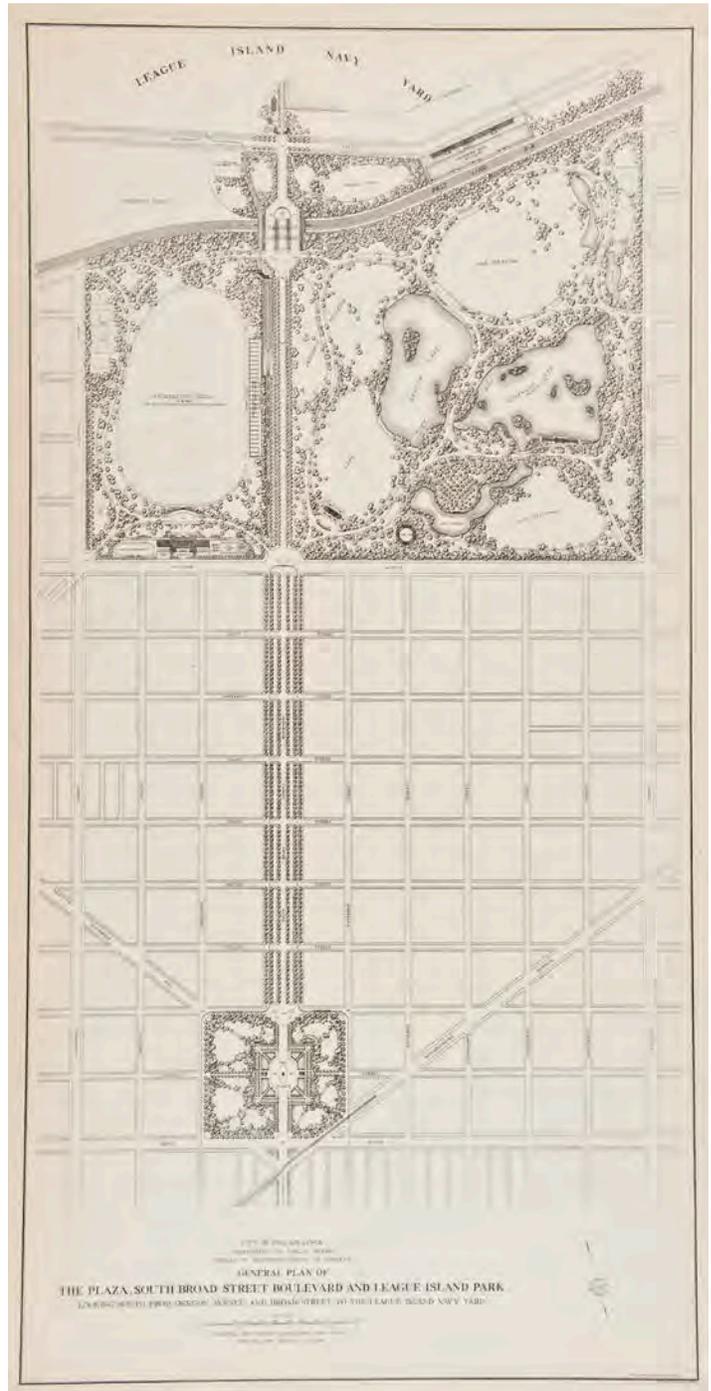


Figure 8.2.6. 1914 Plans for League Island Park, Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects. (Courtesy of The Frederick Law Olmsted Archives, Brookline, MA)

- should avoid decorative treatment of plantings and structures so that the landscape experience will ring organic and true.
3. Orchestration of Movement: The composition should subtly direct movement through the landscape. There should be separation of ways, as in parks and parkways, for efficiency and amenity of movement, and to avoid

collision or the apprehension of collision, between different kinds of traffic.

4. **Orchestration of Use:** The composition should artfully insert a variety of uses into logical precincts, ensuring the best possible site for each use and preventing competition between uses.
5. **Sustainable Design and Environmental Conservation:** The design should allow for long-term maintenance and ensure the realization and perpetuation of the design intent. Plant materials should thrive, be non invasive, and require little maintenance. The design should conserve the natural features of the site to the greatest extent possible and provide for the continued ecological health of the area.
6. **A Comprehensive Approach:** The composition should be comprehensive and seek to have a healthful influence beyond its boundaries. In the same way, the design must acknowledge and take into consideration what surrounds it. It should create complementary effects. When possible, public grounds should be connected by greenways and boulevards so as to extend and maximize park spaces.

FDR Park as a Cultural Landscape

The National Park Service defines a cultural landscape as “a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values.” Under this broader definition are four different types by which to categorize cultural landscapes. FDR Park falls under two of these categories as outlined by the National Park Service in Preservation Brief #36:

- I. **Historic Designed Landscape:** a landscape that was consciously designed or laid out by a landscape architect, master gardener, architect, or horticulturist according to design principles, or an amateur gardener working in a recognized style or tradition. The landscape may be associated with a significant person(s), trend, or event in landscape architecture; or illustrate an important development in the theory

and practice of landscape architecture. Aesthetic values play a significant role in designed landscapes. Examples include parks, campuses, and estates.

2. **Historic Site:** a landscape significant for its association with a historic event, activity, or person. Examples include battlefields and president’s house properties.

Approaching the site as a cultural landscape provides all parties involved in the management of the Park with a preexisting framework by which to identify, record, preserve, and manage the unique cultural and landscape qualities of the Park. Following this framework as outlined by the National Park Service guides practitioners and landscape managers to recognize and categorize individual character areas within the park to determine the correct guidelines for management of the site.

Determining Change Over Time

Based on current Park conditions and layout and the Olmsted Brothers design from 1914-1916, it is clear that of the design elements at the Park, as well as the ecological features and plantings are remnants of the Olmsted Brothers design. While other aspects of the Park’s history are also important (such as the Sesquicentennial Exhibition of 1926), this aspect of the report privileges the earlier Olmsted Brothers design because of its continued integrity. To determine what remains of this design and what has changed, a series of comparative maps were created to identify the areas of historic design integrity and designate distinct character areas.

1. Figure 8.2.7: Current Park survey based on site visits, maps, and aerial photographs (2012)
2. Figure 8.2.8: Olmsted Brothers design (1914-1916)
3. Figure 8.2.9: Change in shorelines of lakes from 1916 to 2012
4. Figure 8.2.10: Change in tree canopy cover from 1916 to 2012
5. Figure 8.2.11: Change in pedestrian pathways through the park from 1916 to 2012
6. Figure 8.2.12: Changes to roadways and addition of parking lots from 1916 to 2012
7. Figure 8.2.13: Character areas as determined by comparative maps
8. Figure 8.2.14: Area as surveyed for plant inventory



Figure 8.2.7: Current survey based on site visits, maps, and aerial photographs (2012).

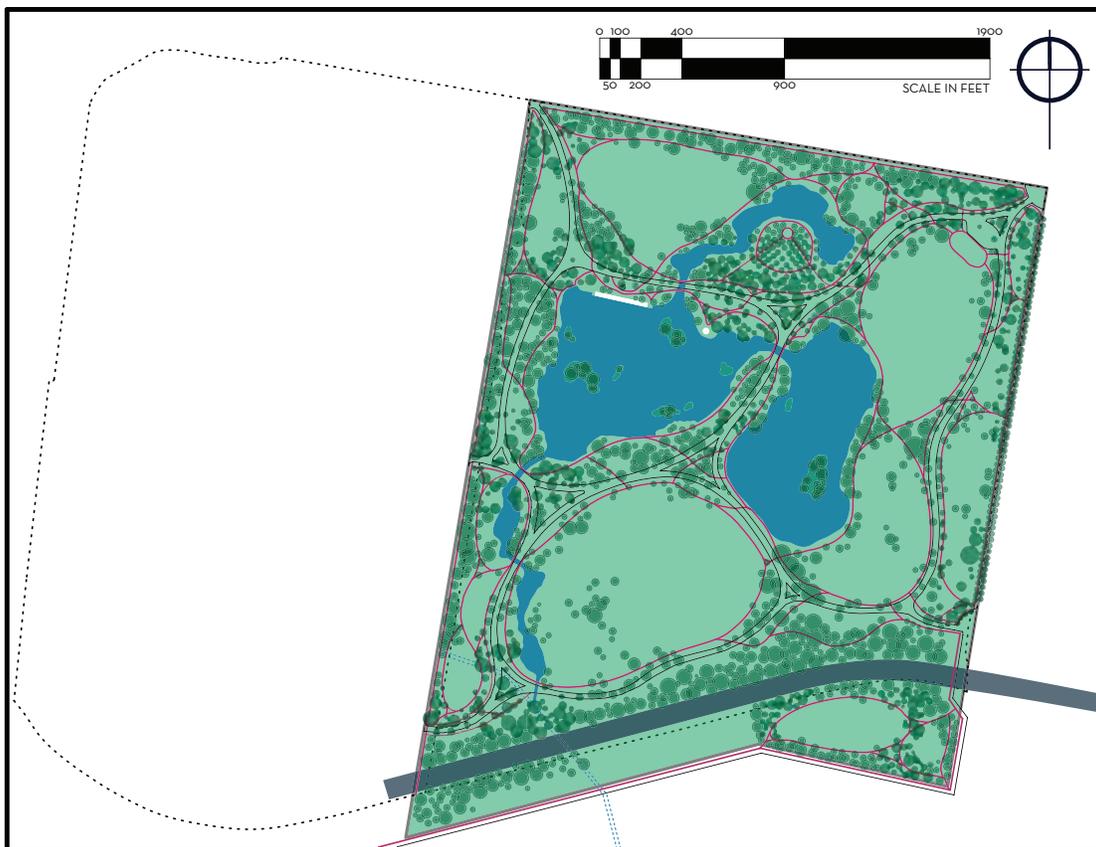


Figure 8.2.8: Olmsted Brothers design (1914-1916).

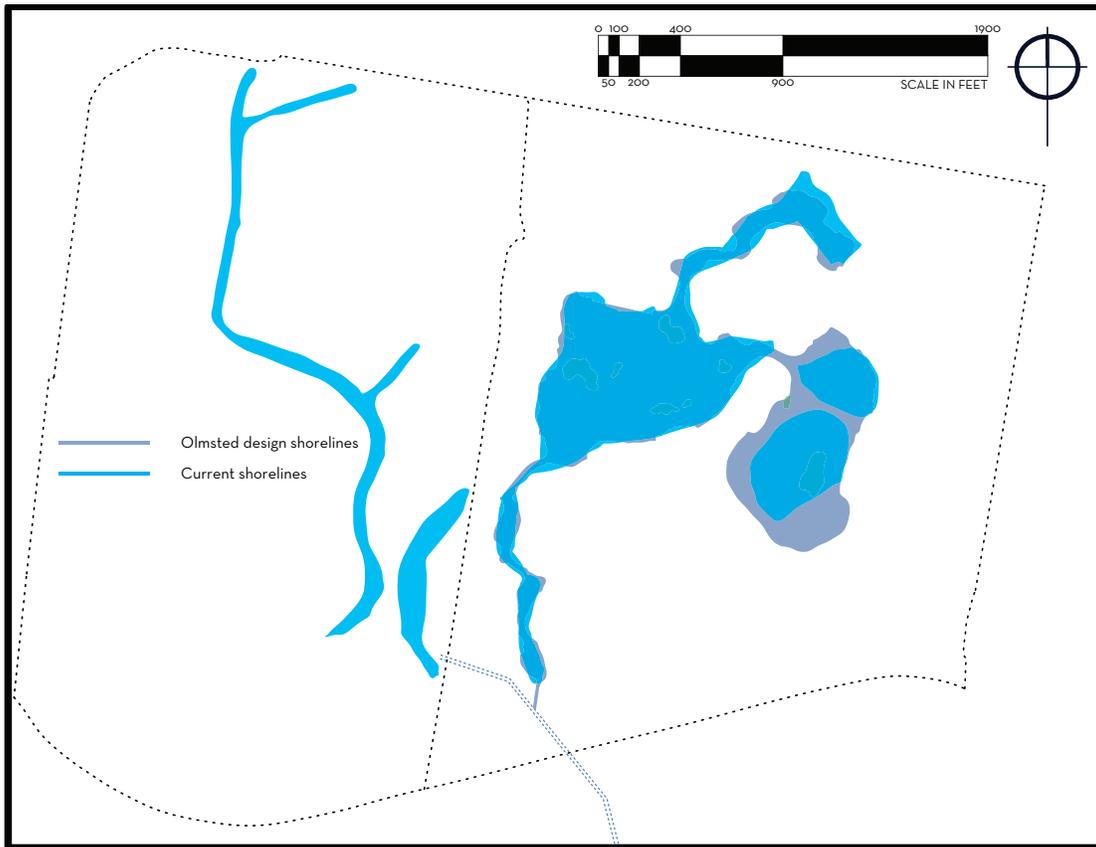


Figure 8.2.9: Change in shorelines of lakes from 1916 to 2012.

