

REPORT TO CONGRESS
FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
REPORT ON MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION
OF THE ARCHIVAL COLLECTION

Section 202 (c) of Public Law 96-87 requires a report to Congress within one year of enactment of the law on the management and protection of the Archival Collection:

Acquisition of the Archival Collection

Funds have not been appropriated for acquisition of the collection. The National Park Service is using available funds in Fiscal Year 1980 to purchase that portion of the collection which is most urgently in need of conservation and stabilization work. The exact amount available from Fiscal Year 1980 is currently unknown, but approximately one-fifth to one-half of the total \$514,000 acquisition price is anticipated. The legislation specifies that the acquisition be substantially completed within two years of the passage of the Act. A source of funds must be identified during Fiscal Year 1981 to acquire the remainder of the archival collection.

Mr. Artemas Richardson, owner of the collection, has reaffirmed his intention to donate to the National Park Service the office furnishings and other items not included in the appraisal by the National Park Service, however, this donation will not occur until the purchase of the collection is completed.

Management of the Archival Collection

The archival collection is currently in the care of the National Park Service by oral agreement with Mr. Richardson. The management and permanent protection of the archival collection will be the responsibility of the National Park Service. The condition of the collection and strategies for preserving it have been assessed by National Park Service professionals and personnel from the New England Document Conservation Center. The most critical problem identified to date is the rapidly deteriorating collection of nitrate negatives. Of the approximately 20,000 nitrate negatives, roughly 350 were found to be completely deteriorated. Others have been identified as being in the early stages of deterioration with approximately six months time remaining before they "melt".

Administration

Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site is administered by the Superintendent of Longfellow National Historic Site. A Park Manager who is by training a landscape architect reports to the Superintendent. Administrative and maintenance support are provided by the Longfellow National Historic Site.

The Longfellow National Historic Site staff includes a professional librarian who has been assigned, on a temporary part-time basis, to supervise all activities pertaining to the handling and preservation of the archival collection. Plans are underway to make this a permanent arrangement.

As previously reported, a professional paper conservator will be hired to commence preservation treatment upon acquisition of the collection. The position of photographic technician will not be established. We now believe that a more practical solution is to enter into a contractual arrangement with the New England Document Conservation Center to perform the photographic work.

Land Acquisition

Title to the land and structures passed to the United States on November 27, 1979. The National Park Service assumed full control of the site on July 1, 1980.

Planning and Development

Public Law 96-87 mandates that a general management plan be prepared within three years of the date of enactment of the Act. Planning will take place at the Olmsted Site in Brookline, Massachusetts, taking advantage of the unique opportunity to continue to use the site as a center for park planning and design. Some emergency rehabilitation work will begin in Fiscal Year 1981 to provide security to the structures and their contents and to begin to deal with energy conservation measures. An opening ceremony is scheduled for April 26, 1981, which is the anniversary of Frederick Law Olmsted's birth.

Cooperation

Preliminary discussions have been held with a number of organizations interested in Olmsted and the history of landscape architecture. None has been identified to date which has the capability or interest to assume the physical management and care of the collection. However, several have committed themselves to projects which directly support the activities of the site. Most notable is the newly formed National Association of Olmsted Parks which is scheduling a major conference on Olmsted to coincide with the site's opening ceremonies in April, 1981.

Discussions have also been held with faculty members from the Harvard Graduate School of Design and the Radcliffe Institute Program in Landscape Architecture. Harvard and Radcliffe students will participate in the researching and planning of the site and the newly established Harvard program to train Historic Landscape Architects will work closely with the site staff. The Landscape Architecture Foundation is interested in working with the site to produce a travelling exhibition on Olmsted's work.