The Olmsteds in Pittsburgh: (Part I) Landscaping the Private City

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On January 29, 1901 John C. Olmsted, the step-son of the great urban park creator, Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr. arrived in Pittsburgh from Boston, probably on the 9 a.m. train. A carriage whisked him promptly to William Larimer Mellon’s downtown office for a 9:30 a.m. meeting. Olmsted waited a full 15 minutes before Mellon received him. The traction magnate in 1901 was building a new Pittsburgh home on three lush acres overlooking Schenley Park in the city’s East End, and the Olmsted firm had been summoned to propose a plan for landscaping the estate. It was neither the first nor the last visit to the smoky city for Olmsted’s firm. In fact, although little has been written about such visits, it was typical of many that John C. Olmsted and his half-brother Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. made to Pittsburgh during the first quarter of the 20th century.

They left behind a deep, albeit unheralded, mark on the private, civic, and public landscape of Pittsburgh and its region. This first of two articles on the Olmsted legacy in Pittsburgh focuses primarily on the Brookline, Mass., firm’s long, sometimes strained association with the urban elite, and examines the private as well as the civic world it sculptured for the wealthy in the city’s suburban...
East End and the more peripheral Sewickley area; a second article will explore the Olmsted impact on the city’s public landscape.

This exploration ventures beyond deciphering Olmsted’s mark on the physical texture of Pittsburgh to probe as well the web of social and business relationships that attracted private landscaping consultants such as the Olmsteds into the elegant, often sumptuous, world of the urban-industrial elite, and perforce into the vortex of urban reform. Historians such as Roy Lubove long ago confirmed the elite impetus behind 20th century urban planning; however, few historians have attempted to fathom — as we do here — the matrix of business, civic, and social relationships linking the worlds of landscape architecture, the urban elite, and early 20th century environmental reform.

We contend that despite their late 19th century retreat to such East End suburbs as Shadyside, the wealthy turn-of-the-century Pittsburgh families regarded the cityscape of streets, mills, department stores, rail yards, warehouses, courthouses, jails, and even the tangle of slum housing as their patrimony to be brought somehow into conformity with upper class moral and aesthetic standards. The orderly, landscaped suburban communities and civic settings that the Olmsteds helped shape palpably reflected those standards. Indeed, the charge to redesign the industrial city that Pittsburgh elites would convey to Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. in 1909 might be best comprehended as an extension or broadening of their collective individual ambition to mold, with the Olmsteds’ help, a rational, safe and, yes, beautiful private world.

The Olmsted name is traditionally linked with Frederick Olmsted, Jr.’s father, the renowned designer of New York’s Central Park, where he blended an exhaustive knowledge of arbiculture and horticulture with a deep aesthetic sensitivity for nature, as well as a certain foreboding about the social deterioration of urban America. Joined later in the 19th century by his sons, John C. and Frederick, Jr. Olmsted creatively, often magisterially, articulated the role of parks in urban society, thus, argues historian William H. Wilson, inextricably linking the Olmsteds to the City Beautiful Movement.¹

Despite the Olmsteds’ fame, the family’s role in helping shape the landscape and planning history of Pittsburgh and its region has remained untrumpeted. In the 1880s and 1890s, however, much of the daily work at the Olmsted offices in the fashionable Boston suburb of Brookline involved not public planning, but serving the landscaping needs of the urban-industrial elite, including the Vanderbilts, and even Andrew Carnegie of Pittsburgh.² Frederick Olmsted, Sr.’s fleeting business acquaintance with Carnegie appears an exception. Circumstances seemingly precluded a role for the famed landscaper in Pittsburgh. Olmsted’s reputation resonated as a park planner, but among large cities, Pittsburgh lagged in building public parks. Olmsted and Calvert Vaux prepared a plan for Allegheny City’s modest West Park in 1867, but two decades elapsed before the city of Pittsburgh seriously entertained park development. When it did acquire park land in 1889, it was not Olmsted, but an admirer, Pittsburgh Public Works Director Edward M. Bigelow who undertook the park design work.³ Moreover, the elite vogue for extravagantly landscaped estates, perhaps evoking the gardens of Europe, did not reach Pittsburgh until the late 1890s, too late for the elder Olmsted. While perhaps knowing of his fame as Central Park’s creator, Pittsburgh elites were unaware possibly of Olmsted’s talent as a private estate landscaper; or it may be that in no-nonsense Presbyterian Pittsburgh there was little thought of obtaining outside consultation for private landscaping.⁴

Boston architect H.H. Richardson, commissioned in 1884 to design the Allegheny County Courthouse, may have been the vehicle for Olmsted to become active in Pittsburgh. Olmsted and Richardson had a long professional relationship. Two of Richardson’s young protégés, A.W. Longfellow and Frank E. Alden, had worked on the important courthouse project, and after Richardson’s death in 1886 they spawned a new film with Alfred Harlow. This firm forged another strong link between Boston’s design community and wealthy Pittsburghers. Longfellow, Alden and Harlow quickly landed commissions in Pittsburgh, which put them in touch with the people who soon would become Olmsted’s first local clients. One of these early commissions was the residence of Andrew Carnegie’s personal physician, Dr. James McClelland; Longfellow, Alden and Harlow also won the competition for the Duquesne Club (1887), and the Vandergrift (1888) and Conestoga (1889) buildings, both developed by J.J. Vandergrift, as well as Vandergrift’s private estate in the East End.⁵ These close connections between Boston and Pittsburgh by the end of the 1880s afforded bountiful opportunities for Pittsburghers such as Carnegie and Vandergrift to know of him and his work. In 1889 Carnegie asked Olmsted to survey a building site for the steel magnate’s country estate at Cresson in the Allegheny Mountains near Altoona. Olmsted toured the estate grounds with Carnegie and recommended a site.⁶

More is known about a second contact with Pittsburgh some six years later — appropriately with the steel industry. In 1895 the treasurer of Pittsburgh’s Apollo Iron and Steel Co., Wallace Bache, wrote Olmsted seeking a plan for a new model industrial town the company wished to erect on the Kiskiminetas River in Westmoreland County. J.J. Vandergrift was the major investor in Apollo Iron and Steel. The firm’s president, George McMurtry, who
was the moving force behind the new plant and town, maintained his office in the Vandergrift Building in Pittsburgh, and named the town Vandergrift. Whether Vandergrift’s Boston architectural associations led the company to Olmsted, or whether Olmsted’s reputation and recent work at the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair provided the impetus is, of course, unknown. On the heels of a bitter lock-out at their Apollo mill in 1893 and in the general context of violent strikes at Homestead, Pullman, and elsewhere, McMurtry and Vandergrift purchased a farm a few miles downriver where they could both build a more expansive, modern works and fashion a worker’s community. Undoubtedly aware of George Pullman’s celebrated industrial experiment near Chicago and the current discourse about model company towns, McMurtry embarked upon a plan to blend sound environmental planning and paternalism to fashion a more stable social order than the common southwestern Pennsylvania iron and steel town.7

