

(June 1991)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
MULTIPLE PROPERTY DOCUMENTATION FORM

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This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

New Submission

Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

The Historic Designed Landscapes of Syracuse, New York

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period of each.)

Early National Period, 1785-1840

Romantic Period, 1840-1890

The City Beautiful Movement and Progressive Era, 1893-1930

The Country Place Era, 1890-1930

The Depression Years, 1930-1940

C. Form Prepared by

*Landscape & Prospect*

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July 1994

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D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.

( [ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*David S. Gillette*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official

*10/20/94*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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INTERAGENCY RESOURCES DIVISION  
Statement of Historic Contexts  
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**SECTION E: STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXTS**

Located throughout the city's 16,432 acres, Syracuse's historic designed landscapes include seven major property types. These landscapes may be historically important through association with the social, political and cultural development of the city from its settlement period in the late eighteenth century through the period of significance ending c1940. Varying from early public squares to mid-nineteenth century rural cemeteries to recreation parks of the 1930s, the landscapes are potentially significant as well in the area of landscape architecture as local evidence of regional, state and national trends in landscape design from the country's early national period through the Depression era. For ease of discussion the city's designed landscape history will be divided into time periods based on identifiable national activities in the field of landscape architecture. To ensure relevancy for Syracuse, the context statement will be confined largely to landscape history in the Northeast and Middle Atlantic regions and to the property types identified for this project.

**Early National Period 1785-1840**

***Syracuse During the Early National Period***

Syracuse's first historic designed landscapes, consisting of public squares, cemeteries and residential gardens, developed naturally as components of the original townscape during the city's settlement period at the turn of the nineteenth century. For several reasons permanent habitation in Syracuse and the surrounding area was delayed until the close of the Revolutionary War. Prior to the settlement era, roads leading to upstate New York were primitive, often little more than Indian trails unsuitable for wagon traffic, and travel along them was slow and torturous. The old water route to central New York, the Mohawk River to Wood Creek and Oneida Lake, bypassed the Syracuse area to the north and, with long portages, water travel too was difficult. In addition, the land where the city's business district now lies was an inhospitable wooded swamp feared as a source of disease. (For a more full account of Syracuse's pre-settlement period, see *City of Syracuse, Reconnaissance Level Survey of Historic Resources, 1992*). With travel difficult and portions of the city's natural landscape unwelcoming, there was little inducement to settle the area until the close of the Revolution when the lure of free land and salt manufacture was sufficient to overcome earlier obstacles to area growth.

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In 1789-90, the New Military Tract was laid out in a rectilinear grid of townships and mile-square lots on +1,500,000 acres of former Iroquois land acquired by New York State through a 1788 treaty. The Tract encompassed today's Onondaga, Cortland, Cayuga and Seneca counties along with portions of four others. The concept of the Military Tract originated during the Revolutionary War as a means of raising troops who were offered land bounties in return for service. A product of the period's rational, Enlightenment mindset, the rectilinear grid was a pragmatic means of rapidly dividing large blocks of land to meet the demands of a public intent on moving westward. As a framework for settlement, the survey grid imposed a spatial order on the region's surface still visible in field patterns, political boundaries and road networks. The city of Syracuse occupies the northern part of a reservation retained by the Onondagas in the 1788 treaty; the treaty also set aside a separate strip around Onondaga Lake for joint use by the Indians and the state in the manufacture of salt. Known as the Onondaga Salt Springs Reservation, this area included land now within the city limits. Finally, via a 1795 treaty, title to all Indian land in the Syracuse area, with the exception of today's Onondaga Reservation south of the city, passed to New York State. Subsequent deeds within the city area rest on these early treaties between the Onondagas and the state. While New York soon sold much of the newly acquired land, several hundred acres, largely within today's city, remained under public control in connection with the developing salt industry.

