



Olmsted Park Landscape Restoration Project

Olmsted Park

Community Meeting #1 – October 27, 2016



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Project Team

- Boston Parks and Recreation Department
 - Michele Folts, Project Manager
 - Margaret Dyson, Director of Historic Parks
- Pressley Associates
 - Marion Pressley and Gary Claiborne
- Tree Specialists
 - Barbara Keene Briggs and David Ropes

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Meeting Agenda

- Project Description and Goals
- Historic Considerations and Site History
- Project Area Existing Conditions
- Tree and Woodlands Assessment
- Invasive Plants
- Next Steps
- Discussion/Input

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Project Description

- Pilot project
 - Apply principles and lessons learned to future Emerald Necklace park improvement project
- Landscape rehabilitation
 - Tree pruning
 - Invasive vegetation management
 - New plantings and general woodlands improvements (understory plantings)
 - Slope stabilization
- Historic stair rehabilitation
- Pathway and trail improvements

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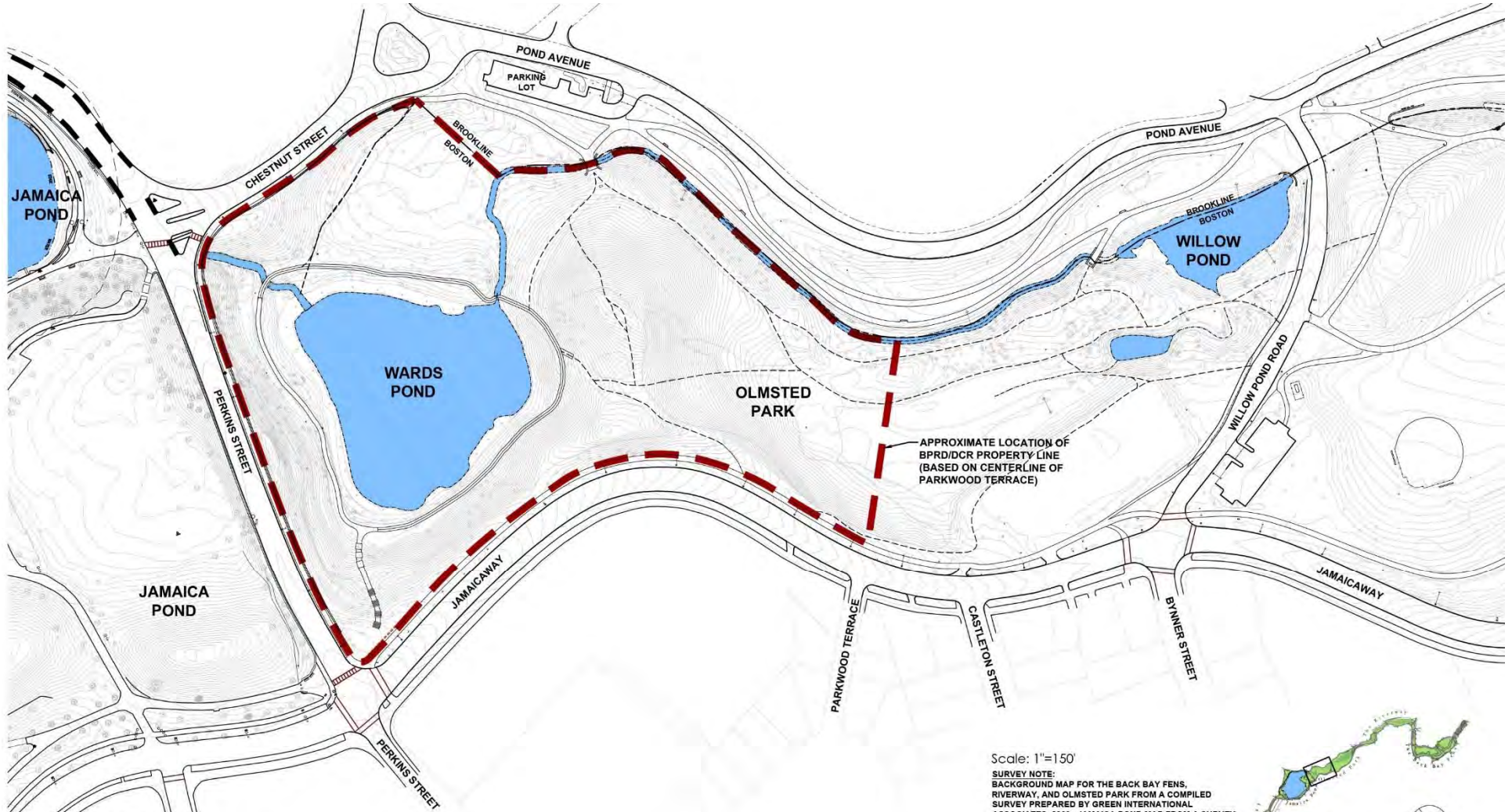