At age 70 and already suffering severe lapses of memory, Olmsted deferred on the Vandergrift matter to his partners, stepson John C. Olmsted and Charles Elliot. The associates jointly crafted a socially and aesthetically masterful plan for Vandergrift. In contrast to Pullman and most other company towns, Vandergrift featured the naturalistic curvilinear design first seen in Olmsted’s and Vaux’s plans for upper-class Riverside, Ill., in 1856. McMurtry envisioned Vandergrift as a community of homeowners. Accordingly, Olmsted and Elliot arranged single family homes on unusually spacious lots and used restrictive covenants to control subsequent development. They also placed picturesque parklets at key street intersections, and incorporated into their design a monumental central square anchored on one end by an impressive railroad station and on the other by an attractive town hall. Although the completed Vandergrift reflected the severe compromises that the punitious board of the steel company imposed upon Olmsted and Elliot’s original plan, the publicity surrounding Vandergrift undoubtedly strengthened the reputation of the Brookline firm in Western Pennsylvania, and especially that of John C. Olmsted, who by 1900 with his half-brother Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., headed the firm called Olmsted Brothers.8

The Vandergrift commission soon led the Olmsteds directly into the city of Pittsburgh. During the summer of 1895 the treasurer of Apollo Iron and Steel requested the Olmsteds’ advice on another of J.J. Vandergrift’s real estate investments. Vandergrift and an associate, Charles Lockhart, owned 90 acres along Frankstown Road in Homewood, which they wanted to develop into residential lots. After a visit to the site, known as the Homewood Driving Park, the Olmsteds recommended laying out the plan and providing improvements that would attract the “better class of occupation... [people] who are most likely to build, immediately, attractive suburban houses with all the modern conveniences and comforts and showing considerable individuality.” Although the rectangular grid of extant city streets around the site prohibited a curvilinear plan, they believed that the widening of Frankstown and Homewood avenues, and the planting of curbside grass and shade trees, would create an attractive environment.

Further, the firm proposed landscaped center strips on some other streets, a 3- or 4-acre parklet, and the planting of fruit trees and shrubbery on the lots in the advance of sale. For the “quickest and greatest profit,” they urged the construction before sale of all general improvements such as sewers, gutters, paved roads and water and gas lines. While the Homewood Driving Park plan was filed with the city in a few years, the developers clearly did not implement the Olmsteds’ suggestions, and a more prosaic subdivision of small lots, closely spaced houses, and a few landscaping amenities emerged.

Within three years of beginning their Vandergrift commissions, another steel company had asked Olmsted Brothers to consult on subdivision plans. In October 1898 L.C. Phipps, second vice president of the Carnegie Steel Co., solicited the Olmsteds’ advice for landscaping the 75 acre “Hill Subdivision” of the company’s City Farm property adjacent to its Homestead mill in Munhall Borough. Phipps may have sought the Olmsteds because of their Vandergrift work; however, he was also a member of the investment group that two months earlier had engaged the firm for the Schenley Hotel project it was developing. The industrialist not only accepted the Olmsted plan, but requested suggestions for plantings and for trees.9 Through their work with L.C. Phipps and the Apollo Iron and Steel principals, especially J.J. Vandergrift, the Olmsted firm had the opportunity to become known among Pittsburgh’s iron and steel elite. Over the years many prominent Pittsburghers, communicating through their business contacts, civic roles, and private lives, recommended the Olmsteds to each other. In some cases either local or out-of-town architects suggested the Olmsteds to their clients. While the eminence of the firm in landscape design and later urban planning would have alone commanded the Olmsteds, surviving correspondence reveals a web of personal recommendations based on first hand acquaintance with their landscaping work,
which led to inquiries for consultation. This network of relationships produced for the Olmsteds the important Pittsburgh commissions for landscaping private residences, planning subdivisions, and designing the grounds for various civic establishments. The landscaping firm that Frederick Olmsted, Jr. and John C. Olmsted headed in 1901 had originated in the mid-19th century under the senior Olmsted, who with Calvert Vaux had designed Central Park. In 1872, Olmsted, Sr. ended his long and shaky partnership with Vaux and soon thereafter founded the firm of Olmsted Associates, headquartered in his home at 209 West 46th St. in Manhattan. Although until 1877 he retained his job as head of the New York Park Department’s Bureau of Design and Superintendence, Olmsted feuded endlessly with New York's Tammany Hall bosses, mainly over the issue of professionalism versus patronage, and in 1883 he moved his family and his firm to the more sedate and less socially fractious elite suburban world of Brookline, Mass. Here on the grounds of his small estate, “Fairstead,” in a wing of his large residence, Olmsted established a full-scale professional landscaping firm, which emphasized the teaching as well as the practice of landscape architecture. 

Olmsted’s landscaping gems, his Central Park, his “Emerald Necklace” of parks bejeweling Boston, and his dazzling lagoon system informing the “White City” of Chicago’s 1893 Columbian Exposition, secured the writer-horticulturist-planner a prominent niche in the pantheon of American landscape architects. Tragically, by 1895 premature senility forced Olmsted out of the public world. He died Aug. 28, 1903. However, the firm he founded survived, and prominently so. Indeed, by 1900, John C. Olmsted enjoyed a solid national reputation among the wealthy urban-industrial elite as a favorite architect for the landscaping of their large estates. And, at a time when the profession of city planner was fairly unknown, Frederick Olmsted, Jr., a member of the prestigious body of architects and artists commissioned by Congress in 1901 to restore Washington, D.C. to Pierre L’Enfant’s original baroque design, boasted an equally distinguished career. Until 1935 Olmsted Associates ranked among the top three landscape planning firms in America, listing among its clients, in addition to the U.S. government, universities such as Stanford and Johns Hopkins, and America’s richest families. 

The turn of the century proved auspicious for the Olmsteds’ debut in Pittsburgh. Beginning in the 1880s a sizeable segment of the city’s wealthy began abandoning the din, pollution, and ethnic mottle of the industrial city for bucolic suburban retreats in the East End and Sewickley areas. After the pall of economic depression lifted in the late 1890s, home building boomed in the fashionable suburbs. Middle and upper middle class Pittsburghers now joined urban elites, making places such as the East End a crucible where a new, more cosmopolitan, upper class culture was being created. Once caricatured as stern, self-abnegating Calvinists who shunned luxury as a sin, Pittsburgh elites increasingly immersed themselves in the cult of consumption, especially of a more beautiful residential environment. In the early 1900s they built the pretentious estates that required professional landscaping.