The city's first settlers actually arrived before the completion of the Military Tract survey and the large-scale distribution of free land it afforded. In 1786, the first European American settler, New Englander Ephriam Webster, set up a trading post at the mouth of Onondaga Creek near the center of today's city. In 1788, he encouraged Asa Danforth and Comfort Tyler to settle in Onondaga Valley or Hollow, as it was called, where the availability of good arable farmland soon drew an influx of emigrants from New England and elsewhere, eager to acquire newly available land. Arriving via the Seneca Turnpike, the area's first major east-west road, they established an active community at the southern edge of the present city. During this early period, emigrant farmers also settled in upland areas of Manlius, Pompey, Tully and other towns surrounding today's Syracuse. By 1789-90, the lure of salt brought squatters to "Salt Point," the land jointly held by the state and Indians at the southeast end of Onondaga Lake, and salt manufacture effectively began. These first settlements in the valley and along the lake were connected by an early road, originally an Indian trail and now generally the route of Salina Street. With the two fledgling communities established, Syracuse's first historic designed landscapes evolved at the close of the eighteenth century as a natural, albeit planned, result of area growth. Their original organic relationship to the surrounding community remains largely intact today.

Washington Park, considered the earliest of the city's designed landscapes (see Property Type: Public Spaces), lies at the center of what was the village of Salina. During the 1790s the number of salt boilers at Salt Point grew as demand for salt in the expanding nation increased. In response, in 1798, the state ordered the laying out of a village on high

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ground east of the lake. Overlooking boiling operations closer to the lake, Salina, as the village was called, was laid out on a grid plan. Employed on the New Military Tract within a national context of large scale land division, the grid-style plan was also practical on a small scale. Evidence of its practicality occurred in settlement plans beginning with William Penn's 1683 concept for Philadelphia and continuing in many communities throughout the nation. In using the grid pattern, Penn and city developers who followed him looked to the European Renaissance tradition of rational, Cartesian planning that had, in the sixteenth century, replaced earlier medieval prototypes characterized by congestion and irregularity. Considered a progressive planning concept when first applied to the North American continent, the grid plan was selected by town developers as the most effective way to promote healthful living conditions, equality of opportunity for all and a sense of community identity.<sup>1</sup> In many localities, including Syracuse, the grid was also a means of preplanning future urban expansion, easily accommodated by extending the original rectilinear layout.

Like most designed landscapes, Washington Park had an important social role, functioning as a center of village life for Salina. A portion of the square was used as a cemetery, and a school and church were built on the site in the early nineteenth century. The second of the city's early green spaces lay in Onondaga Hollow where New England emigrants modeled their first communal space on the traditional "green" (see Property Type: Public Spaces). Presumably used by the community from the time of settlement, the Onondaga Hollow Village Green was legally dedicated to the "use and ornament of the village and the inhabitants residing in the vicinity" by deed in 1807, and soon became the site of a school. The choice of the word "ornament" in the deed is the earliest known local reference to an aesthetic role for open space. With the construction of a private school in 1816, across Seneca Turnpike from the village green, the area's first campus, Academy Green, was established (see Property Type: Institutional Campuses).

At the turn of the nineteenth century, when a public square and a village green had been established in the small, but thriving communities of Salina and Onondaga Hollow, respectively, the site of today's downtown Syracuse was still a densely-wooded swamp desolate enough to "make an owl weep to fly over it," as an early visitor reported.<sup>2</sup> (First called South Salina and later Milan, Corinth and Cossit's Corners, Syracuse received its present name c1820.) Within a very few years, development in Syracuse accelerated in the area of today's Clinton Square, one of downtown's major historic designed landscapes surviving today. This square, named before 1834, traces its origins to the decision of Pennsylvanian James Geddes to settle at the west edge of the salt reservation in what became

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<sup>1</sup> Philip Pregill and Nancy Volkman, *Landscapes in History*, (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1993), p.339.

<sup>2</sup> Syracuse Conservation Advisory Council, *City of Syracuse: Urban Natural Resource Inventory* (Syracuse: City of Syracuse Department of Community Development, 1979), p.43.