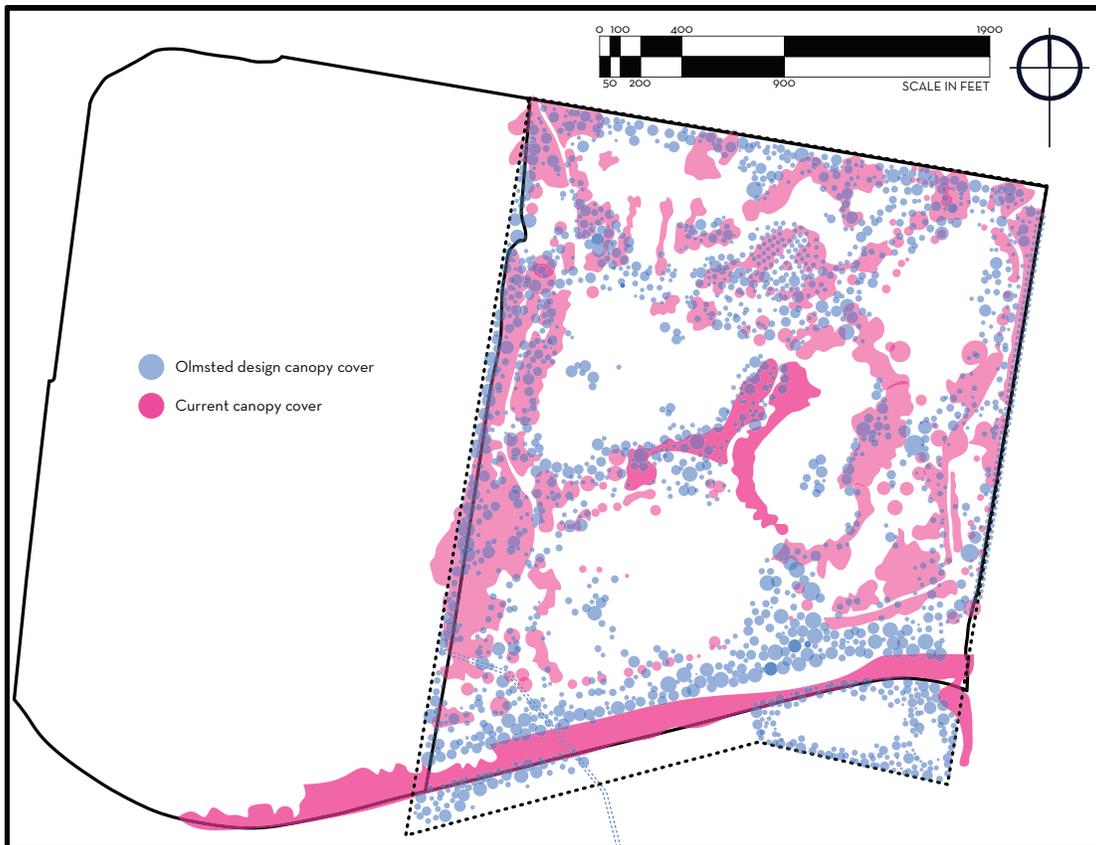


Figure 8.2.10: Change in tree canopy cover from 1916 to 2012.



Figure 8.2.II: Change in pedestrian pathways through the park from 1916 to 2012.

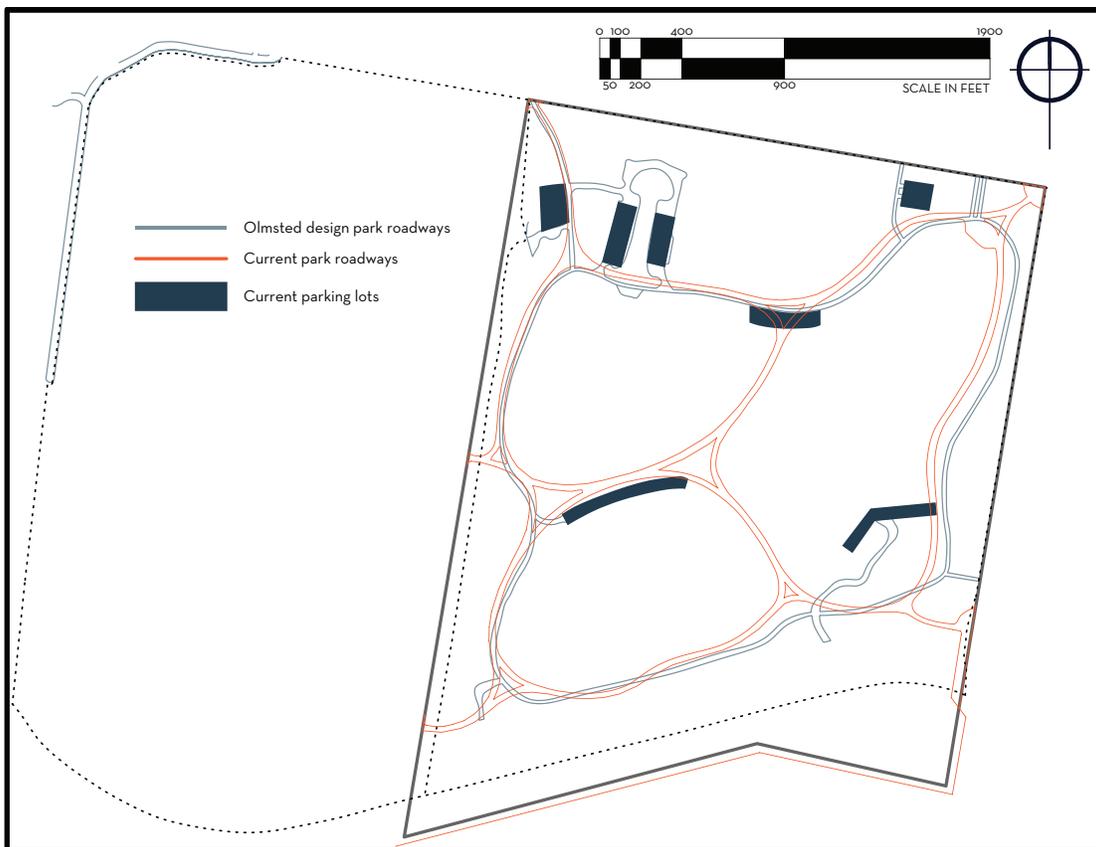


Figure 8.2.I2: Changes to roadways and addition of parking lots from 1916 to 2012.

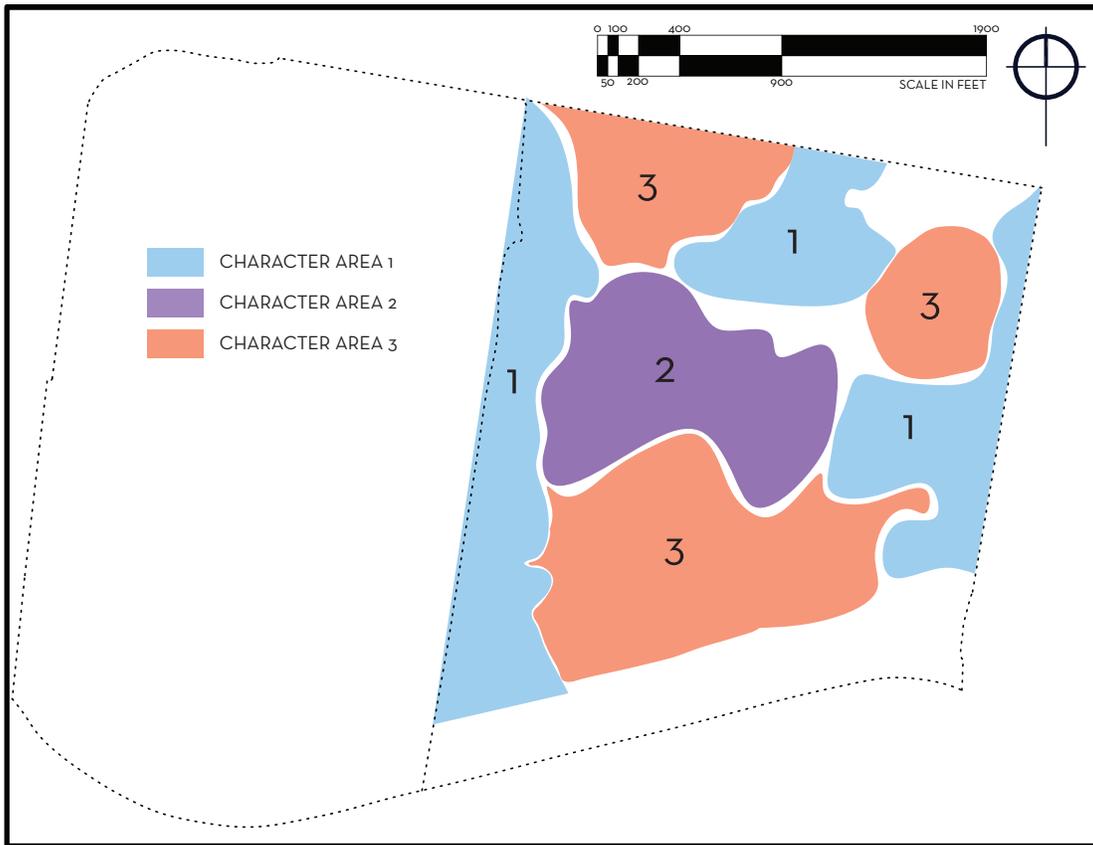
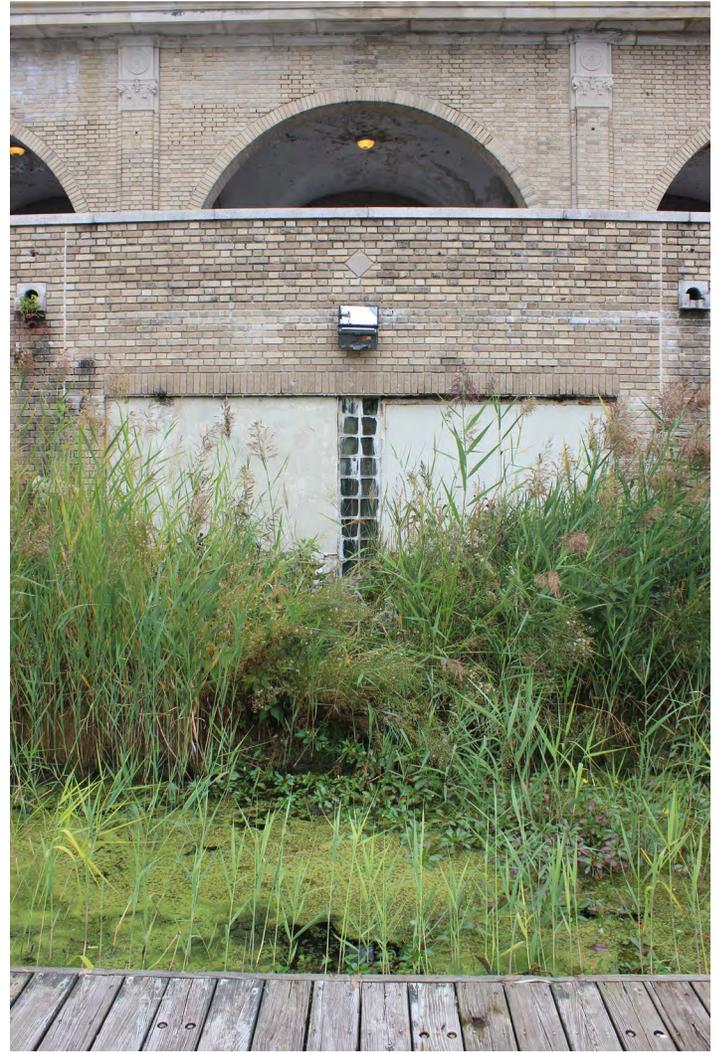


Figure 8.2.I3: Character areas as determined by comparative maps. Character areas are defined as follows:

- Character Area 1: High level of historic integrity. These areas have a low tolerance for changes that do not restore the landscape to the original Olmsted Brothers design, or improve environmental conditions.
- Character Area 2: Medium level of integrity. Drastic changes are not recommended, but changes that improve the ecology and Park experience are acceptable.
- Character Area 3: Low level of integrity. These areas have already been dramatically changed, and therefore have a higher tolerance for continued change.



Figure 8.2.I.4: Area as surveyed for plant inventory to compare with Olmsted Brothers planting lists. Surveyed area highlighted in white.



Figures 8.2.15 and 8.2.16. Examples of invasive plant species along the shoreline of Edgewood Lake between the boathouse and docks. (A. Kress; E. Hessmiller)

to compare with Olmsted Brothers planting lists (see Appendices A.8.2.3 and A.8.2.4 for lists)

Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the culmination of the above research and mapping processes, and are specific to landscape conservation and design management of the Park. They are meant to be complementary to the more comprehensive recommendations as outlined in the team report. While these recommendations are not mutually exclusive from one another, the implementation of any of them individually will still have a positive impact on Park ecology.

Short-term

1. Completion of an extensive cultural landscape report (CLR) of the Park.
2. Minimize environmental damage to the Park by ceasing fertilizer use on fields within the Park and the adjacent golf course.
3. Clear shorelines of invasive plant species to enhance water quality and contribute to control of bird population (Figures 8.2.15 and 8.2.16).
4. Introduce aeration to the lakes and water systems to reduce standing water and discourage growth of algae (Figure 8.2.17).
5. Develop ways to control invasive bird populations (such as Canada Geese) that have a detrimental affect on the environment of the Park and visitor experience.



Figure 8.2.17. Introducing aeration to the lakes and water systems will help reduce standing water and discourage growth of algae.

Mid-term

1. Reopen Navy Yard tide gates to restore tidal connection.
2. Maintain and enhance the environment for state-designated rare plants within the Park.
3. Expand patches of native vegetation and replace invasive species with native plants as per the Olmsted Brothers planting lists to benefit both the Coastal Plain ecology and provide wildlife habitat.
4. Increase natural land areas and enhance woodland and wetland environments to enhance to encourage use of the Park as a breeding, migratory, and wintering ground for rare and non-invasive bird species. (This also provides an opportunity to work with organizations such as the Audubon Society and introduce new visitors to the Park.)

Long-term

1. Restore and reintroduce areas of the park to the original Olmsted Brothers design to encourage and enhance pedestrian circulation throughout the Park.
2. Develop a thorough and detailed preservation plan that balances the restored Park ecology, Olmsted Brothers design intent, and current Park uses.
3. Restore a small section of the tidal marsh to serve as an educational exhibit and interpretive aspect in the Park.