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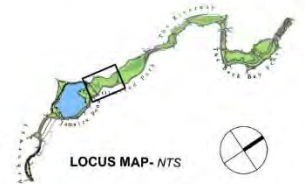
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Project Area



Scale: 1"=150'

SURVEY NOTE:
BACKGROUND MAP FOR THE BACK BAY FENS,
RIVERWAY, AND OLMSTED PARK FROM A COMPILED
SURVEY PREPARED BY GREEN INTERNATIONAL
ASSOCIATES, 2000. JAMAICA POND MAP FROM A SURVEY
PREPARED BY HOWE ENGINEERING ASSOCIATES, DATED
JULY 1, 1997.



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Project Considerations

- Historic
 - National Historic Landmark
 - Boston Landmarks Commission
- Emerald Necklace Master Plan
- Wetlands
 - Boston Conservation Commission
- Site Ecology
- Park User Experience
- Sustainability of Design

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Historic Considerations

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties

- **Preservation:** the act or process of applying measures necessary to **sustain the existing form, integrity, and material of a historic property**, which includes initial stabilization work, where necessary, as well as ongoing preservation maintenance and repair of historic materials and features.
- **Rehabilitation:** the act or process of **making possible a compatible use for a property** through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features, which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.
- **Restoration:** the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a **property as it appeared at a particular period of time** by removing features from other periods in its history and reconstructing missing features from the restoration period.
- **Reconstruction:** the act or process of **depicting, by means of new construction**, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.