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the village of Geddes. In 1804, Geddes, active in the salt industry, persuaded New York State to sell 250 acres of Salt Springs Reservation land to finance extension of the Genesee Road from DeWitt west to his settlement, thus facilitating transportation of salt to market. Clinton Square and the surrounding downtown area of Syracuse grew up within the 250 acre tract, around the crossing of the new road, today's Genesee Street, and the then-existing route from Salina to Onondaga Hollow. Purchased by Abraham Walton of Utica and called the "Walton Tract," the swampy 250 acre parcel, traversed by twists and turns of Onondaga Creek as it flowed to Onondaga Lake, offered little other than potential mill sites. In 1805 Walton built the Old Red Mill, and in 1806, Henry Bogardus built a tavern adjacent to the crossroads that is now Clinton Square. Despite inhospitable conditions, development of the central portion of today's city proceeded rapidly around the sites of this early mill and tavern. In the tradition of New England villages, the early settlement was bordered by common pasture and agricultural land, generally confined to a cleared area extending from the present Willow Street south to Fayette Street and from Clinton Street east to Warren Street, all within the center of the Walton Tract. Beyond this area to the east and west lay swamps and woods.

Originally surveyed by James Geddes in 1804, the Walton Tract was resurveyed in 1819, under the direction of Judge Joshua Forman, into village lots and farm lots. An early settler of Onondaga Hollow, Forman moved to the Syracuse settlement in 1819. Because of his extensive involvement in the development of the city, he is called the "father of Syracuse." Employing the favored grid plan, the 1819 survey established a land division pattern for much of downtown Syracuse; the pattern still exists today and over time has provided a template for expansion of the city. Although settlement began in the downtown Syracuse area slightly later than in Salina and Onondaga Hollow, the 1819 completion of the Erie Canal through the crossroads hamlet established it as the center of area growth in the ensuing decades.

While Salina, Onondaga Hollow and Syracuse were the principal areas of early settlement, small communities also grew up to the west in the village of Geddes, laid out in 1807 with St. Mark's Square (then Center Square) at its core, and to the east in the village of Lodi established by Captain Oliver Teall in the 1820s. Lodi's principal open space was Lock Square at the intersection of the Erie Canal and Lodi Street, built by Teall as a route from his settlement directly to Salina, bypassing the Syracuse swamps to the west. Neither public square survives with any integrity of original features.

With completion of the canal through Syracuse, the physical pattern that would support several decades of changes upon the land was in place. The ongoing prosperity of the salt industry and new commercial and manufacturing opportunities resulting from the presence of the canal encouraged an overlay of continued landscape development atop the original settlement imprint. With promising communities at Salina, Onondaga Hollow, Geddes and Syracuse connected by major roads and transportation beyond the area offered by the canal, it only remained for enterprising citizens to take steps to promote the area's clear potential as a manufacturing and traffic hub. One of the most important early initiatives was the 1821 lowering of Onondaga Lake in order to drain the disease-ridden swamps in downtown

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Syracuse and along the lakeshore. Like the construction of the canal, the draining of the swamps displayed a typically American pragmatism and ingenuity which, in each case, produced engineering feats that altered the environment. With the swamps diminished, thousands of acres were made available for settlement, a primary health problem was overcome and Syracuse became a more desirable place to live. At about this time the name "Syracuse" was finally adopted for the settlement within the Walton Tract. The name was chosen, after several others were rejected, because of similarities between the local landscape and the landscape of ancient Siracusa in Sicily.