Between 1901 and 1902 four stalwarts of modern urban-industrialism, Howard J. Heinz, William Larimer Mellon, John Guffey, and F.T. Lovejoy, and one scion of the old order, Elizabeth D. Thaw, widow of William Thaw, approached the Olmsteds about landscaping their properties. Consistent with the firm’s division of labor, John Olmsted usually handled private estate work, while Olmsted, Jr. busied himself with the firm’s public and semi-public works, city parks, street and thoroughfare layout, and the design of civic spaces.

On January 14, 1901, the Olmsteds wrote W.L. Mellon at the suggestion of William Falconer, Superintendent of Schenley Park, offering their services for planning the property of his projected residence near the Murdoch Street entrance of Schenley Park. Falconer knew of work the Olmsteds were doing on the Schenley Hotel and the Bigelow Boulevard entrance to the park in Oakland. Mellon obviously reacted positively, for as noted in the vignette opening this article, John Olmsted arrived by train in Pittsburgh on January 29, 1901, and after briefly visiting Mellon at his office, joined adjacent property owner Leonard G. Woods and Falconer in perambulating the site located at Darlington Road. A friend since childhood and a partner in local street railway ventures, Woods had sold part of his property to Mellon for the residence. On his field inspection, and typical of his firm’s procedures, Olmsted, notebooks in hand, carefully recorded the land elevations. He observed as well the natural vegetation of the park and adjoining properties, the house plan details, and of utmost importance, Mr. Mellon’s personal vision of the place. They also discussed the residential plans of neighbors William Kay and Julian Kennedy, the latter a Yale classmate of John Olmsted’s and a notable figure in the city’s steel industry who had been superintendent of Carnegie Steel’s Homestead Works. From his copious notes (which were later typed), Olmsted prepared and submitted to Mellon within a week an extensive 10-page report. In
addition to grading, retaining walls, steps, piazza, terrace, walkways, plantings and other exterior recommendations, the architect suggested changes in the siting and layout of the house to take greater advantage of the park view, to gain more sunlight, and especially to dissipate disagreeable cooking odors by enhancing natural air circulation. As the firm prepared a more formal preliminary plan during March, Olmsted and his assistants coordinated land grading with respect to Mellon’s neighbors’ properties and proposed to Falconer the restructuring of the Murdoch Street connection with the park. Over the next 18 months, the firm made several additional site visits, consulted regularly with Mr. and Mrs. Mellon, and worked closely with their architects, Boston’s Alden and Harlow.14

Between February 1901 and April 1903 the Olmsted firm produced 61 topographic maps of Mellon’s Darlington Road property. Depending on the physical size of the estate and its complexity, over time — years in many cases — the Olmsteds generated anywhere from 10 to occasionally 100 maps. These more or less highly detailed topographic maps invariably included one or more “preliminary” or conceptual plans and numerous cross-sectional studies showing the house in relationship to other main infrastructural and natural features such as drives, formal and informal walks, sewers, and clumps of trees to be removed or preserved. Grading maps followed, as well as the elaborate “planting plans,” and finally, the piece de resistance, the “general plan.” The orchestration of these topographic plans expresses magnificently the firm’s syncretic relationship with its clients. Although both Olmsted Jr. and his half-brother John inherited their father’s affection for the romantic landscape, and whereas whenever possible they incorporated serpentine stone paths, tree-stands, and other natural landscape motifs into their design, they were equally sensitive to the hubris of their powerful clients. French chateauesque, Tudor, and Beaux Arts mansions demanded imperial baroque elements, formal gardens and driveways, to complement the Olmsteds’ signature romantic designs. Although their taste frequently exceeded the depth of clients’ pocketbooks, they mastered the fine art of massaging the well-developed ego.

Within days of John Olmsted’s inspection of Mellon’s property, he received a letter from George S. Orth, the Pittsburgh architect who was designing Elizabeth Dohrman Thaw’s new 44-room summer home, called “As You Like It,” being built on 45 acres in Sewickley Heights.15 Orth had read in the newspapers about Olmsted’s consultation on the Mellon and Kennedy properties, and wondered if on his next visit to Pittsburgh Olmsted would tour and evaluate the Thaw property adjoining the B.F. Jones estate near the new Allegheny Country Club. The firm did not customarily make preliminary visits merely on the speculation of obtaining business. Rather, for a set fee of $100 plus travel expenses, they would undertake an initial visit of the property and prepare a short report of their observations for a general landscaping plan. If the client wished to proceed, then for $150 the Olmsteds would prepare an elaborate preliminary plan for reshaping the topography, locating driveways and out-buildings, constructing walls, establishing proper drainage and planting trees, shrubs and gardens. The client could keep the plan or contract with the Olmsteds to develop a detailed grading and construction plan, implemented either under their supervision or by a contractor of the client’s choice.

In late February of 1901 Elizabeth Thaw joined John C. Olmsted and her son at the Sewickley Heights property for a site visit, and by March 6 she received a 12-page report. Thaw found the report pleasing enough to order the preparation of the preliminary plan, and she instructed her architect to mail Olmsted the requisite maps and topographical surveys of her property. He produced a plan by the end of April. Following additional site visits, discussions of the plan, estimates of charges, and concern by Thaw over expenses, a contract for carrying out the detailed plan was accepted in August. A year later Orth assumed supervision of further landscaping based on the Olmsted plan, but Thaw periodically consulted with the Olmsteds during the next 15 years about the plantings.16