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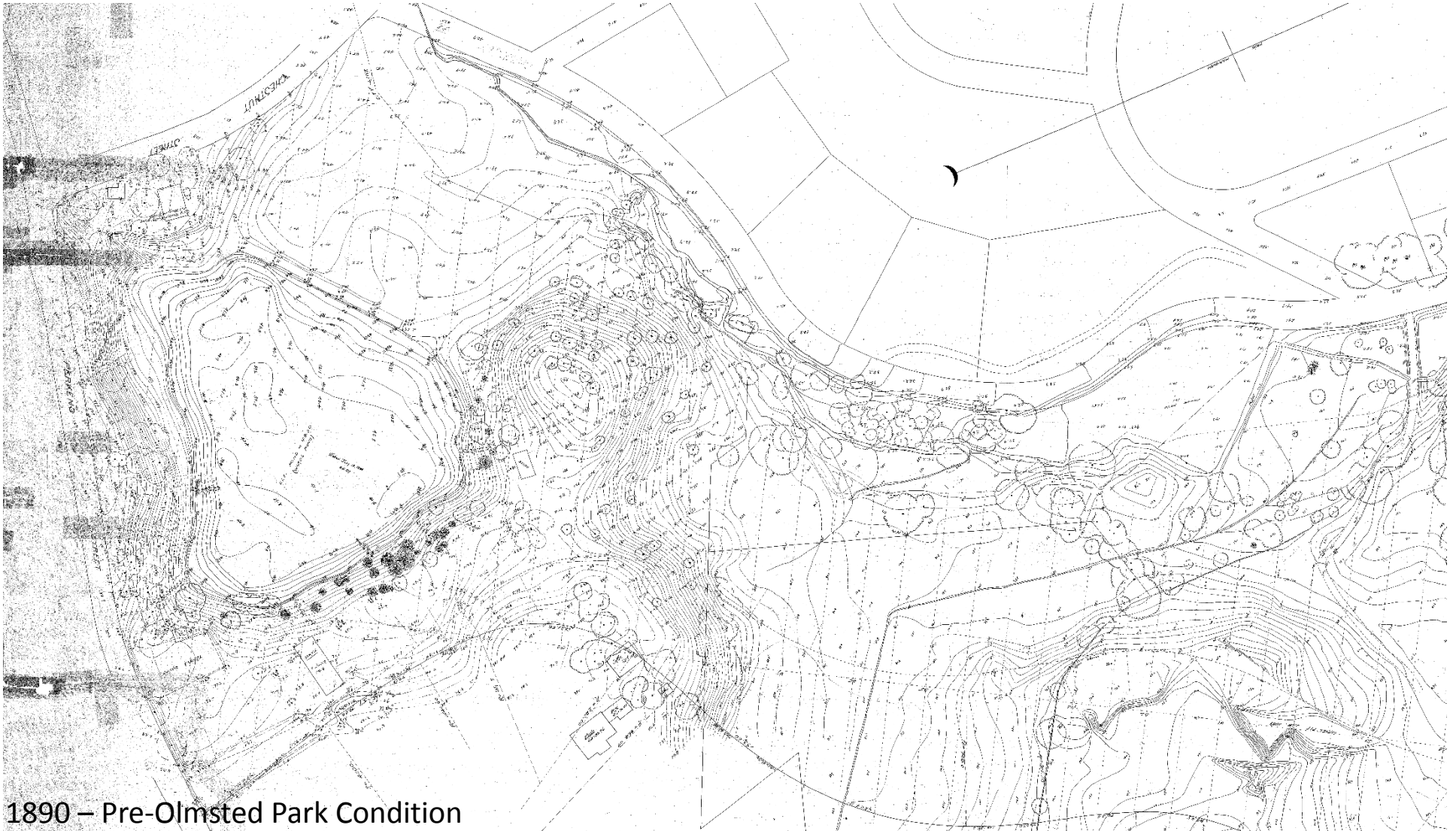


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Olmsted Park History



1890 – Pre-Olmsted Park Condition

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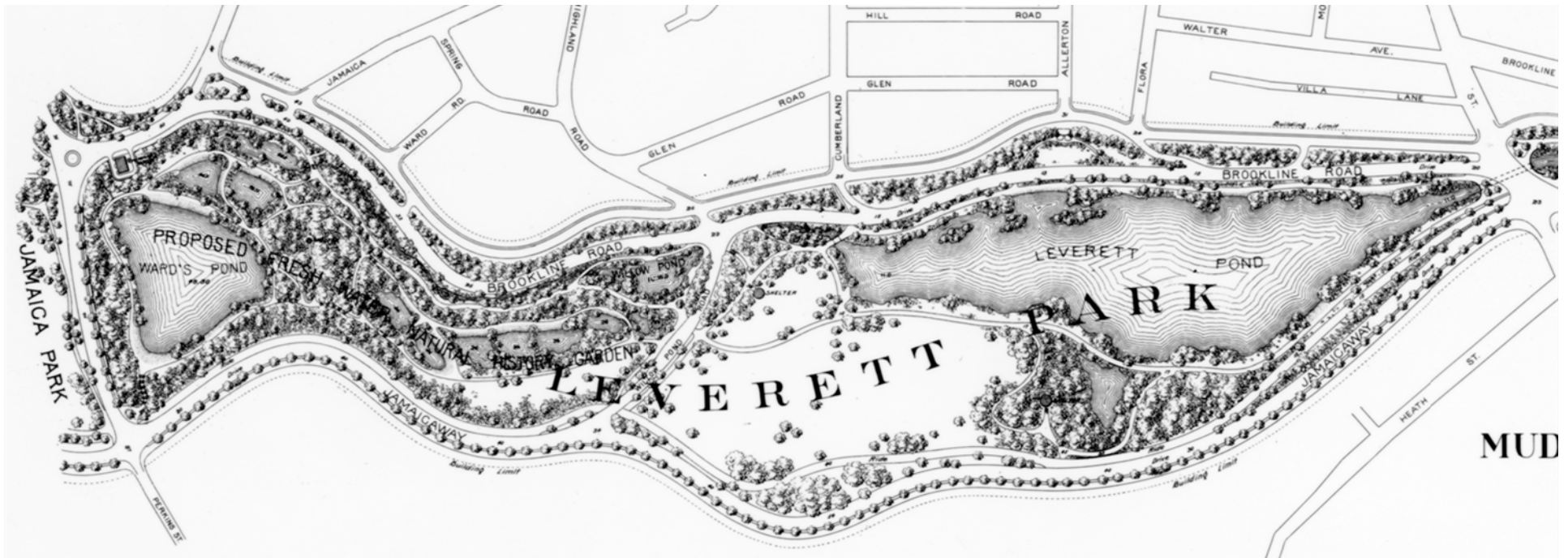