In 1824, with the canal open and the swamps drained, a group of Albany businessmen, recognizing the area's potential, formed the Syracuse Company to purchase the Walton Tract and begin the first systematic effort to improve and promote the property. William James, James McBride and Isaiah and John Townsend were principals in the company with Moses Burnet acting as their local agent. As development progressed, streets in the new community would be named for each of the partners. With stimulation from the salt industry, the canal and the Syracuse Company, the small hamlet grew rapidly from a population of 600 in 1820 to 2,625 in 1830 and 3,769 in 1834. By 1834 the Walton Tract (Syracuse) and Salina grids had been extended to meet at Division Street, then the boundary between the villages of Salina and Syracuse. Surveying in Syracuse had also extended east to incorporate the settlement at Lodi which was annexed by Syracuse in 1835. During this period of rapid expansion, one of the city's most distinctive property subtypes, the small-scale, open triangle made its first appearance as a result of the imposition of the village grids over existing diagonal roads including Salina, Onondaga and Genesee Streets. Early examples include Hanover Square in Syracuse and Union Square in Salina. As the city grew through the nineteenth century open triangles also appeared in newer areas.

While certain open spaces were created more or less on an ad hoc basis, others resulted from more intentional planning as the city grew. Fayette and Forman Parks, both appearing as squares on early village maps, were given their present boundaries in 1839 and 1850, respectively, when Genesee Street, which originally bisected the two, was rerouted to bypass them. Eventually the two parks would become surrounded by desirable residential areas. Following initial settlement at Clinton Square and the opening of the canal, the first important residential area in the village of Syracuse was along Water Street where business leaders built their houses facing the canal. For nearly a generation, from c1820-1840s, Water Street, east and west of Salina Street was Syracuse's fashionable address. Willow Street, then called Church Street, was also a desirable locale during the period. Beginning in the 1840s, Fayette Park and James Street became the city's desirable residential areas, replacing older neighborhoods quickly transformed to commercial development as the city grew.

While the city's public squares and greens are still more or less discernible, other property types, now sometimes abandoned or vanished beneath subsequent layers of development, were also part of the local settlement era landscape. Of particular note are cemeteries and residential gardens (see relevant Property Types), both necessities from

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Syracuse's earliest days. For a short period in the late eighteenth century, burials were made in a portion of what soon became Washington Park. A subsequent series of public burial spaces set aside in Salina were finally abandoned in 1829 when the First Ward Cemetery was established and removals were made from the old grounds to the new. The First Ward Cemetery remained in active use until 1915; in the 1930s, due to deterioration, the stones were flattened and graded over to produce the present appearance of open greensward. The first burials within the limits of what was the village of Syracuse were made on the southwest corner of Clinton and Fayette Streets, now an open parking lot. Burials ceased there in 1819. Between 1819 and 1824, all burials were made at Salina, Onondaga Hill or Onondaga Hollow. In 1824, after the village of Syracuse passed into the hands of the Syracuse Company, a burial ground, later called Franklin Park, was set aside west of Franklin Street between Water and Washington Streets. Now the site of a parking garage, this spot was in use until 1841 when Rose Hill Cemetery was established. In Onondaga Hollow, the creation of Onondaga Valley Cemetery in 1806 provided a communal burial ground at the southern perimeter of the present city. Established in the early 1800s, the village of Geddes burial ground exists today as Myrtle Hill Cemetery where Victorian era design elements indicate its ongoing use through the nineteenth century. And in Lodi, the last area of early settlement within the present city, a small cemetery was established in 1834 on today's Beech Street and remained in use until after the Civil War. Although a design intent in each of these early burial grounds is largely undiscernible, they generally followed the New England prototype of a communal rather than family graveyard, with rectilinear rows of closely spaced graves accommodating numbers of unrelated community members.

While documentation for early cemeteries is scant, even less is known about the city's first residential gardens. Like settlers elsewhere in the new nation, early Syracusans, in all likelihood, could not afford the time for anything other than utilitarian gardens, generally herbs, vegetables and fruit, and simple flower beds. Since many emigrants arrived from New England and eastern areas of New York, it is reasonable to assume they brought with them the gardening traditions of those areas. With what time and energy was available, local settlers may have created dooryard gardens similar to, though perhaps simpler than, the restored garden at the Mission House in Stockbridge, Massachusetts where a perimeter fence, bilateral symmetry and bordered geometric beds indicate the ongoing influence of English Renaissance prototypes. Judge Joshua Forman, who settled in Onondaga Hollow c1800, is known to have brought with him from his Dutchess County home, "a few locust trees, which he set on the grounds about his new residence...He also brought a quantity of seed and planted a nursery below his house. From this nursery trees were set all over the valley."<sup>3</sup> Forman's enterprise documents local interest in the fledgling nursery industry then in active development in New York City, Philadelphia and elsewhere. The Syracuse Nurseries, which

<sup>3</sup> "Arbor Day Suggestions," *Syracuse Post-Standard*, 3 May 1898.