May 1901 was a busy month for John Olmsted in Pittsburgh. While discussing plans with W.L. Mellon and Elizabeth Thaw, Olmsted received an inquiry from Thaw’s neighbor, the Allegheny Country Club. Upon the request of club vice-president Henry R. Rea, a well-connected member of the city’s iron and steel elite, the club’s secretary and prominent city banker, John Denniston Lyon, asked Olmsted to consult on the building of cottages on the organization’s grounds.17 Even as Olmsted submitted his report at the end of the month, he had already agreed to visit H.J. Heinz’s Penn Avenue estate, “Greenlawn” in Pittsburgh’s East End. Heinz had recently toured the mansions lining Euclid Avenue in Cleveland, and after consulting with several landscape architects before 1901 on the recommendation of his friend, Gen. Warner Washington, invited Olmsted to his East End home. The strong-willed Heinz somewhat resisted Olmsted’s magisterial approach. Heinz wished not only English gardens, but also a grape
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Not all of the Olmsted firm’s early 20th century consulting work in Pittsburgh involved private estate landscaping, although that work kept them busy. In this era of rapid suburbanization the Olmsteds found work plating new subdivisions. The ongoing consultations with Elizabeth Thaw in Sewickley Heights during the early years of the century led to an important commission for designing a subdivision in adjoining Edgeworth Borough. On the advice of Thaw, James B. Oliver of Oliver Iron and Steel sought John Olmsted’s advice in June 1905 about platting his wife’s 30-acre inheritance into lots with 100 foot frontages. Oliver and his wife, Amelia Shields, disagreed on the merits of the prosaic rectilinear lot design versus the romantic curvilinear plan favored by Olmsted. The 30 acres had been earlier platted in typical rectilinear style by a local engineering firm, Edeburn and Cooper, with whom Olmsted often worked in Pittsburgh. Oliver’s wife favored a curvilinear street system, which Olmsted described in a letter as picturesque, especially for those eager to “escape from the strictly rectangular subdivision so universally adopted in the suburbs of Pittsburgh.”

Although Amelia Oliver loved Olmsted’s plan, her businessman husband feared that it departed too radically from the gridiron tradition established in the East End and in nearby Ohio River suburbs such as Bellevue. Based on the advice of the local real estate community, he also worried that it unduly raised development costs. Further, Oliver noted the objections of two neighbors who felt that curved roads looked good on paper but in time would degenerate into mere “crooked lines” because the borough would fail to maintain them. Oliver temporarily prevailed upon Olmsted to produce a rectangular plan, writing that it was “the best and most sensible one,” even though his wife “still adheres to the curvilinear.” In this last phrase, Olmsted saw his opportunity, and within two days wrote back to argue his case. Normally, he averred, the curvilinear plan in large cities like New York and Philadelphia raised land values. “We judge, however that in the vicinity of Pittsburgh a departure from the commonplace rectangular system of subdivision is much more a novelty, and therefore, much less likely to be appreciated by the majority of seekers for home sites.” Nevertheless, he pleaded, the novelty itself in Pittsburgh may well attract many customers. Within a week Oliver capitulated and Olmsted reproduced his picturesque albeit modest plan, replete with a long list of covenants controlling the character of the development. Although Oliver died before the year ended, Amelia Oliver eventually recorded the plan as “Oliver Place,” and incorporated Olmsted’s restrictions establishing minimum house values, setbacks from the road, right-of-ways for electric and telephone wires, as well as clauses prohibiting chicken coops, pasturing of animals, and houses with flat roofs.

The route the brothers followed from landscapers to the Thaws, Olivars, and many other Pittsburgh elites, to framers of the city’s first urban plan, passed directly through the Progressive Era, specifically the

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“City Beautiful” movement. During this era in the late 19th and early 20th century Pittsburgh’s wealthiest citizens extended their passion for environmental order and beauty beyond their private suburban world into the civic realm. Indeed, historian John Peterson has traced the roots of the “City Beautiful” movement in America to this involvement of such people in municipal art, civic improvements and outdoor art movements. Apostles of these civic crusades contended that in an age of obsessive individual competition, the unkempt commonweal or public good would be served by creating parks, erecting an artistic fountain, building tree-lined boulevards, removing billboards, and in other ways beautifying and making orderly the public landscape. Indeed, a deep moral commitment to order and beauty infused the suburban ethos visible in Pittsburgh’s East End. Sickened by the ugliness of the industrial landscape, elite and upper middle class reformers espoused a philosophy that equated environmental quality with elevated moral behavior. Little distance, therefore, separated the elite impetus for artistically landscaped private estates from the progressive crusade for civic betterment.

In Pittsburgh many of these elite crusaders for civic beauty and moral environmentalism marched in the ranks of the Civic Club of Allegheny County. Founded in October 1895 amidst economic depression and the premonition of class warfare heightened by the violent Homestead and Pullman strikes, the CCAC mirrored the gamut of popular fears about the deterioration of the urban environment, the squalid, unhealthy living condition of the city’s ethnic working class, and the implications of both for the volatility of the urban social order. At the same time the women and men who comprised the CCAC resonated millennial optimism about the depths of civic virtue, the inevitability of progress, and the power of environmental reform to restore social order and social justice.

With a membership comprised of prominent upper class women such as the organization’s treasurer, Elizabeth D. Thaw, as well as leading businessmen and professionals, the CCAC infiltrated every dark and dank corner of the urban industrial environment. Its agenda encompassed building public baths and playgrounds for the poor (the former a special interest of Thaw’s), industrial education, the prohibition of cigarette sales to minors, outdoor schools for tubercular children, smoke abatement, Arbor Day, public baths, tenement house laws, the professionalization of social work, the abolition of child labor, the control of billboards, and need for good government. Urban beauty ranked high among the civic club’s objectives. Its various departments included not only “Social Service” and “Public Health,” but also “Art,” the latter dedicated “to increasing the beauty of our parks and public places, and raising standards of taste.” At the turn of the century, therefore, the civic club embodied the fervent progressive belief in the curative power of a beautified urban environment. Significantly, the CCAC listed among its leading members not only Elizabeth Thaw, but also Howard Heinz, Andrew Mellon, and Mr. and Mrs. Franklin Nicola, all clients of Olmsted Associates.

The CCAC’s agenda placed the organization neatly within the civic improvement movement championed by the Rochester, N.Y., father of the “City Beautiful” movement, Charles Mulford Robinson. But, prior to 1909, civic improvement in Pittsburgh, Rochester, and all of urban America for that matter, involved more whimsy than planning. No coherent vision of environmental reform guided action. Reformers planted a tree here, a monument there; they eradicated unsightly roadside billboards, cleared rubble-strewn lots for a playground, transformed prosaic horse troughs into Grecian fountains, and campaigned for romantic urban parks. For example, the 300 acres of Oakland woodlands that city Public Works Director Edward Bigelow in 1889 cajoled from Londoner Mary Schenley, and which he hoped to groom into an Arcadia for the social elevation of lower classes, lay beyond the pathways of the city’s ethnic poor. The City Beautiful apostles such as CCAC member Franklin Nicola abjured the pathways of the city’s ethnic poor. Beautiful apostles such as CCAC member Franklin Nicola abjured the pathways of the city’s ethnic poor. Niccolas transformed a tract of the city’s old homesteads into a park for middle class Oakland, where Nicola was developing a subdivision and hotel near the planned main entrance to Bigelow’s Schenley Park.