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Upper Valley of Muddy River – “A chain of picturesque fresh-water ponds, alternating with attractive natural groves and meadows”. *Frederick Law Olmsted, City of Boston 6th Annual Report 1880.*

1892 Plan: Three major ponds (Leverett, Willow, and Wards Ponds), a watercourse (the Babbling Brook) connecting them, six historic pedestrian bridges, pedestrian paths, and “The Ride” along the parkway. Park sheltered from the city by woodland areas.



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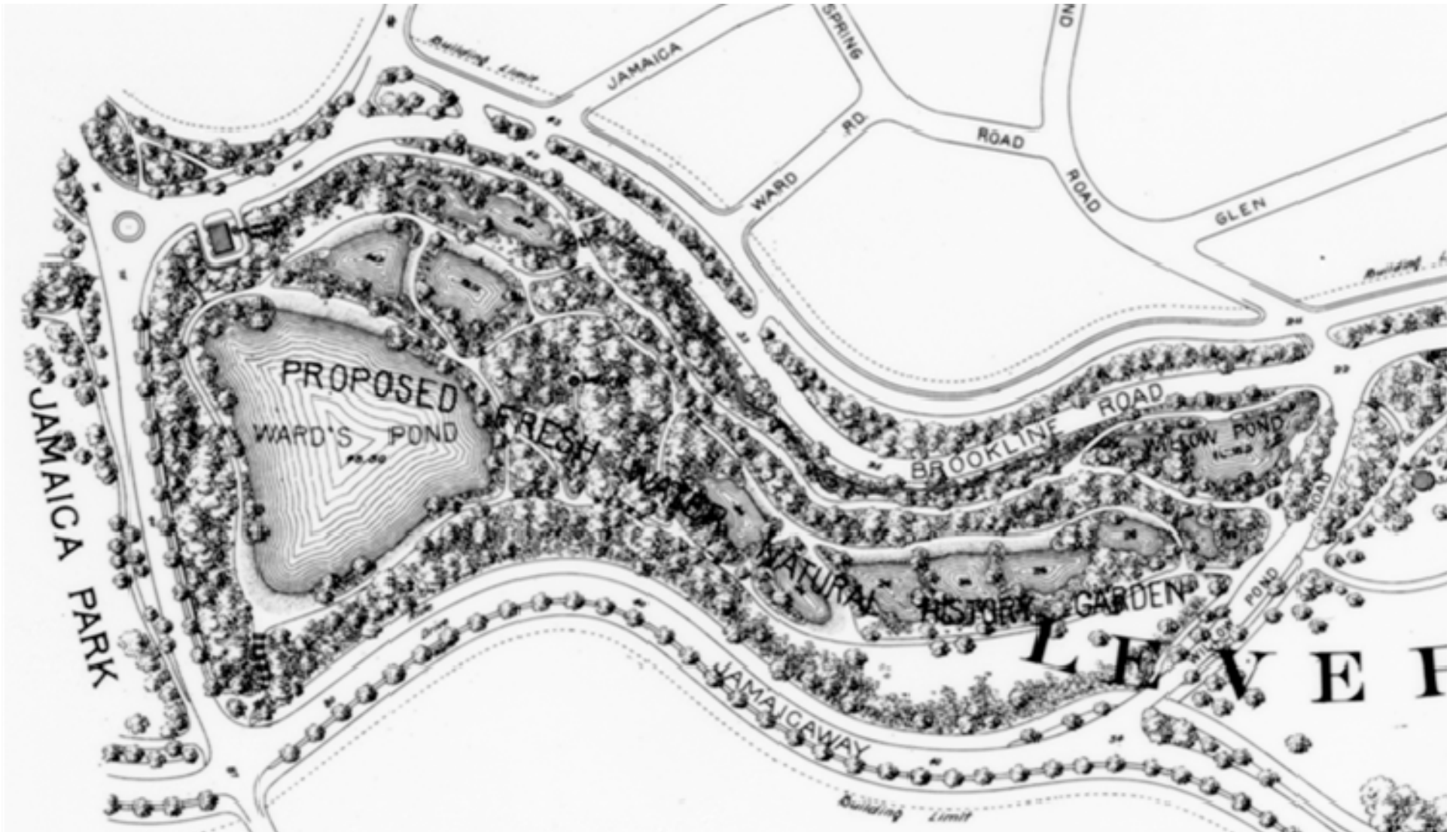