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developed a national reputation in the later nineteenth century, was established in 1830. Forman's nursery was also the first known example of local interest in arboriculture which would continue with the city's active tree planting program through the nineteenth century and the development of Oakwood Cemetery (1859), Thornden (1875-1900) and the Pass Arboretum (1925).

Given the original swampy nature of today's downtown area, it is unlikely that much gardening occurred during the early nineteenth century. However with the draining of the area accomplished c1821, conditions improved and by the 1830s, a visitor noted a row of dwellings, "...each lot surrounded with a picket fence; the green lawn and shrubbery in front of these neat little homes giving them an air of cheerfulness and comfort."<sup>4</sup> Of particular note was Judge Forman's garden developed following his move to Syracuse from Onondaga Hollow. "The grounds west [probably from the southwest corner of Water and Clinton Streets], nearly to the creek [Onondaga], were soon transformed into a garden, where beautiful flowers and fine vegetables grew under the care of the gardener; it was a place of rare beauty in those times..."<sup>5</sup> An 1838 visitor reported nearly 800 dwellings in Syracuse,<sup>6</sup> many along Water Street, presumably with vegetable and flower gardens, of simple geometric layout, intended in varying degrees for both utility and pleasure.

At the end of the Early National Period, c1840, Syracuse continued to enjoy rapid growth and prosperity resulting from its central location at the crossing of stage routes, the Erie Canal and the railroad which had arrived in 1839. In relation to landscape development, in the ensuing decades national trends in landscape design would begin to be felt in Syracuse as city leaders planned parks, cemeteries, homegrounds and other outdoor spaces. In general this later activity contrasted with the first period of landscape development in Syracuse, when the community's relatively remote location and late settlement date meant that landscape design traditions developing elsewhere in the new nation were not applied, in any significant way, in the local area.

***National and New York State Developments During the Early National Period***

At the national level, during the Early National Period, particularly the first decades, the majority of Americans, like Syracusans, were occupied with carving a new life from the wilderness. As the population moved west, the country demonstrated its democratic ideals through implementation of a uniform system of land division, evidenced locally in the New Military Tract. With land to be cleared and cultivated, most people had neither the time nor

<sup>4</sup> M.C. Hand, *From a Forest to a City* (Syracuse: Masters & Stone, 1889), p.4.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p.12.

<sup>6</sup> James Silk Buckingham, "Syracuse in 1838," in *Upstate Travels: British Views of Nineteenth-Century New York*, ed. Roger Haydon (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1982), p.171.



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the resources to be concerned with designing landscapes other than as an unconscious response to utilitarian needs. Although the average citizen was distracted by daily duties, wealthier Americans, in the early years of the Republic, developed the country's early landscape tradition in the plans for their country estate grounds. During this transitional period between the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and the Romantic Movement of the middle nineteenth century, designs were often characterized by integration of formal Renaissance-inspired motifs of the colonial era with newer naturalistic design elements based on English prototypes.<sup>7</sup> English landscape gardening books and literature, including William Hogarth's *Analysis of Beauty*, prints of European landscape scenes and travel in England provided inspiration for design in America. In addition, European landscape designers, engineers and architects who emigrated to the United States brought with them the latest in European design ideals.