In 1898 Bigelow wanted an impressive neoclassical gateway for his Schenley Park in Oakland. He envisioned this majestic gateway symbolically separating the mechanized, brutal world of the city from the serene, natural world of the park. Actually, it was Bigelow’s distinguished superintendent of Schenley Park, the young English landscape architect William Falconer, who advised the Olmsted firm commissioned to design this monumental main park entrance to be located off Forbes Avenue near the new Carnegie Library. On Bigelow’s behalf, Falconer enjoined John C. Olmsted to produce a Beaux Arts masterpiece by “magnificently, tastefully, artistically ...” designing an entrance, “the whole forming one grand harmonious picture.”

We know nothing about Olmsted’s 1898 park entrance plan. Whatever its fate, the landscape
architect’s work there surely pricked the entrepreneurial imagination of Franklin Nicola. With his investment partners, including in Falconer’s words “our most prominent friends, or, in plain English ‘ring’ men,” Nicola in 1898 was building the Schenley Hotel as a cornerstone of his design for a Pittsburgh “White City” in Oakland mirroring that built along Chicago’s Lake Michigan as part of the 1893 Columbian Exposition. Nicola’s Oakland tapestry already included Longfellow, Alden and Harlow’s Carnegie Library and Institute (1895). Working in concert with Bigelow and Falconer, Nicola engaged Olmsted to weave the park entrance and the Schenley Hotel grounds into one fabric. John C. Olmsted discussed his landscape design ideas with Nicola, as well as steel magnate L.C. Phipps, and Colonel Albert J. Logan, a Pittsburgh mattress manufacturer keenly interested in planning. All three shared Nicola’s Oakland vision. And by 1902 planting and contouring progressed smoothly on Olmsted’s hotel landscaping, while, alas, the park entrance plans languished. Olmsted continued to consult on the hotel’s plantings through 1908.39

In late January 1901, within days of being approached by W.L. Mellon and Elizabeth Thaw for work on their estates, John C. Olmsted was asked by park superintendent Falconer to consider redesigning Allegheny Cemetery. Recall that Falconer had also been involved in Olmsted’s consultation for the design of Mellon’s Murdoch Street estate as well as the Schenley Hotel and park entrance commissions. By the end of the nineteenth century, “rural” cemeteries like Allegheny, built in large cities during the mid-century, were undergoing extensive renovations that embodied the era’s environmental reform ideas. Reluctant to undertake the arduous work of cemetery revisions, Olmsted nevertheless agreed to conduct a preliminary visit in June and requested maps and notes from the cemetery’s head gardener. Olmsted then made a second visit, and in the last days of 1901 submitted an extensive 68 page report on the cemetery. Presumably impressed, the board of managers for Allegheny Cemetery two years later lured Falconer from his city parks post to oversee the revamping. Over the next quarter century Falconer managed the massive reconstruction and rehabilitation of the cemetery, transforming it into one of the nation’s finest, and propelling himself into the top ranks of the Association of American Cemetery Superintendents.50 Olmsted’s report apparently formed the basis, at least initially, for Falconer’s far-reaching work on Allegheny Cemetery.

In 1908, five years after Falconer had left his Schenley Park position, the Department of Public Works solicited Olmsted’s services once again, now for the development of Arsenal Park. As customary, the firm refused to confer on speculation, but they agreed to draft a proposal of work based on blue-prints forwarded by the city.31 Nothing came of this matter, but the Olmsteds’ involvement in civic design escalated considerably in 1909 when the Pittsburgh Civic Commission engaged Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. to prepare a plan for the city. This public role of Olmsted in Pittsburgh will be fully elaborated in a second article, in the Winter 1993 issue of Pittsburgh History.

Nevertheless, Olmsted’s greater visibility attending his work on the city plan sparked a flurry of inquiries and private commissions. Civic Commission member Thomas E. Billiquist queried Olmsted in April 1910 about a planned real estate development in Washington, Pa. No evidence confirms his working on Billiquist’s subdivision, but several months later Olmsted began drafting reports for landscaping the grounds of Howard Heinz’s Morewood Heights home and for F.S. Willock’s estate in Sewickley. In both cases Edward C. Whiting, Olmsted’s associate in Pittsburgh who coordinated the city plan work, conducted the site visits, collected appropriate maps and surveys, and offered suggestions for these residential reports. One Whiting note regarding the Willock estate and the peculiar environment of Pittsburgh informed Olmsted that “evergreen trees don’t do well in smoky air. Can we use rhododendrons?”32 The following March attorney William A. Way of Sewickley asked whether Olmsted, while visiting Pittsburgh on civic commission business, would consider advising on a street problem in Edgeworth Borough (where the Oliver subdivision was located).33 Olmsted graciously declined. A month later the Civic Club and Chamber of Commerce of Johnstown, Pa., cognizant of the firm’s Pittsburgh work, requested Olmsted’s services on a “general and set plan” for the city. However, unexplained delays postponed the actual competition until 1916, when Johnstown selected architect Henry Hornbostel of New York City as their consultant.34

After submitting the Pittsburgh plan in 1911, and completing residential reports for Heinz and Willock, the Olmsteds undertook no new local commissions until 1919. Frederick Olmsted, Jr.’s interests broadened considerably between 1911 and 1920. In addition to his burgeoning international reputation as one of the fathers of city planning, Olmsted fought to protect the national park system from commercial incursions, and cultivated his role with

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John Nolen as the American authority on industrial housing. During World War I Olmsted moved to Washington, D.C., where he initially served as town planner with the War Industries Board's Bureau of Industrial Housing. In 1918 he headed the town planning section of the U.S. Housing Corporation and oversaw the building of several exemplary wartime government housing developments including Yorkshire Village in Camden, N.J. and one project in McKees Rocks.\(^{35}\)

Olmsted's war-time preoccupation with industrial housing aside, he managed to remain engaged in Pittsburgh civic affairs during the 1911-1920 period. When the City Art Commission in 1913 retained Edward H. Bennett to revise the plans for bridge approaches to the Point, Bennett contacted Olmsted, who naturally directed the Chicago planner to his two-year-old city plan.\(^{36}\) In 1914, the art commission asked him to join a jury evaluating designs for the still unfinished main entrance to Schenley Park. Olmsted declined the appointment primarily on the grounds that a competition was an inappropriate means to secure a quality design and that having already prepared a solution for the entrance years earlier, he could not be considered an impartial juror.\(^{37}\) Two years later Olmsted did participate as a juror in a competition sponsored by the Beaux Arts Salon of Pittsburgh for design of an important intersection, Fifth Avenue and Craig Street in Oakland. The sponsors, members of Pittsburgh's elite like Marvin F. Scaife and Mrs. Roy A. Hunt, hoped that a public square, circle or some other solution would “add to the beauty of the avenue or street without in any way lessening its dignity or utility.”\(^{38}\)