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Planting Notes - Unknown Date (after 1895)

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Unknown date

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Wards Pond View from Jamaicaaway 1901 (6 years after FLO)

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1904

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1904

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Ward's Pond toward the Jamaicaaway: June 1913 (18 years after FLO)

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View down the steps toward Perkins Street June 1913 (18 years after FLO)

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View down to Wards Pond 1920

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Ward's Pond View toward Perkins Street June 1929 (34 Years)

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Ward's Pond, looking down from Jamaicaaway June 1929 (34 yrs)

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Project Area Existing Conditions - Paths



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Project Area Existing Conditions - Slopes



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Project Area Existing Conditions - Slopes



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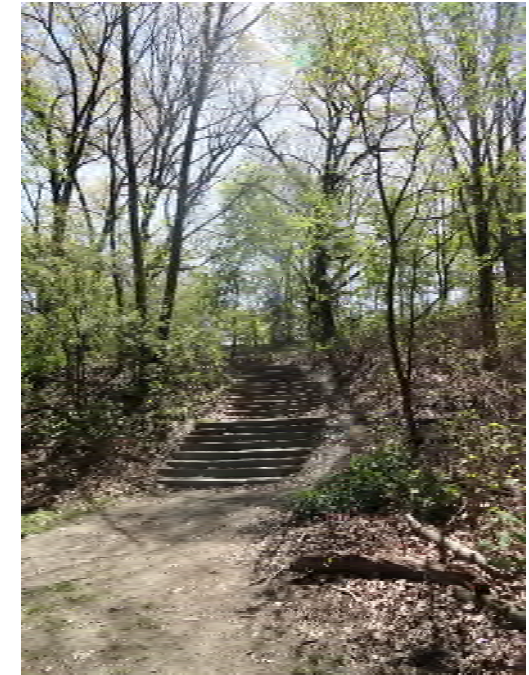


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Project Area Existing Conditions - Stairways



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Project Area Existing Conditions - Stairways



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Project Area Existing Conditions – Trees and Woodlands



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Tree Assessment Methodology

- Data Collection
 - Inventoried and assessed individual “Trees of Distinction”
 - Sizes ± 30 ” Diameter at Breast Height (DBH)
 - Additional trees under 30” included if botanically significant or high resource value
 - Assess the structural condition and overall vigor of trees
 - Develop prioritized pruning or removal recommendations



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Trees of Distinction

Large
framework trees
with stem diameters
of 30" or greater



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Pruning Goals and Objectives

Safety through *Risk Reduction* to address large dead limbs and live limbs with visible structural defects that may pose a threat to visitors on pathways, stairs, roadways, or other high use areas



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Pruning Goals and Objectives

Preservation
through *Stabilization*
to address large
diameter limb or
stem structures that
would significantly
damage or degrade
the quality or
longevity of
significant trees.