Conclusion

While the Park has been transformed dramatically over the past century, it is important to consider that its

functions have remained. Natural lands evolve and change, and an important aspect of landscape conservation is allowing the environment to transform and adapt. As these changes happen, however, it is necessary to ensure that existing landscape features are retained through careful and calculated landscape management practices. By identifying important character areas of the Park and taking into consideration the guiding design principles for the early Olmsted Brothers design, many of the important environmental and design features of the Park can be preserved or restored. Through the various arenas of landscape conservation, design management, and preservation maintenance, monitoring and controlling change in the landscape ensures that the historic integrity of FDR Park is not altered, and that significant features are not lost for future generations of Philadelphians.

Appendices

- A.8.2.1: Chapter 3, *Fairmount Park System Natural Lands Restoration Master Plans*, Academy of Natural Sciences
- A.8.2.2: *A Natural Heritage Inventory of Philadelphia County*, Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program
- A.8.2.3: Planting Lists for League Island Park, Olmsted Brothers Landscape Architects (Courtesy of The Frederick Law Olmsted Archives)
- A.8.2.4: Tree Inventory of park survey as illustrated in Figure 8.2.14

Note: A.8.2.4 can also be found on the following page of this report.

Appendix 8.2.4

The plant species listed below are the results of a survey conducted over the course of one day in October 2012 at FDR Park, within the area noted in Figure 8.2.14 (at right). This list is by no means extensive, and was completed partially for reasons of personal interest and curiosity on behalf of the author, and also to use as an initial comparative tool with the Olmsted Brothers planting lists for the Park.



Figure 8.2.14: Area as surveyed for plant inventory to compare with Olmsted Brothers planting lists. Surveyed area highlighted in white.

Acer negundo (Box Elder)
Acer nigrum (Black Maple)
Acer rubrum (Red Maple)
Acer saccharinum (Silver maple)
Acer saccharum (Sugar Maple)
Achillea millefolium (Common yarrow)
Aesculus hippocastanum (Horse Chestnut)*
Ailanthus altissima (Tree of Heaven [introduced to United States by William Hamilton])**
Amelanchier canadensis (Shadbush Serviceberry)**
Artemisia vulgaris (Common mugwort)
Betula nigra (River Birch)
Baccharis halimifolia (Eastern Baccharus, Saltbush)
Broussonetia papyrifera (Paper Mulberry)*
Celastrus orbiculatus (Asian Bittersweet)*
Cephalanthus occidentalis (Button Bush)
Chamaecyparis thyoides (Atlantic White Cypress)
Cornus sericea (Red osier dogwood)
Fagus grandifolia (American Beech)
Fagus sylvatica (European Beech)
Eryngium yuccifolium (Button snake-root)
Fraxinus pennsylvanica (Green Ash)
Ginkgo biloba (Maidenhair tree)*
Gleditsia triacanthos (Honey locust)
Hibiscus moscheutos (Swamp-rose Mallow)
Leersia oryzoides (Rice cutgrass)
Ligustrum lucidum (Glossy privet)*
Liquidambar styraciflua (American sweetgum)
Malus coronaria (Wild Crab Apple)
Maytenus silvestris (Orange bark)*

Nyssa sylvatica (Black tupelo)
Phytolacca americana (American pokeweed)
Pinus strobus (Eastern White Pine)
Platanus x acerifolia (London Plane Tree)*
Platanus occidentalis (American Sycamore)
Populus alba (White Poplar)*
Prunus serotina (Black Cherry)
Quercus acutissima (Sawtooth oak)*
Quercus alba (White Oak)
Quercus bicolor (Swamp white oak)
Quercus macrocarpa (Burr Oak)
Quercus palustris (Pin Oak)
Quercus phellos (Willow Oak)
Quercus rubra (Red Oak)
Rhamnus cathartica (Common Buckthorn)*
Rubus fruticosus (Blackberry)
Sagittaria sagittifolia (Arrowhead)*
Tilia Americana (American Linden)
Ulmus parvifolia (Chinese Elm or Lacebark Elm)*
Ulmus pumila (Siberian Elm)*
Ulmus rubra (Slippery Elm)
Zelkova serrata (Japanese zelkova)*

*Non-native

**Not listed on Olmsted Brothers planting lists

8.3 INTERPRETING THE SESQUICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION AND THE RUSSIAN TEA ROOM AT EDGEWOOD LAKE BOATHOUSE

Individual Studio Project - Elizabeth Lissy

INTRODUCTION

This section offers a reinterpretation of the 1926 Sesquicentennial International Exhibition in Philadelphia which took place at League Island Park in South Philadelphia. The Sesquicentennial was important to the development of the park, celebrated an important event in American history, and marked a period in Philadelphia where the proud and hopeful city displayed its accomplishments. Celebrating the Sesquicentennial Exhibition gave an influential platform to Philadelphia and FDR Park deserves recognition and promotion as the site of such a powerful event. The history and context provided in this proposal serves as a basis for an interpretive plan for the Edgewood Lake Boathouse, which functioned as the Russian Tea Room during the Fair (Figure 8.3-I).

This research was driven with the aim of finding the connection of Russia and the Russian Pavilion to the rest of the fair and to Philadelphia in order to provide an appropriate historic interpretation and proposed future use for the boathouse with this connection in consideration. The context of Philadelphia in the 1920s, the groups represented at the fair, and Russian influences

on the fair exhibit are examined for the purpose of identifying features that need to be incorporated into an interpretation that would represent the significance of the boathouse during the fair. This section concludes with a proposal for the installation of a Philadelphia Sesquicentennial Exhibit and a Tea Room Café at the boathouse to be in part promoted by the American Swedish Historical Museum, whose building was built for the Sesquicentennial Exhibition. This proposal complements the preservation goals for the site by increasing awareness of the site's history and significance and will gather support from visitors and the community.

PHILADELPHIA AND THE SESQUICENTENNIAL

a. Philadelphia: Cultural Context

Between 1901 and 1915, Philadelphia experienced a dramatic increase in population from 1.29 million people to 1.68 million people, largely due to the increase in immigration to the United States before World War I. Most of the Russian immigrants to Philadelphia, as well as a large number of Poles and other eastern Europeans, were Jews who had been forced from their home by poverty and religious persecution in the 1890s. The pogroms in Russia in 1881 began a wave of Jewish immigration into the U.S. that flowed into the next century. By 1894, the Jewish population in Philadelphia rose from 300 to 30,000, and then in 1905 to 100,000; of those 100,000 Jews in the city, 70,000 were Russian.²

By 1904, each Philadelphia neighborhood was a collection of almost separate villages which guarded its special character, ethnic heritage and political integrity. Each had its own business district, such as the Italian street markets and Jewish shops in south Philadelphia and others. By 1920, the population in Philadelphia reached 1.82 million, and was the largest city in the U.S. after New York and Chicago.³ The percentage of Italians, Russians, Poles, and others of foreign-born population increased from 16 to 33 percent in America during this time.⁴ By



Figure 8.3-I. General view of the boathouse as the Russian Pavilion Restaurant, with Edgewood Lake to the right and the Palace of Fine Arts to the left. 1926. *Philadelphia Department of Records (DOR)*.

the end of the 19th century, “old” immigration from Britain and northern Europe was replaced with a “new” immigration from Russia, Eastern Europe, and Italy.⁵ This generation of immigrants became well-known in Philadelphia for clothing manufacture, shoemaking, mercantile, carpentry, butchery, and other artisan trades.

According to the 1920 census, Russians were the majority of the city’s foreign born population.⁶ Jews of Russian extraction, Italians, and Poles comprised most of the new immigration in Philadelphia. These cultural groups were represented by local ethnic groups at the Philadelphia Sesquicentennial Exhibition, along with Swedish Americans, African Americans, Italian Americans and others. Philadelphia was becoming increasingly segregated along ethnic and economic lines and South Philadelphia served as the immigrant port of entry and home to many of the city’s unskilled poor.⁷ The fair’s location in South Philadelphia, which was of debate between fair organizers for a time, seems to be fitting in that this may be one of the first World’s Fairs to have a great emphasis on participation from local cultural groups, not just from visiting foreign group participation.

Other big changes were occurring in the United States after the First World War that would have major effects in Philadelphia, as in any city across the country, in the early twentieth century. The passing of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution granting women the right to vote occurred in 1919. Women comprised a large percentage of the Sesquicentennial organizers and participated in running many booths, pageants, and exhibits at the fair. Studying women’s efforts in the fair is beyond the scope of this research, but changing roles of women in this era lends perspective to the more diverse participation in the fair overall.

Another drastic change at the time was Prohibition in the United States, the national ban on the sale, manufacture, and transportation of alcohol. The call for national prohibition began during the Progressive Era in the United States, a large social activism and political reform movement, in part demanded by the white protestant population on moral grounds. Some believe this was somewhat in response to the [German] immigrant

population, who were large producers of alcohol and believed to be a threat to Protestant morals.⁸ With the American involvement in World War I, the German-American protests against prohibition were ignored and the amendment was voted for, effective from 1920 and lasted until 1933. Even though World War I ended in 1918, the “red scare” and other similar fears were only somewhat subsided.⁹ The Sesquicentennial occurred during a time in American history where immigrant groups felt pressure to seem more “American”. This is why it is especially interesting that these groups took the opportunity to use the fair to inform visiting spectators and fellow Philadelphians of their heritage, showing that they can retain their culture and still be American.

b. Sesquicentennial Preparation, Opening, and Close

The Sesquicentennial International Exposition marked the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. It was Philadelphia’s responsibility to make plans for this celebration, which would offer the world the opportunity to see the scientific, spiritual, economic, artistic, and industrial progress that has been made in the United States since the Centennial Celebration in 1876, which had been held in Philadelphia. Proposals for the Sesquicentennial International Exposition to be held in Philadelphia began as early as 1916.¹⁰ Previously having chosen a site next to the Benjamin Franklin Parkway and part of Fairmount Park, the final selection of League Island Park and adjacent territory in South Philadelphia was approved (Figure 8.3-2).



Figure 8.3-2. Sesquicentennial grounds showing the main entrance off Broad Street in South Philadelphia. DOR.

The city council agreed to spend \$5 million to promote the fair. President Coolidge gave approval in February of 1925 and by April the construction would begin. Before any construction could begin, the marshy land near League Island in South Philadelphia needed to be engineered to provide firmer foundation. South Philadelphia was about 15 feet below the grade of South Broad Street. The city had to fill in close to 4,500 acres of land, reclaiming this land which would eventually lead to the development of south Philadelphia. Sewers, water and electrical lines were installed and mosquitoes needed to be controlled, and streets were graded and paved. The state of Pennsylvania contributed nothing other than its state building at the fair and Congress allotted \$1 million. Another \$3 million was raised privately to provide much needed money and the planned construction of many buildings were abandoned.

The fair opened on May 31st, 1926 with roads still unpaved, unfinished exhibits and exhibition buildings, and it rained all day.¹¹ But the fair opened with a concert, aerial exhibition, and fireworks. On Flag Day, military troops from the original 13 states paraded. President Coolidge delivered the Fourth of July address.¹² There were five main exhibit palaces erected for the fair, sixty-seven buildings, hundreds of booths, along with administration and personnel buildings, and an 80-foot tall reproduction Liberty bell near the entrance (Figure 8.3-3). Although the Liberty Bell replication was still not complete at the opening, it was the largest electrical structure to have ever been presented.

There were a series of buildings, each being a copy of the originals from Colonial and Revolutionary history, forming a reproduction of High Street (present-day Market Street), Philadelphia (Figure 8.3-4). Old High Street was sponsored by the Colonial Dames and was one of the most successful exhibits, followed by the Japanese Pavilion. Forty-three foreign nations participated in the Sesquicentennial, either officially through their governments, such as Japan, Spain, and Argentina, or unofficially through industry groups, such as Germany, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia.¹³

The fair only received a fraction of the visitors expected. Rain fell 107 out of the 184 days the Exposition was



Figure 8.3-3. Large scale replica of the Liberty Bell at the entrance to the fair. DOR.



Figure 8.3-4. Reproduction of High Street, Philadelphia at the fair with costumed participants of the pageant. DOR.

open, contributing to poor attendance.¹⁴ When the Exposition closed in November, the city had run up a \$5 million deficit. There were several issues besides the weather that may have influenced poor attendance. The early 1920s saw economic decline, in which there were several bank failures between 1919 and 1924 and a building and loan scandal resulting in some stock broker closures and seventeen associations.¹⁵ Post-war unemployment was still very high. Immigration brought more and more foreign workers to Philadelphia and white Americans called for the "Americanization" of those already here. Many people were still unhappy with the prohibition laws, which were unequally enforced on



Figure 8.3-5. Current image of the American Swedish Historical Museum in FDR Park. *Photo by author.*

top of everything else. In addition, many were worried by the graft and police connections with illegal activities that had been going on in Philadelphia.¹⁶

Many writings on the Sesquicentennial focus on the failure of the city, and in so forget that fair represented a hopeful and proud Philadelphia, and it was successful in that it brought many stories of American history to the fair. The Sesquicentennial is significant because of the representation by many different groups, including women, immigrant groups and African Americans. The fair also helped in developing South Philadelphia, even though the area did not demand residential needs until the Navy Yard increased activity and the subway line from Broad Street to Snyder Avenue was completed.¹⁷ The subway would be officially opened in September of 1928.