When the war ended the Olmsted brothers resumed their business as landscaping consultants for some of Pittsburgh's wealthiest citizens. After John C. Olmsted died in 1920, various associates, including the trusted Whiting, handled local site visits and reported back to the Brookline office and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. Most commissions concentrated in Pittsburgh's East End and in the Sewickley area, though a few reflected the expanding residential horizons of the city's upper class. By October 1919 the firm had undertaken landscape planning for both Andrew W. Mellon's home on Woodland Road and Richard Beatty Mellon's Alden and Harlow-designed residence at 6500 Fifth Ave. Olmsted's work for R.B. Mellon, which continued into the 1930s, involved redesigning his extensive gardens, including lavish plantings around the estate's lily pond.\(^{39}\)

Other East End commissions and inquiry in this post-World War I period stemmed from the firm's past and ongoing work in the city. Whiting reported to the Brookline office in March 1921 on a site visit to the Georgian brick home of architect Frederick I. Merrick. Merrick was the Morewood Heights neighbor of Howard Heinz, a client of the Olmsteds a decade earlier. A local architect, Stanley Roush, the nephew of a Mt. Lebanon client, businessman J.C. Roush, had recommended the firm to Merrick. The Olmsted firm prepared a preliminary report, but Merrick terminated the relationship after deciding to carry out some aspects of the project himself, and at his own pace.\(^{40}\)

Frequently nothing at all happened following a rash of interest in Olmsted's services. For example, earlier in 1921 the Longvue Country Club inquired about having Olmsted landscape the club's grounds. The Brookline office rushed a statement of terms, but the Longvue people failed to respond. Two years later architect Benno Jannsen wrote Brookline again on behalf of the Longvue club. Olmsted informed Jannsen of the aborted first inquiry, and restated the firm's terms. Again, and for the last time, the matter died.\(^{41}\)

As before the war, urban elites were allured during the war by the residential attractiveness and the development potential of the verdant Sewickley area. They sought out Olmsted. The Tuxedo Land Co. wrote Olmsted about a planned subdivision for 2,000 Sewickley Heights acres near the Allegheny Country Club. Preoccupied with war work, Olmsted declined. But after the war ended, he began in the spring of 1920 a two year commission for landscaping the James Park estate. Pittsburgh architect William Boyd designed the Park house and asked Olmsted to plan gardens, terraces, and the driveway as well as plantings for the property which abutted the country club. Olmsted’s hand-picked gardener, Jetson Dyer, from Maine lived on the Park estate and supervised the project. However, Olmsted’s relationship with Park steadily deteriorated largely because Park objected to the expense. In laboriously written notes to the Brookline office Dyer beseeched Olmsted for another assignment because of Park’s unrelenting negative and penurious attitude.\(^{42}\)

And, in fact, Olmsted had another job in mind for their loyal Maine gardener. Boyd had recommended the firm to another one of his clients, Mr. and Mrs. Charles A. Painter, who were moving from Pittsburgh's East End into a French chateau house on eight acres of Sewickley Heights land. During the summer of 1921, while wrangling with Park over expenses, Olmsted prepared a plan for the Painters and suggested Dyer as the gardener. Their consulta-
tion with the Painters ended with the submission of the plan, but Dyer informed them of the interest of another Heights landowner. Seeing that Olmsted was working on the Park and Painter estates, wholesale lumber dealer George Nicola requested that the firm landscape his property across the valley from Park. Following a discussion of the potential charges, Nicola demurred, and the Olmsteds’ work in the Sewickley area ended.43

Throughout the 1920s, a decade when Pittsburgh’s heavy industrial economy lagged despite booming consumerism and a spiraling stock market, the Olmsteds preserved their foothold in Western Pennsylvania, although by 1930 it became somewhat strained. Year by year the work for R.B. Mellon, begun in 1919, continued. In the mid-1920s, Mellon also engaged Olmsted to landscape the grounds of his new Rolling Rock golf course and club house near Ligonier, and to design the club’s reflecting pool and cascade gardens. It was while employed on Rolling Rock in 1930 that Olmsted entertained a request from Mrs. George M. Laughlin to consult on the placement of the family’s main cabin and several smaller ones on her property adjoining the country club. Laughlin, who lived on Woodland Road near A.W. Mellon, had earlier employed the Olmsteds on a project for her Mt. Lake, Fla. property. Discussions about the cabins continued all summer, then in late August she put her plans on hold because of “difficulties.”44

Indeed, by 1930 the Great Depression created “difficulties” even for the wealthiest Pittsburghers. Olmsted’s consulting fees that R.B. Mellon had harped about as early as 1919, and the expense of proposed landscaping work, estimated for Mellon at $12,000 in 1931, proved less tolerable with the nation’s economy in an abyss. In early 1931, while Olmsted’s long-time associate, E.C. Whiting, was still supervising R.B. Mellon’s garden reconstruction, the

Olmsted firm agreed to prepare plans for the adjoining Shady Avenue property of R.B. Mellon’s son-in-law, Alan M. Scaife. Later that summer, having evaluated Olmsted’s preliminary plans and detailed work sheets, Scaife (like his father-in-law had earlier done) bristled at the expense. He paid the outstanding bill, requested a copy of the report, then (unlike his father-in-law) brusquely decided to do no further business with Olmsted.45

Not all of Olmsted Brothers’ post-war work in southwestern Pennsylvania concerned private residences and clubs. As before, some involved subdivision planning, especially for industrial housing. Despite their professional reservations about the Vandergrift plan as it was developed, the publicity about the Westmoreland County industrial town had been extensive and highly favorable, especially in the writings of Ida Tarbell in 1915 and 1916.46 Moreover, Olmsted, Jr.’s directorship of the United States Housing Corporation had brought him to McKees Rocks to oversee the war housing project there. After the war, in November 1919, Thomas J. O’Brien of the Fort Pitt Malleable Iron Co. requested help with housing problems for employees at their McKees Rocks works. By the end of 1920 Olmsted had produced a plan “showing grades, storm drainage, sewerage, walks, and other details” able to support 27 houses. Olmsted recommended a “four-room semi-detached house” model, which “though small, yet contains all the essentials and may properly be considered the minimum decent accommodation.” Noting other recent examples of four-room company houses in the Pittsburgh area at Midland, Donora, and Clairton, Olmsted suggested that the firm could prepare sketches of houses “showing suitable groupings of various house elevations, differing chiefly through the judicious handling of this feature that attractive general effects can be produced with little, if any, extra cost and without departing from the most serviceable floor plan.” O’Brien found the plan satisfactory, but he felt front porches and central flues would improve the houses. He requested the plan’s details be readied for implementation, though “the building will not be done for some time.”47 A visit to the site in late 1992 revealed that contrary to Olmsted’s recommendations, a number of small “detached” frame two-story worker’s dwellings were built there.