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Pruning Methods – Crown Cleaning

Crown Cleaning is an industry accepted term for the removal of **dead...**



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Pruning Methods – Crown Cleaning

...dying...



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Pruning Methods – Crown Cleaning

...or structurally compromised limb or stem structures.



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Pruning Methods – Crown Reduction

Crown Reduction is an industry accepted term for the removal of live and healthy limbs, for the purposes of **reducing weight...**



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Pruning Methods – Crown Reduction

...and **strain** on **structurally weak** limb or stem structures.



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Pruning Methods – Crown Reduction

Reduction can be achieved with **heading cuts...**



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Pruning Methods – Crown Reduction

...or **thinning** cuts



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Pruning Specifications

Crown cleaning over paths, sidewalks, and roadways will address limbs down to 2" in diameter, increased to 3" over woodland areas.



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Pruning Specifications

Crown reduction pruning will be targeted at **specific** limb or stem structures based on an aerial inspection by the contracting arborists in the field.



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Invasive Plant Assessment Methodology

- Inventory invasive species
- Evaluate environmental impacts
- Tailor a management strategy specific to each invasive species



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Invasive Plant Assessment

Colonization

- Invasive species spread and disrupt ecosystems in natural areas.
- Makes habitat less suitable for native plants and wildlife.



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Invasive Plant Assessment

Competition

Young Norway maples growing into the canopy shade lower limbs and reduce area for oak regeneration.



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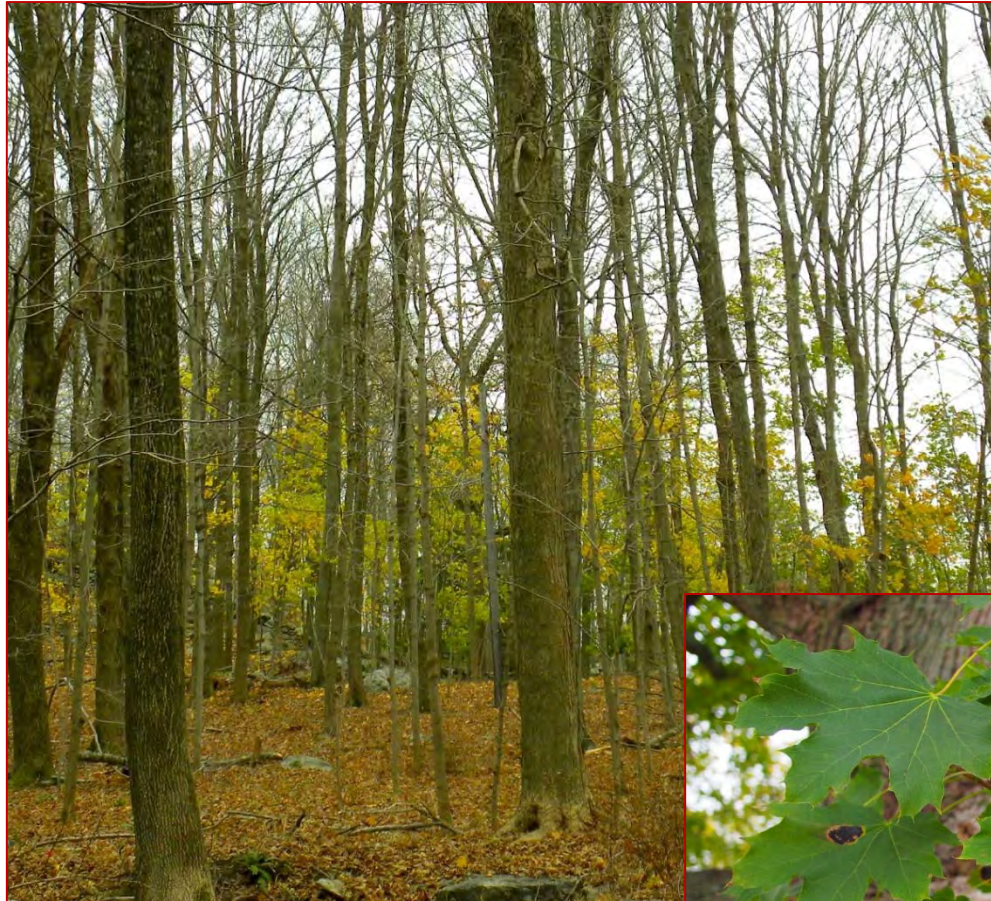
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Invasive Plants in Olmsted Park