Most fairground architecture is intended to be temporary, save a few planned buildings. The construction of the large stadium provided a major recreational outlet for Philadelphia, originally called the Sesquicentennial Stadium (later renamed JFK Stadium), which existed until 1992 when the area was redesigned for the South Philadelphia Sports Complex and is presently the site of the Wells Fargo Center. Now, the American Swedish Historical Museum is the only permanent structure built for the 1926 fair still operating today, located in the northern edge of FDR Park in its original location across the lawn from the boathouse (Figure 8.3-5).

c. Ethnicity at the Fair

The Sesquicentennial occurred during a period of change affecting Philadelphians and Americans:

industrialization, urbanization, and, as already discussed, immigration. Another indicator of change was that the fair was going to remain open on Sundays, which was also protested by Philadelphia Protestants. Other factors were consumerism, the changing role of women, nativism, and racism. Groups that participated in the fair used the celebration as a forum to address these issues. Many of the fair's exhibits were meant to recreate parts of the nation's past in part to teach visitors what it meant to be American. Other exhibits were used by each represented group who wanted to emphasize their role in American history to display their respective accomplishments as well as to celebrate their heritage (Figure 8.3-6). There were 33 "Foreign Days" at the fair celebrated, such as Irish Day and Japan Day. Local ethnic groups in Philadelphia organized some of these events, but the Foreign Days were not distinguished in the fair pamphlet between those celebrated by foreign governments and those celebrated by American ethnic groups.



Figure 8.3-6. Scottish men at the fairgrounds. *DOR.*

The Swedish Americans emphasized their pride and uniqueness during historic ceremonies at the fair. Swedish Americans demonstrated diversity by suggesting that immigrants could retain some of their own culture as they became part of a larger American culture. They wanted recognition and respect for their ancestors and their role in American history while showing that they could still be loyal Americans. The Swedish Americans hoped to educate visitors about the Swedish contributions to American history with the John Morton Memorial Building (American Swedish Historical Museum), the Wicaco Block House, a reproduction



Figure 8.3-7. The Swedish Colonial Society lay the cornerstone for the John Morton Memorial Building as part of a heritage ceremony. *DOR.*

Swedish fort, and with their ceremonies and speeches.¹⁸ The American Swedish Historical Museum was erected in honor of John Morton, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, who was of Swedish descent. The building was sponsored by the Swedish-American Society for the Sesquicentennial where the groundbreaking took place, but the building was not complete until 1938 (Figure 8.3-7). At the fair, the Swedish Americans emphasized their role in the settlement of colonial American, as well as their cultural contributions to religion and education across the nation, which helped distinguish themselves from the more recent immigrant groups to Philadelphia. Today the Museum operates in its original location, but does not interpret the Sesquicentennial. There is currently one sign in the lobby that briefly acknowledges the building's history.

Italian Day and Columbus Day were both celebrated by the Italian Americans, who used the latter to focus on the discovery of America by Italian Christopher Columbus.¹⁹ Italian Day received a great turnout, probably because of South Philadelphia's Italian-American population. Irish Americans formed the United Irish Sesqui-Centennial Association and produced floats for their parade celebrating the thirteen Irish signers of the declaration, the Irish financiers of the revolution, and the birth of the national anthem.²⁰ Their parade was one of the largest at the Fair. This was the first time that Pennsylvania's protestant and catholic Irish joined in mutual celebration.²¹ Polish-American ceremonies honored America's part in Poland's progress and honored



Figure 8.3-8. The National Council of Jewish Women exhibit. *DOR.*

the Polish-American patriots of the Revolutionary War.²² Poland Day was celebrated with a parade with Polish-American members of the American Legion, the Polish Falcons and 5000 Philadelphia Polish school children.²³ The Minister of Poland was a guest to the Fair and this celebration.

Philadelphia Jews felt the pressure of American nativism at the fair, and they also likely faced anti-Semitism. While they displayed ethnic pride at the fair, their spokesmen often cited reasons they would make upstanding Americans. Their scheduled parade was cancelled, possibly due to pressure from the fair's organizers.²⁴ There was an exhibit by the National Council of Jewish Women at the Palace of Education and Social Economy (Figure 8.3-8).²⁵ Despite the seemingly limited participation, the fact that Jewish women were represented at the fair at all is remarkable, both for being women and for being Jewish. There is no documented evidence for Russian representation at the fair, besides the Russian Pavilion and one Landrin Russian candy exhibit, both which may have been more fanciful in conception than truthful. As the many Russian immigrants to Philadelphia in this period were Jewish, it would not be unreasonable to accept that their cultural identification at the fair was also Jewish.

African Americans participated in the fair and also were involved in organizing the fair. According to E. L. Austin, the African Americans hosted a unique exhibit at the exposition that showed the "progress of

the Negro race in industry, art and science.”²⁶ There was a Sesquicentennial Committee for Negro Activities, set up in July of 1925 by the mayor of Philadelphia. The local NAACP chapter in Philadelphia ensured that the fair would not be segregated and that at least one opening speaker would be a black man, which took some convincing.²⁷ Historian Robert Rydell believed that the late inclusion of a black speaker was to avoid a black boycott of the fair, which would have been embarrassing and legally problematic if charged with discrimination against African Americans, since federal funding was given for the fair.²⁸

At the fair, African Americans held a pageant that told the story of enslavement, slavery, the civil war, and emancipation which attracted one of the largest crowds.²⁹ While participation was accepted, there were still some problems. Two black women were refused when they tried to join the Sesquicentennial chorus and the mayor of Philadelphia refused the boxing match planned between white boxer Jack Dempsey and African American boxer Harry Wills, but allowed the match between Dempsey and another white boxer, Tunney.³⁰ However, another planned pageant on African American history was forced to change dates at the last minute because the Auditorium was needed for another event that evening by the Odd Fellows, showing that discrimination and racism was still happening at the fair.³¹ Negro History week was implemented in 1926 by Carter G. Woodson, African American scholar and writer, hoping that the fair would give exposure to black history and garner appreciation.

d. Excitement of the Exotic and The Russian Tea Room
Part of the excitement in celebrating Foreign Days is the experience of something new and exotic. With the participation from forty-three countries, many exciting booths, exhibits, and shops were on display at the fair. The Gladway at the fair was the amusements section that promised fanciful foreign entertainment. This included concessions, assorted rides, and large-scale amusement attractions including “Through the Orient”, “The Battle of Gettysburg”, “Treasure Island”, “The Streets of Cairo”, and “Colonel Cummings’ Native American Village” (Figure 8.3-9).³² Little theaters flourished at the fair, celebrating the arts daily with motion pictures.³³ There was an emphasis on fascination with the Asian and

the Oriental. The large Persian Building and the popular Japanese Pavilion received great attention (Figure 8.3-10). There was an Indian Jungle Attraction with live monkeys, curiosity shops and exotic specialty goods for sale, such as Chinese silk, Tunisian perfume, and Japanese pearls (Figure 8.3-11).

Fairgoers visiting the Sesquicentennial would have



Figure 8.3-9. Treasure Mountain with caves and surrounding boat rides in the park water systems. *DOR.*



Figure 8.3-10. Persian Building. *DOR.*



Figure 8.3-11. Franco-Oriental Curiosity Shop. *DOR.*

also seen a diverse landscape that combined the old with new Modern consumerism elements, such as the contrast between replicated High Street and aviation biplane demonstrations. In the spirit of celebrating the Declaration of Independence, the theme of the fair was Colonial Revival, which ended up being mixed with the exotic, as seen in both the Russian Pavilion and the Japanese Pavilion. Photographs of the Japanese Pavilion appear most frequently in fair publications. Japan was an active and official participant in the fair and hosted a large section of trade displays of products from Japan, including tea. At the Japanese Pavilion, the interior was a different story; the space was used as a Tea Room, furnished in Colonial Revival décor (Figures 8.3-12 & 13). This indicates that the Japanese Pavilion was not organized by Japan, and instead was organized by Philadelphians to provide more exotic sights in the fair.

During the celebration, the boathouse on Edgewood Lake was transformed into a Russian Tea Room and the perched gazebo was a featured view on the gondola rides winding throughout the lakes of the park (Figures 8.3-14, 15 & 16). The Russian Tea Room hosted luncheons for public officials during the fair. However, little else is

known about the Tea Room’s organization or function in the fair besides its serving of “oriental food” and that the restaurant was situated in the “Canoe House, a permanent building”, as Erastus Long Austin describes in 1929 of the fair. Based on the documented interior photographs of the Tea Room during the Sesquicentennial, the lower level also entertained visitors with live music (Figures 8.3-17, 18 & 19).

The Russian Pavilion also was furnished with Colonial Revival tastes, with Windsor chairs the featured pieces (Figure 8.3-20). Again, this supports the idea that these oriental tea rooms were planned by Philadelphia fair organizers and did not involve local ethnic groups in the preparation of these interiors. Like Japan and other foreign countries, Russia was an unknown, magical place full of wonder and delight. There was an exhibit, or shop, in the upper level of the boathouse during the fair (Figure 8.3-21). The shop displayed textiles, tea urns, trinkets, rugs, and other goods. It is unknown if these tables were run by local Russian Jews or set up in the spirit of exoticism by the fair planners.



Figure 8.3-12. Japanese Pavilion. *DOR*.



Figure 8.3-13. Japanese Pavilion, interior. *DOR*.



Figure 8.3-14. Russian Pavilion, view from lake. *DOR*.



Figure 8.3-15. Russian Pavilion, view from lawn. *Parks and Recreation Archives*.



Figure 8.3-16. Postcard showing gondola rides on Edgewood Lake with gazebo. *Parks & Recreation Archives.*



Figure 8.3-19. Lower level of the Russian Pavilion Restaurant, in Colonial Revival decor. *DOR.*



Figure 8.3-17. Interior view of the lower level of the Russian Tea Room. *DOR.*



Figure 8.3-20. Upper level of the Russian Pavilion. Windsor chairs are used to furnish the cafe space. *DOR.*



Figure 8.3-18. Lower level of the Russian Pavilion with band on stage. *DOR.*



Figure 8.3-21. Exhibit or shop in the upper level enclosed space of the Russian Pavilion. *DOR.*

RUSSIAN INFLUENCES

Russian fantasy and influences had been growing in the United States by the 1920s, likely resulting from the heavy Russian immigration to New York and Philadelphia. Russian culture involving tea traditions, literature, and ballet entered American culture as well as fashion, music, and art as early as the mid-19th century.

In Philadelphia, March 19th, 1915 was the fifth annual Russian Tea Party, Concert and Ball, hosted by the Radical Library Branch.³⁴ This series of Russian Tea Parties was the successor by blood relationship to the series of ten annual parties from 1898 to 1907, started by a woman of Russian descent. A Russian evening social (*Russkaya Veчерinka*) was arranged with traditional talent, literary and musical, and ended with a dance. During the evening, tea in Russian fashion was served with refreshments. In Russia, tea was served with sugar, lemon, and a dash of rum. Often instead of sugar, jam was used to sweeten tea, rose-leaf or strawberry being favorites. Russian teapots, samovars, became the symbol of Russia. After what the Europeans called the tea urn fell out of fashion, samovars became almost exclusive to the Russian Empire during the Imperial period (Figure 8.3-22). Literature was an important part of Russian identity as well that later became well known in the United States, connecting tea drinking and the samovar to Russian identity. Terms such as *chaepitie* (tea-drinking) and *chainichat* (drinking tea to pass the time) were invented in Russia in the nineteenth century and perpetuated by renowned writers, Pushkin, Dostoevskii, Tolstoy, and Chekhov.³⁵

In 1872, the Boston premier of Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto in 1875, and Tchaikovsky's subsequent recitals in New York, Washington, Philadelphia and Baltimore in 1891 were among the first interactions between American and Russian musical cultures.³⁶ Russian Ballet became popular in the United States around this time first in New York and Russian-born dancers would continue to move to the U.S. for ballet in the twentieth century.³⁷ The Russian ballet costumes influenced the Art Deco style of fashion in the United States in the 1920s (Figures 8.3-23 & 24). The clash of color, fabric, and pattern design in the ballet produced a mysterious and daring ensemble to transfix the spectators. The theatricality of fashion worn by female spectators was exotic, with bejeweled, turban headwear mounted with feathers and large shawl coats. The well-known Russian Tea

Room in New York City was founded 1927 by the Russian Imperial Ballet. Today, The Russian Tea Room hosts New York's elite as a restaurant for fine dining, elegant high tea, and an evening party venue. Today, Russian writers, figure skaters, ballet dancers, and symphony orchestra musicians are ubiquitous in American life.



Figure 8.3-22. Imperial Russian samovar. *Collection of The Lower East Side Restoration Project.*



Figure 8.3-23 & 24. Russian born ballerina Felia Doubrovska moved to New York in the 1930s (left). *Russian Ballet History Collection.* 1920s Russian-inspired dress by Jeanne Lanvin (right). *Excellence in Exile Exhibition.*

PROPOSAL FOR AN INTERPRETED PHILADELPHIA SESQUICENTENNIAL EXHIBIT AND TEA ROOM CAFE AT THE EDGEWOOD LAKE BOATHOUSE IN FDR PARK

Goals of any interpretive plan should incorporate the following notions: provide orientation and inspiration; provide knowledge; connect the site to visitors' interests; gather support; provide a way to sense beauty in the surroundings; and give meaning to unknown structures and events from the past. Ways to interpret can be with the physical object, or in this case, the boathouse, the gazebo, the lakes, and the entire park, and with firsthand experience, such as the experiencing the historic view sheds in the park, walking through the interior spaces of the boathouse, and using the spaces as they were once used: as a café and an exhibit. Supplemental ways to interpret the history and use of the boathouse during the Sesquicentennial Exhibition should be through signage and other illustrative media, such as maps and printed historic photograph. In addition, usable interior furnishings can be chosen to mimic what was used during the fair as an option to let visitors visually sense what it would be like to have been in the Russian Pavilion during in the fair.