For 35 years the Massachusetts-headquartered Olmsteds were active participants in shaping the Pittsburgh region’s environment. This first of two articles concerning the Olmsteds in Pittsburgh has focused mainly on the private landscaping work that they performed as consultants to the city’s most prominent families. This article has also looked at the firm’s involvement in smaller “civic” projects that flowed directly from their private work.

In the late 19th century, the Olmsted brothers, already renowned as America’s preeminent landscape architects, erected an extensive network of Pittsburgh clients from among the cream of the city’s urban-industrial elite, including the Heinzes, the Mellons, the Vandergrifts, Thaws, Olivers and Phippses. At one important level the firm’s presence in Pittsburgh mirrored the stature of the city as a national center of wealth-producing industrial capitalism. At another it reflected an important cultural shift among the city’s
urban elite. All but abandoning the abstemious Presbyterianism of the past, Pittsburgh’s fin de siècle aristocracy embraced a new cosmopolitanism manifested especially in their passion for large, architecturally exquisite estates. The Olmsted brothers capitalized on this passion, and exerted a profound influence in shaping the romantic suburban ethos of the East End, as well as the more rural environment of the Sewickley area, an early twentieth century pastoral retreat. The stone gates, serpentine paths, graded lawns, and tastefully and elaborately planted gardens helped endow the East End with a signature of distinction.

Sadly, very little evidence of the Olmsteds’ artistry remains. Fifty to 75 years later only a sharp observer can discern the imprint of the Olmsteds’ vision on the private landscape of Pittsburgh. Over the decades, new owners and new gardeners have sculptured and redecorated the land to fit their own visions and different styles of new eras. Many of the trees, shrubs and plants carefully selected by the Olmsteds have died from old age and neglect. And, when grand mansions such as “As You Like It” were pulled down, developers subdivided the properties and built new homes, reconfiguring the estate grounds sometimes beyond recognition. Yet, the graceful contours of former driveways, now serving as roadways of new subdivisions, recall the Olmsteds’ plans, as do the remnants of aged-darkened stone walls and gates, the quiet repose of ponds, and the majesty of stately trees exotic to Western Pennsylvania. Vandergrift and the diminutive Oliver Place, with their signature curved streets, landscaped roadside edges, and public spaces at street intersections, still retain an ambience that affords further evidence of the Olmsteds’ work and vision.

However, the Olmsted legacy is greater. In addition to the new cosmopolitanism, the firm’s presence among the Pittsburgh urban elite reflected another profound social change transforming urban society. Fearful of the growing and increasingly noisome immigrant slums, dredging the labor unrest and other forms of social disorder that marked the late 19th century, early 20th century urban elites pushed the boundaries of their concern for order and environmental beauty beyond their safe private world and into the larger urban community. In the early 20th century, this half-private/half-public civic realm of public parks and squares, cemeteries, boulevards and main thoroughfares became an important domain of young architects such as the Olmsteds, who, with their elite and upper middle class patrons, believed that the antidote to urban violence and disorder existed in civic art and civic improvement.

However, as the allusion in this article to the Civic Club of Allegheny County also makes clear, the reform agenda of the urban elite and upper middle class, while steeped in urban environmentalism, transcended the mere building of parks, playgrounds, and fountain-bedecked public squares. In their quest for urban order and urban redesign, Pittsburgh’s reform community targeted the city’s boss-controlled political machinery, and sought to gain regulatory control over decisions regarding the use of urban space. The second article will explore the Olmsteds’ important role in shaping the public environment of Pittsburgh and in creating an ethos of planning that carried Pittsburgh into the post-World War II urban renaissance era.

End Part I

1 William H. Wilson, The City Beautiful Movement (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1989), 9-34.
2 Based upon an examination of the subject of the papers of Frederick Law Olmsted in the Manuscript Division of Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. (hereafter, OAP); see also Laura Wood Roper, FLO: A Biography of Frederick Law Olmsted (Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1974), 319-474.
4 For a discussion of the vogue for landscaped gardens among America’s industrial elite which attempts to trace the phenomenon to the elite’s yearning for Europe and a European class structure, see Marc Griswold and Eleanor Weller, The Golden Age of American Gardens: Proud Owners, Private Estates, 1890-1940 (Garden Club of America, 1991); the caricature of the elite as no-nonsense Presbyterians comes from John Ingham, Making Iron and Steel: Independent Mills in Pittsburgh, 1820-1920 (Ohio State Univ. Press, 1991); see also Frances Couvares, The Remaking of Pittsburgh: Class and Culture in an Industrializing City, 1877-1919 (State Univ. of New York Press, 1984); and Joseph F. Rishel, Founding Families of Pittsburgh: The Evolution of a Regional Elite, 1790-1910 (Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1990).
5 Longfellow and Alden split from Harlow in 1896; on the architectural firm, see Margaret Henderson Floyd, Architecture after Richardson: Regionalism Before Modernism: Longfellow, Alden, and Harlow in Boston & Pittsburgh (Chicago Univ. Press and Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation, 1993).
The work of the Olmsted firm (shown here at its Brookline, Mass., offices in 1930) on public projects in Pittsburgh is the subject of Part II of this series, in the Winter 1993 issue of Pittsburgh History.