It was economically unfeasible for Americans to create landscapes on the scale of English properties. Nonetheless coherent estate designs were created, often blending more formal gardens near the house with naturalistic gardens in the middle space as a transition to distant, wild landscape views, a design element as important as geometric flower beds. Placement of the house, generally still in a classical style, was of primary importance in capturing these views as a design feature. Significant estate designs that exhibited transitional landscapes in varying degrees include Mount Vernon and Monticello in Virginia, Gore Place in Waltham, Massachusetts and the Derby residence in Salem. The appeal of a water view was particularly evident in the New York and Philadelphia area where fine river scenery adjoined the urban core. The Woodlands, an estate along the Schuylkill River near Philadelphia, was widely known and admired for its combination of botanical gardens and naturalistic layout (see Property Type: Arboreta). William Hamilton, owner of the Woodlands, was actively involved in the collection and exchange of plants and seeds, an activity begun during the Colonial Period with the scientific travels of John Bartram and other early botanists and continued in the nineteenth century as the interior of the continent was opened and explored. From the perspective of period horticultural development, the Lewis and Clark expedition of 1804-6 was the principal event. The expedition collected hundreds of plants previously unknown, and, through a tightly controlled system, distributed the seeds for scientific cultivation to only two nurserymen, Hamilton and Philadelphian, Bernard M'Mahon. While most botanical gardens at the time were private, Dr. David Hosack was among the first to establish a public botanical garden, thus setting the precedent for the many gardens and arboreta, including Syracuse's Pass Arboretum, that followed in the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Hosack's Elgin Botanic Garden in New York was important for its promotion to the public of both horticultural materials and naturalistic design.

Of perhaps greater importance was Bernard M'Mahon's publication in 1806, of *The*

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<sup>7</sup> Discussion based on Chapter 14 in Pregill and Volkman, *Landscapes in History*.

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*American Gardener's Calendar*, the nation's first gardening guide with practical advice for all branches of horticulture. The book included a chapter on the English landscape style as well as advice on growing in the American environment. Its publication signaled the beginning of the horticultural publication industry which later produced many influential journals, including *The Horticulturist*, *The Magazine of Horticulture* and *The Genesee Farmer*. The guide also marked the start of several decades in which horticulture, through the influence of horticultural publications and horticultural societies, beginning with the New York Horticultural Society established in 1818 and others that followed in the 1820s and 1830s, dominated the field of landscape gardening.<sup>8</sup>

Although its influence apparently was not immediately felt in the fledgling Syracuse community, the establishment in Geneva, New York of the Domestic Horticultural Society in 1828 may have been important to later landscape developments. With members in the ten Finger Lakes counties, the Society was the forerunner of the Western New York Horticultural Society which, as a leading organization of its kind, no doubt provided inspiration, in some yet undetermined manner, for horticultural activities in Syracuse as the city grew in the mid-1800s.

While not as large as their English prototypes, properties of considerable size, resulting from a tradition of patroonships and manors, were typical in lower New York, particularly along the Hudson where spectacular views provided a natural setting for designed landscape development. Dr. Hosack's Hyde Park, designed 1828-1829, by the Belgian landscape gardener, Andre Parmentier (1780-1830), was a vast estate with extensive flower gardens and orchards in a naturalistic setting. Parmentier had established an important nursery in Brooklyn in 1825 (see Property Type: Arboreta). Among the earliest to provide a design for a Hudson River property, he was considered by his contemporaries to be the first practitioner of the English landscape style in America.<sup>9</sup> Clermont and Montgomery Place were other distinguished properties whose designs may well have been known in central New York, and at the very least have encouraged later enthusiasm for local residential landscape design.