1. Establish visual connection between the American Swedish Historical Museum (ASHM) and the Boathouse.

To connect the ASHM with the boathouse will require the removal of some trees (Figure 8.3-25). The Swedish

2. Reuse the top floor of the Boathouse as an exhibit space and a café space



Figure 8.3-25. The view from the second floor Swedish Museum balcony looking across the lawn towards the boathouse, if trees are removed. *Image produced by author.*

Museum should put a small display on the second floor hall overlooking the grounds between the ASHM and the Boathouse (area designated Balcony in Figure 8.3-26). The display at the ASHM should introduce visitors to information about the park's use as the fairground during the Sesquicentennial and what the fair celebrated. It should inform visitors about their own building's history during the fair. In addition it will encourage visitors to go to the Boathouse to see the Sesquicentennial exhibit and enjoy refreshments at the Tea Room Café. The small display should have printed historic photos from the fair and have a printed Sesquicentennial map of the park (Figure 8.3-27).

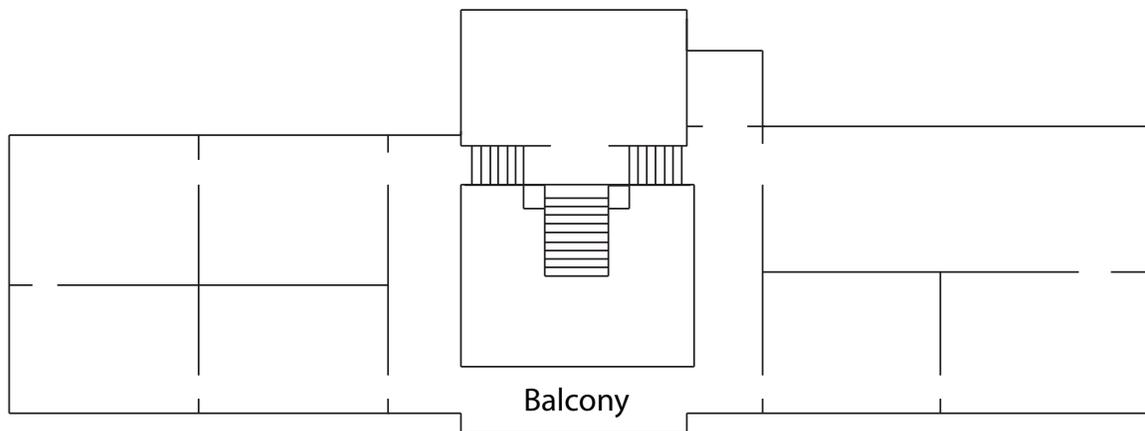


Figure 8.3-26. Second floor plan of the American Swedish Historical Museum. The indoor balcony overlooking the lawn should be the location for Sesquicentennial installation.

The building would need to re-enclose the windows and doors of both ends in a manner historically sensitive to original design. Reproducing the striped awnings is a possibility. One enclosed area will be used for the exhibit and the other will be used as a tea room and cafe (Figure 8.3-28).

a. The Philadelphia Sesquicentennial Exhibit at the Boathouse will:

Highlight the information given in this interpretive report, with an emphasis on ethnicity in Philadelphia and different groups' participation in the fair

Display prints of the historic photos of the boathouse during the fair and describe the Russian Tea Room and other fair activities

Inform visitors briefly about the ASHM, the park buildings, and show the map of the Sesquicentennial fairgrounds

Invite visitors to explore the park and experience the "Framed Memories" displays

b. The Tea Room Café inspired by the Sesquicentennial Russian Tea Room will:

Have an extensive tea and refreshment collection from around the world, specifically from places that participated in the Sesquicentennial and also serve coffee and pastries to park users and museum visitors

Be furnish with Windsor chairs and other pieces as shown in the sesquicentennial photographs and hang prints of the Russian Tea Room in the Tea Room Café. These frames, if possible, should match the "Framed Memories" displays at the park

Have a community board for connecting with local heritage groups in Philadelphia.

3. Park entrance signage must be updated

Park entrance signage should reflect the history at the Boathouse and inform the public of the buildings and exhibit. The park entrances should display "The Philadelphia Sesquicentennial Exhibit" and "The Tea Room Café", along with the American Swedish Historical Museum, Boathouse, and Gazebo.

Other Considerations:

The Boathouse is occasionally used for outside events. The use of this space may need to be rented in the future, which should come with the option of using the café furniture. For any special uses of the spaces, arrangements for appropriate storage within the boathouse need to be considered.

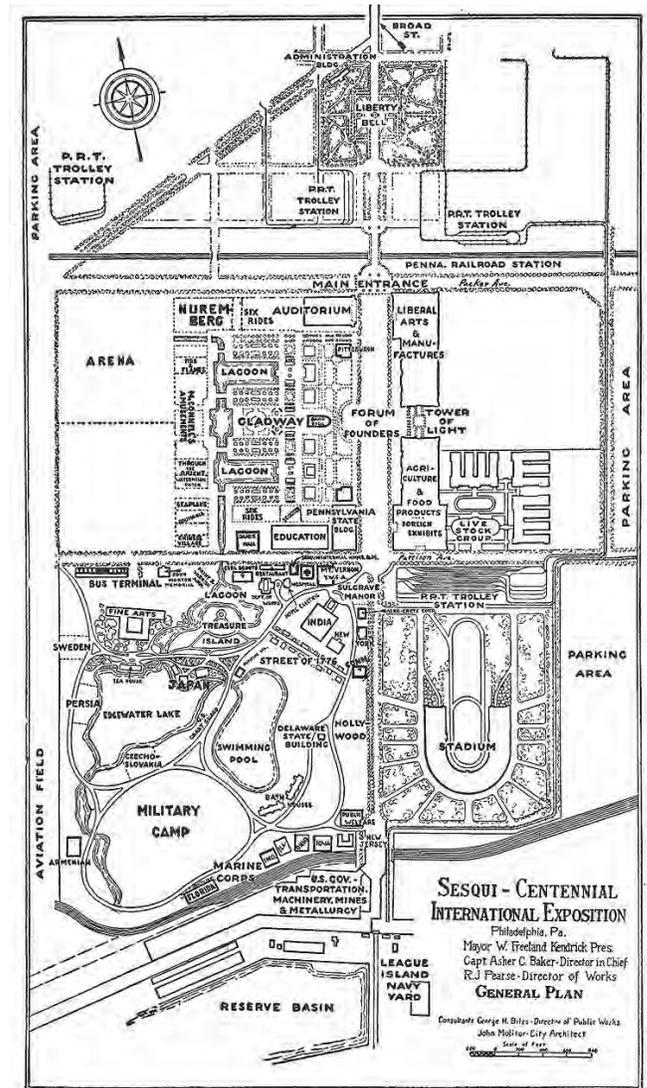


Figure 8.3-27. Map of the fairground exhibits at the Sesquicentennial. Image from fair pamphlet, Parks & Recreation Archives.

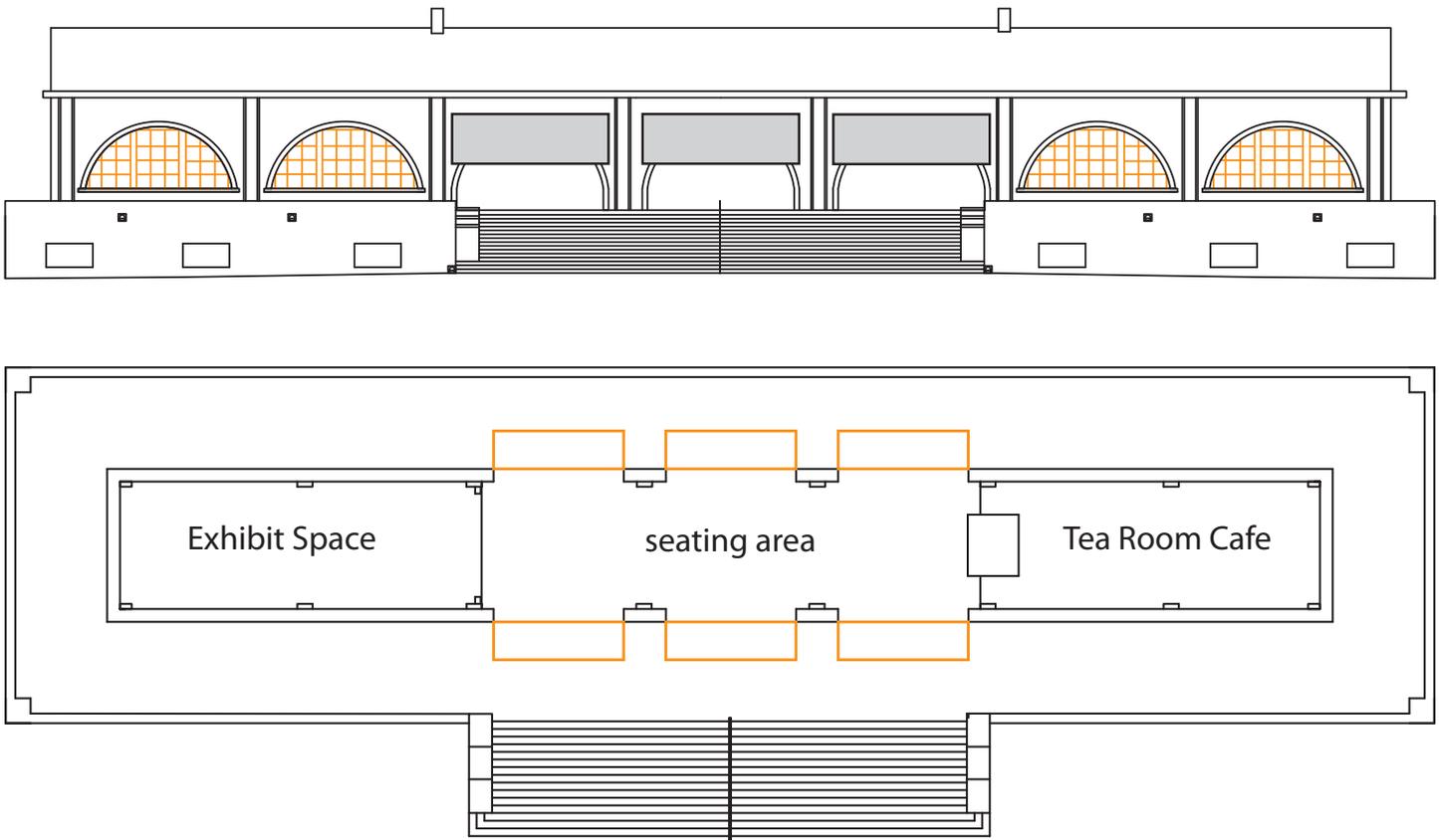


Figure 8.3-28. Elevation and upper level plan of the boathouse. The windows and awnings are reproduced in the fashion of the Sesquicentennial Russian Pavilion. The upper level plan shows the enclosed spaces, which would be used as the exhibit space and tea room, as it was used during the Sesquicentennial Exhibition in 1926.

Endnotes:

1. Frank Russell Weigley, *Philadelphia: A 300 Year History*, New York: W.W.Norton & Company, 1982, 526.
2. Weigley, 489.
3. Fourteenth Census of the United States, Taken in 1920. Population Vol. I, http://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/4I084484vI_TOC.pdf
4. Weigley, 527. He uses population statistics from Philadelphia Workers in a Changing Economy by Gladys L. Palmer.
5. Weigley, 489.
6. Fourteenth Census of the United States, 1920, Population Vol. I.
7. Sam Bass Warner, *Private City: Philadelphia in Three Periods of its Growth*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968, 184.
8. Informal conversation with Michael Lewis, architectural historian, November 29, 2012.
9. The fear of immigrants did not begin with the war, and did not end with the war, and certainly did not confine its distrust to German-Americans.
10. E. L. Austin, and Odell Hauser, *The Sesqui-Centennial International Exposition: A Record Based on Official Data and Departmental Records*, Philadelphia: Current Publications, 1929, 35. Erastus Long Austin was the fair's controller, and most of the original information from the fair is gathered from his report.
11. Weigley, 572.
12. The Free Library of Philadelphia has an additional collection of photographs from the fair. Many of these photos were included in Austin and Hauser's book.
13. Sesquicentennial Fair Souvenir, 1926. City of Philadelphia, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation Archives.
14. Weigley, 574.
15. Weigley, 576.
16. Weigley, 576.
17. Weigley, 575.
18. Calista K. Cleary. *The Past is Present: Historical Representation at the Sesquicentennial International Exposition*. Dissertation. University of Pennsylvania. 1999., 271.
19. Austin and Hauser. 94, 246, 403.
20. Cleary, 296.
21. Philadelphia Record, November 8, 1926.
22. Austin and Hauser, 388.
23. Philadelphia Inquirer, September 3, 1926.
24. Philadelphia Record, 12 Sept 1926.
25. Sesquicentennial Collection, DOR, PhillyHistory.org.
26. Austin and Hauser, 24.
27. Cleary, 330.
28. Robert Rydell. *World of Fairs: The Century of Progress Expositions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1993. 157-160.
29. Philadelphia Tribune, 17 July 1926.
30. Philadelphia Tribune & Philadelphia Inquirer clippings, March 1926.
31. Cleary, 353.
32. Austin and Hauser, 374.
33. The Exhibitor, August 1926.
34. Souvenir, Fifth Annual Russian Tea Party, Concert and Ball. Radical Library, Branch 273. Workmen's Circle, Modern School Association. 1915. Rare Books & Manuscripts, University of Pennsylvania.
35. Audra Jo Yoder, Miami University. "Myth and Memory in Russian Tea Culture." Memory, from Studies in Slavic Cultures. August 2009. 65-89. <http://www.pitt.edu/~slavic/sisc/SISC8/index.html>.
36. Nicholas Wheeler . "The Russian Influence on American Music." Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. 2011. <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/the-russian-influence-american-music>.
37. Russian Ballet History Collection. 2012. <http://www.russianballethistory.com/diaghilevsdancers.htm>.