9 J.J. Vandergrift and C.J. Lockhart File, Box 101, OAP. The Carnegie Steel job was apparently misfiled in Box 101.
10 On the Olmsted firm’s relationships with wealthy clients, see Roper, FLO, 383-424; see job files for various prominent Pittsburgh families, the Heinz, Thaws, Mellons, Scaifes, etc., in OAP.
11 Roper, FLO, 319-474.
12 Roper, FLO, 319-474.
14 See W.L. Mellon File, Box 28, File 271, in OAP; note that the firm of Longfellow, Alden and Harlow had split up. Floyd, Architecture After Richardson. In 1992 only the stone walls and gateposts on Murdoch and Darlington streets attest to Olmsted’s extensive work on the Mellon property.
16 See Mrs. William Thaw File, Box 16, OAP. Today Olmsted’s elegant drives still grace the “As You Like It” site. However, casual inspection indicates that only a few moldering, vine covered brick pillars recall the elaborately landscaped grounds of the early 20th century Thaw estate. The mansion was demolished in 1939 and the grounds converted into a subdivision called “Thawmont.” See Thaw obituary, Pittsburgh Press, Oct. 4, 1948; also note that in 1929 the Olmsteds prepared landscaping plans for her burial lot in Allegheny Cemetery. See Thaw Burial Plot File, Box 479, OAP.
17 Allegheny Country Club File, Box 150, OAP; John Dennis Lyon was related through his mother to the Thaws and was a trustee of the Allegheny Cemetery, a future Olmsted client. Henry R. Rea was the son-in-law of Henry W. Oliver.
18 H.J. Heinz File, Box 16, file 133, OAP.
19 Guffey was a leading figure in the state Democratic Party; see Joseph Guffey, Seventy Years on the Red Fire Wagon: From Tilden to Truman, Through New Freedom and New Deal (privately printed in Pittsburgh, 1952). See also Col. Joseph W. Guffey File, Box 12, OAP; and John C. Olmsted notes from site visit, July 11, 1901, in F.T. Lovejoy File, Box 30, OAP; James D. Van Trump, Life and Architecture in Pitts-
20 See John C. Olmsted's Site Visit Report, July 21, 1905; and John C. Olmsted to James B. Oliver, August 21, 1905; also Oliver to Olmsted: Aug. 26, 1905, Sept. 4, 1905; and Sept. 6, 1905, all in James B. Oliver File, Box 200, OAP; for a contemporary but hyperbolic view of “Olive Place,” see the promotional brochure, “Olive Place in Sewickley Valley,” n.d., Sewickley Valley Historical Society, Sewickley, Pa.
22 On the depression of the 1890s, the middle class concern of social order, and the roots of Progressive reform, see David Thelen, “Social Tensions and the Origins of Progressivism,” Journal of American History 56, 323-41; Arthur S. Link and Richard L. McCormick, Progressivism and Paul Boyer, Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820-1920 (Harvard Univ. Press, 1978); see especially, Civic Club of Allegheny County, Fifteen Years of Civic History (Civic Club of Allegheny County, 1910); and Civic Club of Allegheny County, Annals of the Civic Club of Allegheny County, 1897-1921 (CCAC, 1921).
23 CCAC, Annals of the Civic Club, 7; Elizabeth Thaw was the treasurer of the Civic Club for 43 years. She also served as treasurer of the Pittsburgh Housing Association, and helped found and was first president of the Birth Control League. She was also instrumental in founding the Equal Franchise League, later the League of Women Voters. See Pittsburgh Press, Jan. 30, 1946, in Thaw File, Carnegie Library.
24 CCAC, Twenty Years, 2.
26 Peterson, “The City Beautiful Movement,” 426; Mel Scott, American City Planning Since 1890 (Univ. of California Press, 1969), 85-109; the definitive study of the City Beautiful Movement and its critics is Wilson, The City Beautiful Movement.
28 William Falconer to John C. Olmsted, Brookline, Jan. 15, 1898, and Falconer to Messrs Olmsted, Brookline, Jan. 10, 1898, Box 24, OAP.
29 Letter from William Falconer to Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., Aug. 29, 1898, Box 24, OAP. Franklin Toker, in his Pittsburgh: An Urban Portrait (Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1986), attributes the rebuilding of Beechwood Boulevard to Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., but we have not been able to verify his involvement.
30 See Roy Lubove, “Pittsburgh’s Allegheny Cemetery and the Victorian Garden of the Dead,” Pittsburgh History 75, 148-56; and “Falconer: Horticulturist, Editor, Park Cemetery Executive,” in The Cemeteryian (1975), 26-32. This article was brought to our attention by Roy Lubove; also Allegheny Cemetery File, Box 11, OAP.
31 Arsenal Park File, Box 240, OAP.
32 See T.E. Billquist File, Box 274, OAP; and Howard Heinz File, Box 283, OAP; also F.S. Willock File, Box 285, OAP; and E.C. Whiting to John C. Olmsted, December 12, 1910, in Box 285, OAP.
33 Edgeworth File, Box 289, OAP.
34 Letter from William B. Howland to Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., April 6, 1911, Johnstown File, Box 290, OAP.
35 For example, see Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., to Frank A. Waugh, Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, Oct. 1, 1917, and Olmsted to Horace McFarland, Dec. 19, 1917, and Olmsted to A.W. Crawford, Sept. 24, 1918, all in Horace McFarland Papers, Pennsylvania State Archives, Harrisburg, Pa.; also see Mel Scott, American City Planning, 170-74.
36 Frederick L. Olmsted, Jr. to J.D. Hailman, Secretary of the Dept. of City Planning, Dec. 10, 1913, Box 243, OAP.
37 Schenley Park Entrance File, Box 327, OAP.
38 Quote from “The Beaux Arts Salon Announces an Architectural Competition for a Municipal Improvement,” 1916, in Beaux Arts Salon File, Box 353, OAP.
39 A.W. Mellon and R.B. Mellon Files, Box 373, OAP.
40 Frederick I. Merrick File, Box 385, and Stanley J. Roush File, Box 381, OAP.
41 Longvue County Club File, Box 383, OAP. Similarly, in 1926 Mrs. Roy A. Hunt, who had been secretary-treasurer of the Beaux Arts Salon on the occasion of the 1916 competition that Olmsted, Jr. judged, imparted the firm about consulting on her Amberson Place property in Shadyside; but, here too, nothing followed. See Mrs. Roy Hunt File, Box 438, OAP.
42 Sewickley Heights Estates (Tuxedo Land Company) File, Box 343, and James Park File, Box 378, both in OAP. Despite part of the estate being sold off for building lots, evidence of Olmsted’s handiwork remains visible in the still thriving exotic trees, gardens, and long curving driveway leading to the hilltop location of the Park mansion.
43 On Boyd’s recommendation of the Painters as clients, see Stanley Roush File, Box 381, OAP; on Painter and Nicola, see Charles A. Painter, Jr. File, Box 386, and George Nicola File, Box 387, OAP.
44 See Rolling Rock Country Club File, Box 373, and Mrs. George M. Laughlin File, Box 381, OAP.
45 Scaife File, Box 494, OAP.
47 For quotations, see J. O’Brien to Olmsted Brothers, Jan. 27, 1921, and Olmsted, Jr. to J. O’Brien, Dec. 6, 1920, Ft. Pitt Malleable File, Box 373, OAP.
48 Definitive assessment of the Olmsted’s impact on the region’s private landscape awaits a careful and painstaking comparison of the original drawings, plans and planting instructions with contemporary features and an examination of their influence, if any, on the local landscape architecture profession.