Norway Maple

Acer platanoides

- Trees produce large numbers of seeds.
- The dense inhibits the regeneration of other tree seedlings, reducing diversity.
- The shallow roots are dense and outcompete with more desirable plants.



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Invasive Plants in Olmsted Park

Tree of Heaven

Ailanthus altissima

- Sends out seeds in enormous numbers
- Forms dense clonal thickets (monocultures)
- Grows quickly, displacing native plants, which also affect wildlife diversity.
- Difficult to manage once established.



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Invasive Plants in Olmsted Park

Amur Corktree

*Phellodendron
amurense*

- Has established in park into large framework trees.
- Displaces more desirable native hardwood species.
- Note: only female plants have potential to become invasive.



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Invasive Plants in Olmsted Park

Japanese Barberry *Berberis thunbergii*

- Introduced as an ornamental and escaped into naturalized areas.
- Forms dense stands that outcompete with native trees and herbaceous plants.



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Invasive Plants in Olmsted Park

Oriental Bittersweet

Celastrus orbiculatus

- Can quickly engulf vegetation, forming nearly pure stands.
- It can strangle shrubs and small trees, and weaken mature trees by girdling the trunk and weighting the crown making the tree more susceptible to damage.



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Invasive Plants in Olmsted Park

Burning Bush

Euonymus alatus

- Introduced as an ornamental and escaped into naturalized areas.
- Forms dense stands that outcompete with native trees and herbaceous plants.



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Invasive Plants in Olmsted Park

Knotweed

Fallopia japonica

- Knotweed thrives in disturbed areas.
- Once established, spreads rapidly, creating monoculture stands that threaten native plant communities.
- Can tolerate wide variety of growing conditions, including deep shade, full sun and drought.



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Invasive Species in Olmsted Park

Honeysuckles

Lonicera sp.

- Outcompetes the growth of native plant species.
- It shades out understory growth preventing the success of native understory plants and tree seedlings.



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Invasive Plants in Olmsted Park

Common and Glossy Buckthorn

Rhamnus cathartica & *R. frangula*

- Prolific seeder that adapts to a wide range of conditions.
- Forms dense stands that outcompete with more desirable native plants.



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Invasive Plants in Olmsted Park

Multiflora Rose

Rosa multiflora

- Among one of the top invasive plant species in the country.
- Prolific seeder that quickly colonizes and forms large dense shrub masses that outcompete with more desirable native vegetation



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Invasive Plants in Olmsted Park

Poison Ivy

Toxicodendron radicans

- A native plant with high wildlife value.
- Only a problem if plants threatens the health and safety of visitors or arborists.



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Next Steps

- Early Action Project - Winter Tree pruning bid package for “High Priority Trees”
- Plan for Landscape Rehabilitation
 - Develop a landscape management strategy
 - Additional tree pruning
 - Invasive plan management
 - Understory planting
 - Slope stabilization details
- Develop Trail Standards and Improvements
 - **Possible** closure of some trails on Nickerson Hill
 - Trail clearance standards
 - **Possible** accessible entrance off of Chestnut Street (USDA Forest Service Guidelines)
- Strategy for Historic Stairway Rehabilitation
 - Details and specifications for existing stair granite tread resetting
- Prepare and Issue Bid Package
- Site Construction

Olmsted Park

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Discussion/Input



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THANK YOU!

Next Community Meeting – TBA

Should you have any additional questions, comments, or concerns regarding the design element please contact:

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