8.4 DESIGN OF FUTURE BOATHOUSE REUSE FOR RECREATION AND CAFE WITH COST ESTIMATE

Individual Studio Project - Soeun Park

This project is one recommendation for adaptive reuse of boathouse. It reflects one of our preservation goals, which is to make recommendations and complete feasibility studies for future reuse of the boathouse to allow for continued public accessibility to waterfront activities and recreation. To accomplish this preservation goal, this project proposes the reuse of the boathouse for recreation and café and includes a cost estimate. This project includes the boathouse itself and surrounding features such as the dock and lake and views of the gazebo. The main feature of this project is reuse of boathouse, but also proposes connection of boathouse and gazebo.

Basement Floor

The boathouse is composed of enclosed basement floor and open pavilion level above. (See Appendix A.8.4.I for floor plans) The majority of the proposed reuse is located in the basement level. During the year of sesquicentennial exposition, which is the significant period of boathouse

and FDR Park, the boathouse basement floor was used as a café space as well as the pavilion level and rental boat service was operated. Referencing that period and for reusing the basement floor actively, this project proposes to use the basement floor as a café and food service area and boat rental office. (Figure 8.4.1)

As you can see from the proposed floor plan, most of the basement spaces, especially the central area of the floor, is occupied by café and food service (Figure 8.4.2). The west side of the basement is used as a boat rental office, information, cashier, and restroom for café users. On the east side of the basement is used as supporting spaces such as kitchen, utility, storage, and staff's restroom, and restrooms for park users, which is connected to the outside of the boathouse, as well. The café area is planned so people may view the landscape of the outside of the boathouse, including lake and trees, by reopening the original doors facing the lake. Additionally, people



Figure 8.4.1. Interior design of Basement floor (Cafe area)

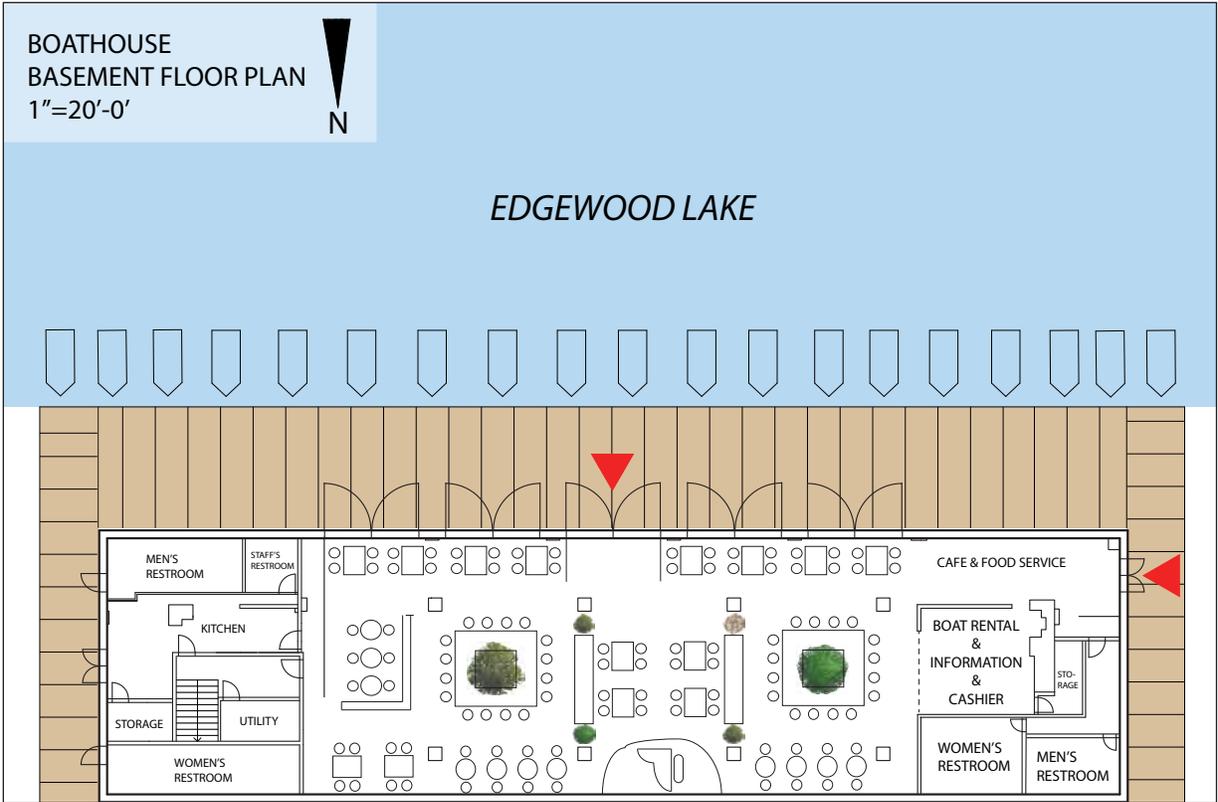


Figure 8.4.2. Proposed floor plan (Basement floor)

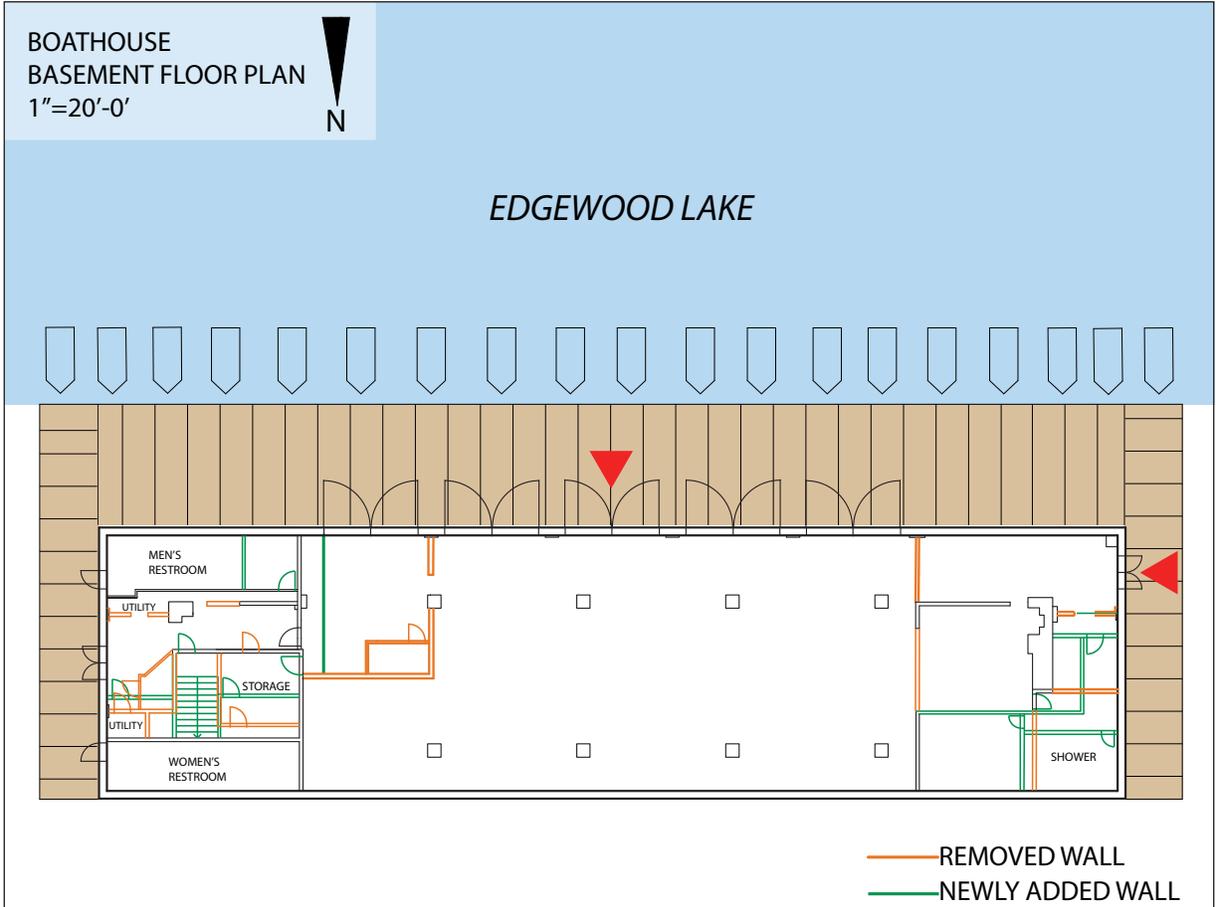


Figure 8.4.3. Removed walls and new walls (Basement floor)

are also able to sit on the dock space in front of the boathouse when the weather allows. When all the doors on the lakeside are opened, the inside of the boathouse is connected to the dock and to the lake, and people in the café can access the dock and lake directly.

This basement floor café is accessible from two main entrances. The first entry is on the south side of the boathouse, which is lakeside, and second one is on the west side of the boathouse. Although the entrance on the east side of the boathouse is more accessible because it is close to the entrance of the park and also parking lot, it is used as a staff entrance and cargo door due to the location of kitchen, utility, and storage spaces.

Rental boats are stored on the lake by the dock and people can use them from the dock. For rental boats, people may go to the boat rental office on the basement first and then out to the dock to retrieve their boat. Rental boats are operated the whole year, but the hours differ according to the season. The price is rated per hour.

For changing the current basement floor plan to the proposed plan, several walls are demolished, and new walls, windows, doors are constructed (Figure 8.4.3). Especially, there are many changes on the east side of the boathouse where kitchen, utility, and storage are placed. The dock is also changed and it is expanded to the boathouse by filling the gap between boathouse and current dock. It is offering more spaces for recreation and terrace spaces. The cost estimate, which is stated on the end of this document, is reflecting these changes of floor plan.

Pavilion Level

For public benefit and reflecting park user's wishes, which is from our team's interview of park users, the pavilion level floor is left as an open space and is used flexibly. Differing from basement floor plan, pavilion level is not planned for certain usage and is occupied with variety programs which may include a small exhibit, small concert, farmer's market or many other events. These events can be held regularly or for special events. Since it is an open space anybody who visit the park can enjoy the space and watch the boating or children playing on the dock .

There are no proposed new construction on the pavilion level except cleaning up the ceiling and walls. Cleaning up the space makes the space bright and active, and this attracts more people. Since the fireplace from the sesquicentennial exhibition remains, this project proposes to reuse this feature. The reusing of the fireplace gives the pavilion level a feeling of past years, when the fireplace was actively used. (Figure 8.4.4)

Exterior Design of Boathouse

For the exterior of the boathouse, the overall design intent is to restore it to its original configuration. Only some minor alterations are applied with cleaning of walls. Windows and doors are reopened with new products; the design of the fenestration references historical images. New lighting is added on the exterior walls around the boathouse. The roads on the east and west sides of the boathouse, which leads people to the lake, are altered and new banisters are added according to the historical pictures. New signs are installed around the boathouse to inform people about new facilities and guiding people to the basement floor and lake. Awnings are installed to the doors in the basement floor on the lakeside (Figure 8.4.5 and 8.4.6).

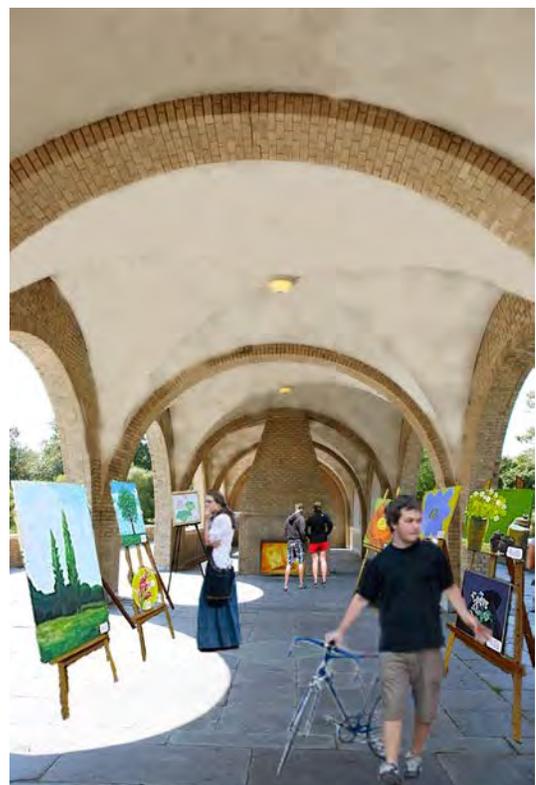


Figure 8.4.4. Example of reuse as a small exhibit and reuse of fireplace (Pavilion level)



Figure 8.4.5. Boathouse exterior design (View from Northeast side)



Figure 8.4.6. Boathouse exterior design (View from South side)

Connection of Boathouse and Gazebo

The gazebo is not redesigned or proposed for certain usage. Rather, this project is offering the ways of improving the awareness of Gazebo by connecting the boathouse and gazebo. To raise awareness of gazebo and to promote connection of gazebo and boathouse, first, I propose to remove some trees between gazebo and boathouse to allow the gazebo to be viewed from the boathouse and vice versa (Figure 8.4.7 and Figure 8.4.8)). It means that this project provides a good viewshed so people are aware the existence of gazebo. Second, I propose the new design of the road between boathouse and gazebo (Figure 8.4.9). It includes new paving, some lights and signs to make the road more visible so that people come and go to the boathouse and gazebo frequently.