Although no direct design connection has been established, in creating a climate of awareness for landscape design, important properties laid out in the early nineteenth century to the north, east and west of the city may have been significant for later landscape development in Syracuse. The house and garden at Constable Hall in Lewis County were built in 1810-1819. With a commanding natural site overlooking the Sugar River and a formal, English Renaissance style garden, the estate was similar in concept, if not in scale and elaboration, to estates along the Hudson and in New England and Virginia. Farther north properties designed in the early 1800s for the Leray family, perhaps by Pierre Pharoux or

<sup>8</sup> David B. Chase, "The Beginnings of the Landscape Tradition in America," *Historic Preservation* (Jan.-Mar. 1973): 41.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

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Joseph Ramée,<sup>10</sup> also exhibited transitional design. To the east and west of Syracuse respectively, Hyde Hall (Cooperstown), with gardens planted c1817, and the Granger family seat (Canandaigua), with property developed beginning c1803, may also have been known in Syracuse, particularly after the opening of the canal speeded the transmission of information and ideas. Regardless of the precise nature of landscape design information available to Syracusans, the Early National Period produced distinctive designs at the national, state and regional levels which together represent a gradual stylistic change from the Colonial Period to the Romantic Period. During the 1840s, as the Romantic Period opened, Syracusans, one way or another absorbing the lessons of these earlier designs, began apparently for the first time to produce significant residential designs in the new style.

While the creation of private grounds occupied many Americans during the Early National Period, the new country's need for public institutions produced an accompanying interest in landscape designs expressive of national democratic ideals. The need for a national capital created a demand for an urban plan. The demand was met by Pierre L'Enfant's 1791 plan for Washington, D.C., an impressive design incorporating strategic sight-lines linking new institutional buildings, along with radiating avenues overlaid on a city-wide grid plan. Although the imposing plan was compromised from the beginning, its influence was felt in emerging cities elsewhere, including upstate New York where Joseph Ellicott, brother of L'Enfant's surveyor, Andrew Ellicott, used a combination of diagonals and grid in his 1804 plan for the village of Buffalo. In addition to governmental institutions, the development of an education system to produce an enlightened citizenry was also critical to the nation's experiment with democracy. At the college level, Jefferson's plan for the University of Virginia (1817-1826) provided an outstanding model for fitting architectural complex to site, all for a social purpose. In New York State, Joseph Jacques Ramée's plan for Union College, Schenectady (1813), earlier than Jefferson's university design, was equally unique. With its formal grouping of college buildings within an informal landscaped park, the plan was the country's first documented use of a naturalistic site plan at a public site,<sup>11</sup> a concept of land design that would continue to develop during the ensuing Romantic Period as America rapidly unfolded across the vast continent.

<sup>10</sup> Roger G. Kennedy, *Orders From France: The Americans and the French in a Revolutionary World, 1780-1820* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), p. 42.

<sup>11</sup> Pregill and Volkman, p.370.

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**Romantic Period 1840-1890**

*National Developments During the Romantic Period*

Although the nation was still predominantly rural in the 1840s, the decade introduced a period of near revolution in American life and thought. Faced with the social problems attached to increasing urbanization, immigration, industrialization and the advance of technology, people turned wholeheartedly from the cold Lockean reason of the Enlightenment to the relative comfort of Romanticism. A new philosophical tradition whose truths derived from a worshipful appreciation of nature as experienced directly, through the senses, Romanticism held that nature had a positive effect on the mind. Exhibited socially at mid-century in the widely-accepted Romantic Christianity of Henry Ward Beecher and other popular preachers, Romanticism, with its realities based on intuition and emotion, also had a pervasive effect on the arts and aesthetic theory, including landscape gardening theory.

As with earlier Enlightenment philosophy, American Romanticism, as exhibited in landscape design, was based on European, often English, sources. British literary figures of the Romantic Period including Pope, Addison, Coleridge and Shelley extolled the virtues of untamed nature and were widely read in America. The concept of an idealized landscape, portrayed in paintings of continental artists, particularly Claude Lorrain, Nicholas Poussin and Salvatore Rosa, was known through prints and copies of paintings available in this country. Of importance as well were actual English landscapes whose designs, during the first half of the eighteenth century, began to be based on landscape paintings - thus the origin of the term "landscape gardener," as designers in the pre-professional period were called. Among the first English designers to abandon the flat terrain and axial symmetry of the seventeenth century in favor of naturalism were William Kent and "Capability" Brown. They were followed by other theorist/designers including Sir William Chambers, Sir Uvedale Price, Humphrey Repton and, somewhat later, John Claudius Loudon. Known to Americans through travel in England and more often through their writings which were required reading for cultured citizens, these English theorists, in general, promoted naturalistic landscape designs. In their work, the asymmetry and irregularity found in nature took the form of sinuous curves, broad lawns, sweeping vistas and dense tree copses, perceived as "beautiful" and sometimes combined with more rugged and wild scenery perceived as "picturesque." Whether through literature, aesthetic theory, seventeenth-century paintings or actual designed landscapes, the English Romantic tradition, in evidence tentatively during the Early National Period, was widely-known and appreciated in America by the 1840s.