Cost Estimate

The cost estimate includes all rehabilitation costs of the boathouse but does not include the cost of removing trees and new road which is proposed in the section of connection of boathouse and gazebo. The sections are largely divided into basement interior, exterior & pavilion envelope, system, café, and boat rental and the quantities and amounts are estimated values. The total estimated cost for this project is \$ 1,957,161, approximately 2 million dollars. (Figure 8.4.10)



Figure 8.4.9. Design of road between Boathouse and Gazebo

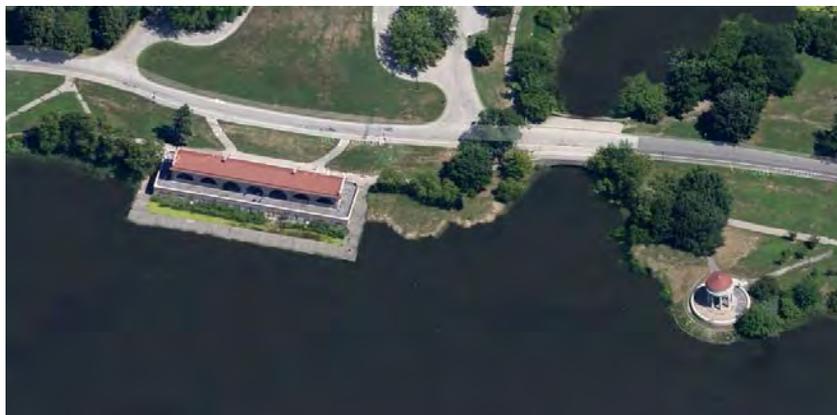


Figure 8.4.7. After tree removal

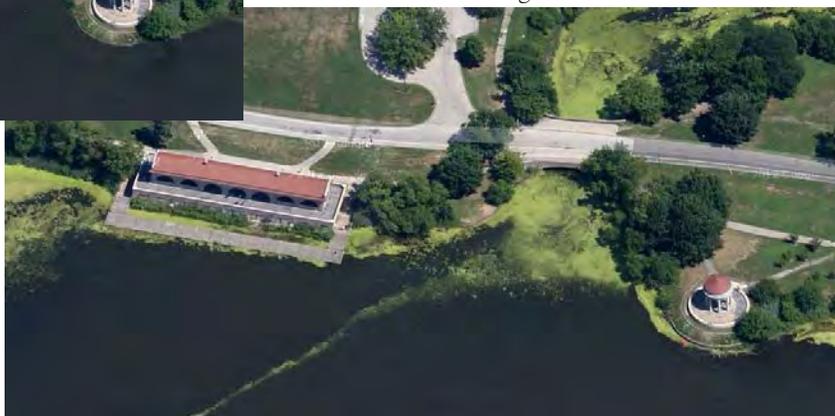


Figure 8.4.8. Before tree removal

DESCRIPTION	QUANTITY	UNIT	UNIT COST (\$) (15-20% MARKUP)	AMOUNT(\$)
BASEMENT INTERIOR				
Demolision-Walls	250.00	SF	1.50	375.00
Walls (draywall)	200.00	SF	75.00	15,000.00
Ceilings (draywall)	9,208.00	SF	75.00	690,600.00
Floor (refinish wood)	9,208.00	SF	5.00	46,040.00
Doors				
Interior Restoration	1.00	EA	750.00	750.00
Interior Replacement	7.00	EA	1,000.00	7,000.00
Exterior Restoration	4.00	EA	1,000.00	4,000.00
Exterior Replacement	5.00	EA	1,750.00	8,750.00
Windows-Replacement	8.00	EA	275.00	2,200.00
Cleaning-Walls	11,000.00	SF	2.00	22,000.00
			SUBTOTAL	796,715.00
EXTERIOR+PAVILION ENVELOPE				
Cleaning				
Walls	20,000.00	SF	2.00	40,000.00
Floors	9,208.00	SF	2.00	18,416.00
Dock restoraion	7,000.00	SF	5.00	35,000.00
			SUBTOTAL	93,416.00
SYSTEM				
Mechanical				
HVAC				
New systmes	9,208.00	SF	35.00	322,280.00
Exhaust fans, louvers, ventilation	1.00	LS	5,500.00	5,500.00
Electrical	1.00	LS	180,000.00	180,000.00
Plumbing				
Toilet	5.00	EA	1,150.00	5,750.00
Hot water heater	1.00	LS	3,500.00	3,500.00
New utility services	1.00	LS	30,000.00	30,000.00
			SUBTOTAL	547,030.00
CAFÉ				
Fit out/installation cost	5,000.00	SF	94.00	470,000.00
Equipment	1.00	LS	40,000.00	40,000.00
			SUBTOTAL	510,000.00
BOAT RENTAL				
Purchasing Boat	20.00	EA	500.00	10,000.00
			SUBTOTAL	10,000.00
			TOTAL	1,957,161.00

Figure 8.4.10. Cost estimate chart

Conclusion

This project has good aspects of reusing this place as an active place and opening it as a public space. The reuse of boathouse as a café, boat rental, and open event area will enhance the overall quality of FDR Park and experience of park users. It also will contribute to attract more people to the park and boathouse. The basement floor, however, has a flooding problem so that it needs to be addressed prior to renovation into a café. The cost estimate for this project that of approximately 2 million dollars includes basement interior, exterior & pavilion envelope, system, café, and boat rental.

Appendices

- A.8.4.1: Boathouse floor plans
(both Basement floor and Pavilion floor)
- A.8.4.2: Picture of basement
(Before redesign, inside)
- A.8.4.3: Picture of pavilion level
(Before redesign)
- A.8.4.4: Picture of boathouse exterior
(Before redesign, northeast side)
- A.8.4.5: Picture of Boathouse exterior
(Before redesign, south side)
- A.8.4.6: Redesigned boathouse exterior view
(With furniture and people)
- A.8.4.7: Proposed boating activity view
(View of dock and lake)
- A.8.4.8: Picture of road between boathouse and gazebo
(Before redesign)

8.5 RECONNECTING THE BOATHOUSE AND PARK THROUGH DESIGN

Individual Studio Project - Alix Kress

“The land where the Delaware met the Schuylkill River, a rather ‘boggy’ land amid the canal country of South Philadelphia-held great promise to be reclaimed as the world’s loveliest riverside parks.”

-Christopher Moley

The boathouse, gazebo, and Edgewood Lake, centrally located within Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) Park and within close proximity to the American Swedish Museum, have enormous potential architecturally, spatially, and environmentally to enhance the park users’ experience. For being such a prominent asset to the landscape of South Philadelphia, reasons for it having such a disconnected identity warranted further investigation. From its original identity as an Olmsted Brothers naturalistic park design to its current disconnected state, as the park continues to develop to meet the needs of its’ current users, the absence of the connections of the original design intent leaves a void in the park experience.

Through thoughtful observation, experience, and research of the existing landscape and its features, a revitalization plan for the spaces associated with the Boathouse, Gazebo, and American Swedish Museum was created. Through unveiling the layers of the spaces within the park, awareness of its’ history and original design intent can be adapted into a historically sensitive plan to reinvigorate the current park users’ experience.

Historic Background

As a park with many layers of design proposals, Franklin Delano Roosevelt came to fruition as a designed landscape by the Olmsted Brothers in 1914-1916. It’s former name League Island Park, held the original design of the Olmsted Brothers, which took advantage of the low-level tidal conditions of the existing site and contained primary characteristics of a naturalistic park setting. The spaces of the park were arranged around Meadow and Edgewood Lake inside a ring of carefully segregated lawns, meadows, and ‘playsteads.’ The essence of the park created a cohesive flow of movement and experience for the park user through the use of curvilinear paths



Figure 8.5.1. The 1914-1926 Original Olmsted Design for League Island Park paired with an image of the picturesque views it held (Courtesy of The Fredrick Law Olmsted Archives, Brookline, MA and Philadelphia’s Park and Recreation Archives)

through a complex of open space and water (Figure 8.5.1). Overall the park lends itself to a landscape that was well structured with picturesque views and segregated spaces of altered topography.

The Olmsted Brothers believe their complete design to be inalterable, with hopes that the park would remain a park for the people that matured over time. However, as time prevailed, the most salient Olmsted features of the park were altered.

Current Situation

As change began to creep into the parks design over the years, through the introduction of new buildings added for the Sesquicentennial Celebration of 1926, additions of a golf course in the 1940s which completely altered the Western portion of the park, and new development surrounding the park, ensured that particular areas of the park would remain designated for such uses. Due to these alterations, particularly the spaces surrounded the Boathouse, Gazebo, and American Swedish Museum; these spaces have developed into more car friendly spaces rather than people friendly spaces, conceivably changing the park users experience. The once public spaces of open meadows, curvilinear pathways, and picturesque views are now obstructed by parking lots and inappropriately overgrown trees which impair the significant features and experience the Olmsted's original design (Figure 8.5.2). Even though in plan these spaces appear to be effectively connected, when it comes down to the experiencing its reality, the spaces feel very isolated with a vague sense of connection due to their close space proximity.

Yet, while the park responds to the pressure for parking stems from the nearby stadium events and has introduced many elements for public convince, in the process the original design of the park and its notion of being a park has disappeared and turned many of the naturalistic features into underutilized areas of space that lack experiential qualities for the park users. However, even through it represents a disconnected version of its former self, parts of the landscape features and the overall essence of the park remain intact, which provide an opportunity for a rejuvenation of the park by bringing back elements its former life.



Figure 8.5.2. A current ariel view of the FDR Park (Google, 2012) and an image depicting the imbalance of car and pedestrian traffic (A. Kress).

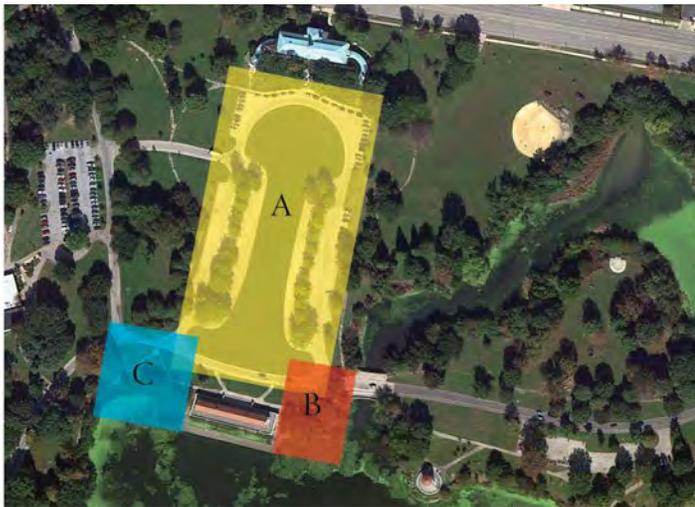


Figure 8.5.3. Ariel View of FDR Park with overlaid spaces of color identifying under-utilized spaces (2012).

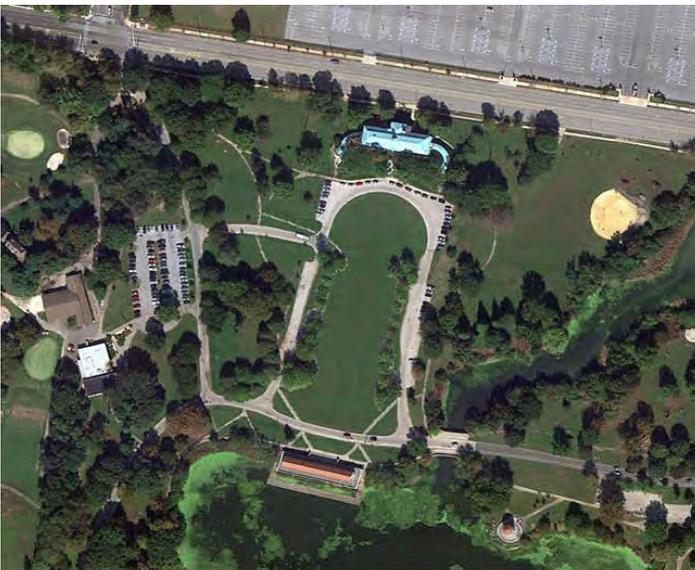


Figure 8.5.4. A rendering of the areas where Olmsted pathways' can be re-established to create a more pedestrian friendly spaces within the park (A. Kress).

Design Strategies

The space around the Boathouse, Gazebo, and American Swedish Museum maintain the most unaltered historic fabric within the landscape of the park; yet continue to be under utilized. There are two main issues that will need to be addressed through design strategies which will center around increasing the current state of the park users awareness of the boathouse, gazebo, and lake upon entering the park, along with the understanding of the connections between these three elements while experiencing the park.

In order to revitalize these disconnected spaces, a proposal to reconnect these spaces through the introduction of landscape and design elements should be implemented. As a result of this plan, new usable spaces for park users will be established, an overall awareness of the parks features will be created, and the layers of history that lie within the park will be unveiled.

Create New Usable Space for Park Users

The first steps in creating new usable spaces for the park users were to locate areas that were currently underutilized that had the potential to be reincorporated to enhance the park users experience (Figure 8.5.3). These areas were once areas that were intersected by curvilinear pathways of the Olmsted design and swept through the landscape bringing the park users to move more fluidly through the park. Currently, these areas are either completely orientated to serve the car or are overgrown with non-native vegetation. In the main of space that leads from the American Swedish Museum to the boathouse there is the opportunity for original Olmsted path's to be reintroduced into the landscape, to promote a less wandering effect for the pedestrian in the sea of parking lots and a more user friendly experience to move from space to space (Figure 8.5.4). In addition to bringing back some of the original pathways, some of parking lot which cut off the pathways can be reclaimed into open landscaped space in order to create an even balance between car and people traffic. These pathways will better flow within the park for users to experience, which in turn will allow for a safer and pedestrian friendly space allowing park users to enjoy the surrounding landscape

and views of the boathouse.

The second spaces considered for an introduction of new landscape features are the spaces adjacent to the boathouse, to the east and to the west. These spaces originally were closely linked to the pathways in the original Olmsted design, creating access points for the park visitors to interact with the water. However, as the shoreline changed and intrusive plant species grew, the areas have simply become buffers of entrance ramps to the docks. Considering the dock connected to the only boathouse is the only real area where park users can be close to the water, introducing dock space to the East (Figure 8.5.5) and West (Figure 8.5.6) of the existing dock will create more circulation space around the boathouse through this system of docks, while allowing for picturesque views of the lake, boathouse and gazebo. Adding park furniture to these docks will encourage park users to dwell in the space longer and enjoy the space.



Figure 8.5.5. The East side of the boathouse rendered with additional dock feature (A. Kress).



Figure 8.5.6. The West side of the boathouse rendered with additional dock feature (A. Kress).

Establish an Overall Awareness of the Parks Features

Currently there is no signage throughout the park, no way of knowing for Philadelphians of what lies within this landscape. The majority of park users come to this park for a specific reason in mind, and that reason leaves for simply passing by the other contributing features of the park. As a part of the revitalization plan, bringing awareness to all the park features is a must. After surveying the access points to the park, by car and walking, areas that were in clear site imbedded within the landscape were chosen for placement of these informative signs. The designs developed for signage are twofold. The first sign is more orientated to the overall public for a general awareness of the current structures, pathways, and access points to the water. Where the other design, is more subtle in nature and highlights the significant features of the park, such as its environmental and ecology (Figure 8.5.7). The first sign is placed a points of access to the park for a general orientation, and the latter is placed within designated spaces of the park that give the park user extra understanding of the space they currently reside in. The design of the sign was thought of to be minimally invasive to the landscape, something that was an eye catcher for its design but blended into the space it, which it was placed.

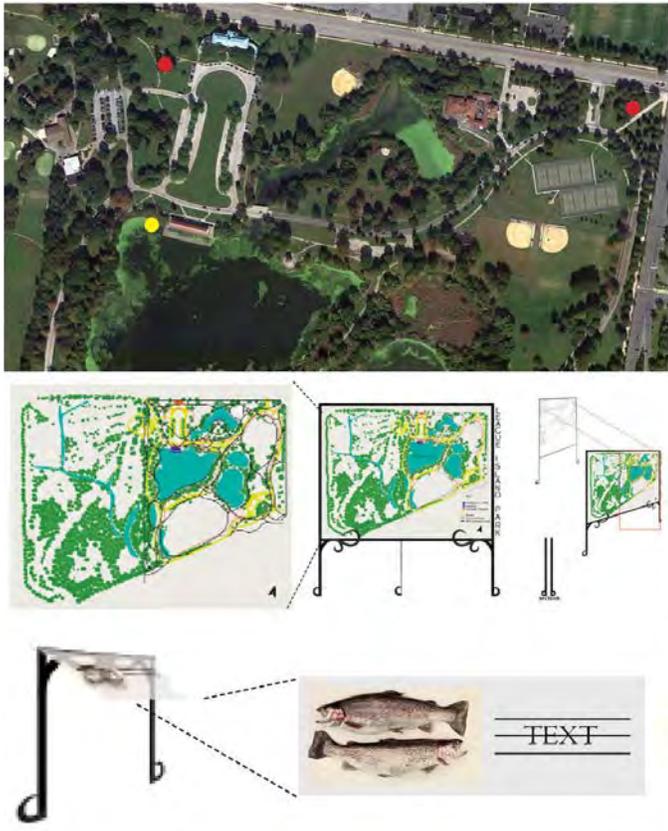


Figure 8.5.7. Areas identified for information sign placement and corresponding designs (A. Kress).

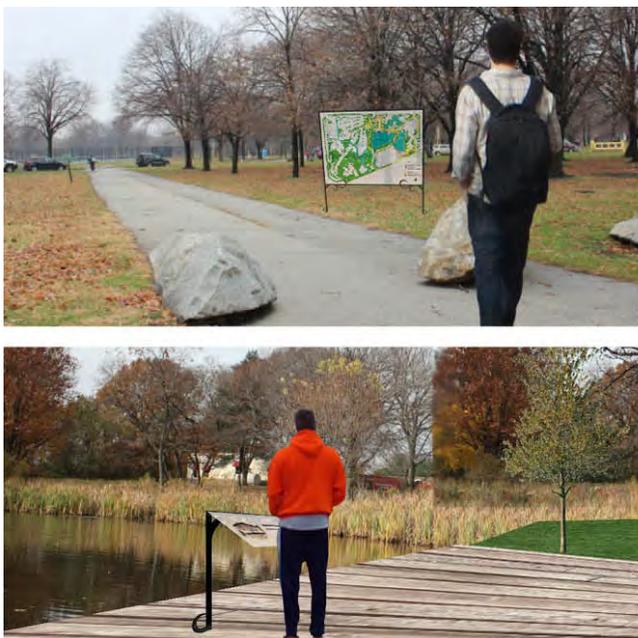


Figure 8.5.8. Rendering of park users interacting with informative signage (A. Kress).

Both signs in materiality were of a transparent medium and a strong bold frame, where could be embedded. The larger of the two signs, was of two free standing signs set within close proximity to one another, allowing for a visual representation of the layers of the park landscape. The first layer transparent medium was rich of information regarding the basic current park configuration, which through the park map, you could see the silhouette of Olmsted pathways that stood behind as a separate freestanding feature. Thus depending the way you approached the sign, you could a heavy presence of the current state of the park, or you could see the presence of the past of the park, both informative in nature yet allowing for unique individual interpretation (Figure 8.5.8).

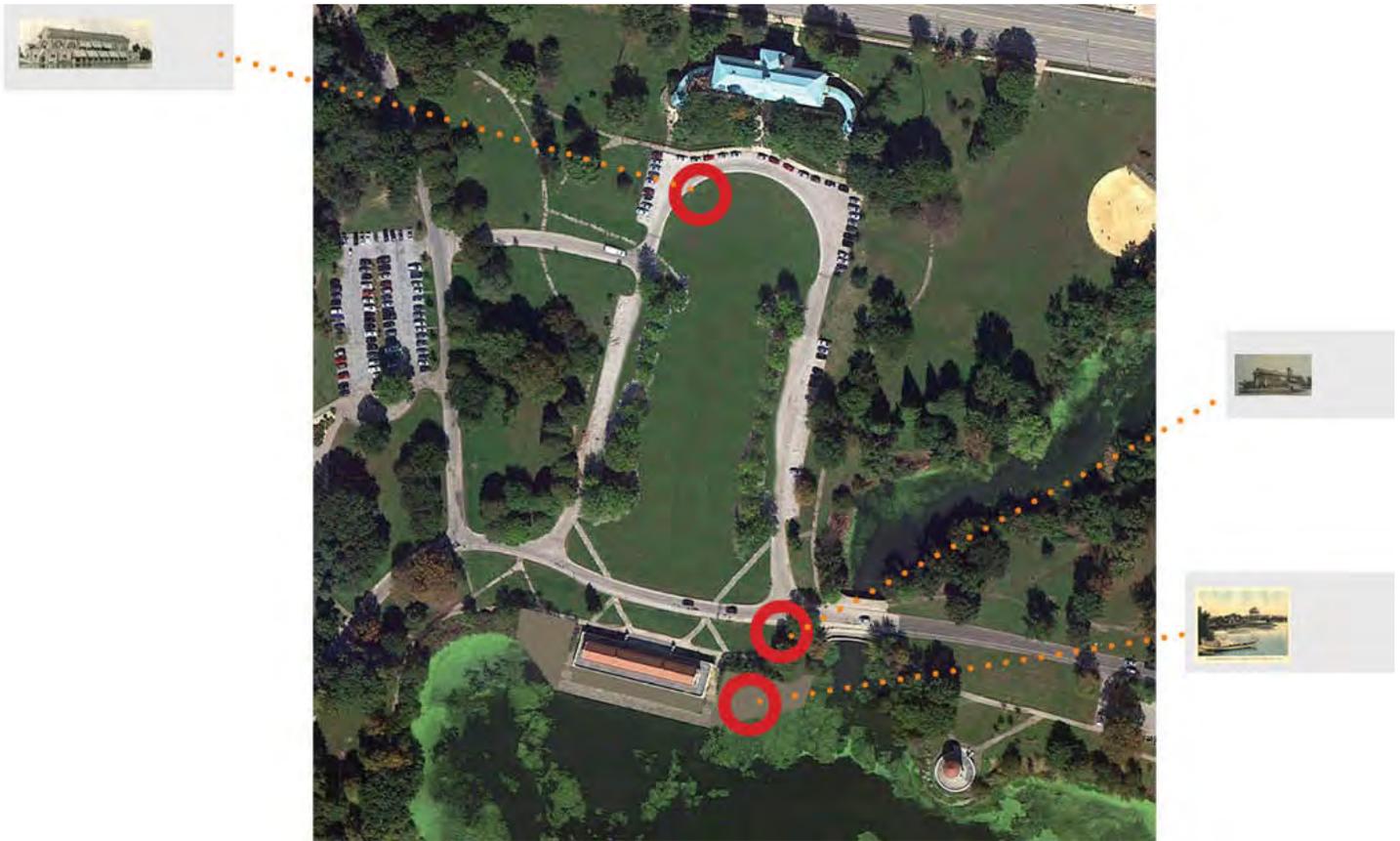


Figure 8.5.9. Mapping of where the ‘framed memory’ installations will go and the image they will recreate (A. Kress).

Unveiling Layers of History: Framed Memories

As park users experience the current landscape and view the buildings situated with the park, there is no understanding of the connection between the spaces and buildings that were once shared. Today, the only feasible connection if any is made at all, is the connection of space, disconnected it may be, of these structures and buildings. There is no understanding of how the park once was laid out, the views that it once held, or the events that were held within its grounds. These three components are what brought life to the landscape and experience for its users.

In efforts to reinstate the lost history of the ways in which these spaces and buildings were once connected, a series of frames will be installed in strategic locations allowing park users to engage with the past (Figure 8.5.9).

These frames will be similar in material to the other signs that were introduced to the park and will be larger than typical frames to create a provocative statement. These frames will be anchored in close proximity to the buildings within the park, strategically placed in a certain angle that will allow for a mirroring image experience as they look through the empty frame. These frames give the opportunity for the park users to be drawn to these, almost out of place frame installations by the newness of the design, and will be captured by the text and view of the past that they now know of (Figure 8.5.10). These frames will frame the current situation of a particular view and below in a short description will be a historic image of what once was there, having the view have a personal connection to past and what was once interpreted within a space. The historic images will be of what the Boathouse used to look like when it was used as the Russian Tea Pavilion for the Sesquicentennial



Figure 8.5.10. Design of frame and installation within the park, showing the view that will be captured and experiential quality it introduces for park users (A. Kress).

Celebration of 1926, along with images from the celebration showing the increase of buildings, along with images that compliment the view sheds between the Boathouse and Gazebo that were once instated within the park-bringing back the charm of the originally designed Olmsted landscape. By these ‘framed memories’ knowledge of the historical events and history of the remaining structures have the chance to be reinterpreted and a part of the evolving history of the park.

Conclusion

Without question, spaces and building go through changes that alter the way they are viewed and experienced. These changes are what create rich layers of a place, and present endless creative possibilities for the ways in which these spaces can be interpreted and rejuvenated for the present. Franklin Delano Roosevelt Park is a prominent green space in South Philadelphia that encourages daily use for the entire population of Philadelphia.

For having such a strong presence within the landscape of Philadelphia, the identity of the park should be equally as strong. However, due to the development of the surrounding areas and their needs for parking and other unassociated public conveniences, FDR park has turned into a hidden time capsule, which lacks features of identity and the experiential qualities that it once had.

These design suggestions above were designed with hopes to bring awareness to the current conditions of the park and the areas that needed to be addressed, while providing inspiration and creative brainstorming for ways in which the former life of the park can be brought back to a more experiential experience for the park users. By pronouncing the character defining elements that created this park, and through designed elements that will communicate the layers of history within the park, a new yet historically sensitive sense of place can be reestablished, creating a destination place where future Philadelphians can endure an authentic park experience.

Dougherty, Christopher. “The Olmsted Brothers’ Artificial Nature: South Philadelphia’s League Island (F.D.R.) Park.” *The PhillyHistory Blog*, December 15, 2012.

9.0 CONCLUSION

The individual projects proposed in this document are to be used as a starting point for any one or combination of these ideas set forth. The information that has been collected on the Boathouse, Gazebo, Edgewood Lake and FDR Park as a whole will prove to be invaluable in considering reuse for this historic resource. The environmental, historical, and cultural significance of the architecture and ecology of the Park and its surroundings require protection and strong advocacy to continue to engage the local community and reach out to visitors who may be venturing to the park for the first time. By establishing a well-defined statement of significance, character-defining features, and preservation goals for the site, we have created a framework for how the Boathouse may be best interpreted, outlined the main considerations for when changes take place in the park, and emphasized the needs of the community while placing a compatible importance on the historic intentions in design and use of the park. We hope that the research and proposals for the Boathouse, the lakes, and the larger park area are as inspiring to future plans as they are to us in our study of preservation and we are honored to have had the opportunity to explore its current greatness and exercise several visions of potential use and improvements in the park.

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