As the nineteenth century progressed, Americans found themselves with increasing leisure time to devote to an appreciation of the arts, including the art of landscape design. In literature, the Romantic works of Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper offered the

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public images of picturesque natural landscapes. Hudson River School artists, including Thomas Cole, Asher B. Durand and Frederic Church, promoted an appreciation of the natural world through their paintings of awe-inspiring wilderness scenes. The appearance of the American landscape itself also inspired enthusiasm for naturalistic design. While early settlers had feared the wilderness, mid-nineteenth-century Americans enjoyed the luxury of perceiving boundless opportunity in the natural beauty of the new continent. During this period of optimistic embrace of natural scenery, the profession of landscape architecture, as an acknowledged discipline based on a body of theoretical and practical knowledge, was established, at a rudimentary level, through the work of Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-1852).

The first American practitioner to make a career of landscape theory and design, Downing came to the public's attention through his book, *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening Adapted to North America*, published in 1841. Filled with advice on "correct taste" in the improvement of homegrounds, adapted to the American environment, the book was based directly on the publications of Downing's English contemporary J.C. Loudon, who in turn based his work on that of Humphrey Repton. Displaying an anti-urban bias, Downing translated the period's concern over the unsettling consequences of national growth into a rural aesthetic where the visual quality of the entire property, including buildings and surrounding landscape, were to be considered. His design ideal combined the simplified naturalism of "beautiful" landscapes with the more rugged beauty of "picturesque" landscapes, while also emphasizing majestic views of distant scenery.<sup>12</sup> Downing's concepts were illustrated with wood engravings of estates such as Blithewood on the Hudson. He wrote approvingly too, of the "Gardenesque" school of landscape design espoused by Loudon. Allowing urns, flowers and an emphasis on individual, largely exotic trees and shrubs, the Gardenesque style influenced the busy designs of later Victorian eclectic gardens. Recognizing that the character of buildings was important to effective landscape design, Downing included in his book a chapter on cottage and villa plans which, together with his later books, promoted picturesque architectural styles. Reissued in ten nineteenth-century editions and numerous reprints, *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* is considered the most popular and influential book of its kind ever published.<sup>13</sup>

Beyond articulating the design ideals of the Romantic Period, Downing was also an early practitioner of landscape gardening, operating from his family's nursery in Newburgh, New York. Although little of his work survives, he is known to have designed impressive private grounds as well as a variety of public projects. Downing was also known for his

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 403.

<sup>13</sup> George B. Tatum, "The Emergence of an American School of Landscape Design," *Historic Preservation* (April-June 1973): 34.

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publication of *Fruits and Fruit Trees of America* (1845) which quickly became the standard text on pomology and for his role as founding editor of *The Horticulturist, and Journal of Rural Art and Rural Taste*, an influential periodical first published in 1846. Through his work in horticulture, landscape design and architecture, Downing played a pivotal role in codifying and popularizing Romantic design principles which would dominate landscape architecture for several decades. His success rested on his ability to interpret abstruse eighteenth-century English landscape theories for a middle class American audience, awakened by his advice to the value in considering improvements to their homegrounds as a whole. An early proponent of an environmental interpretation of human behavior, Downing succeeded in transforming the face of rural America. In the process, through his influential writings and designs, he paved the way for the landscape pioneers who followed. Benefiting from Downing's lead, Robert Morris Copeland (1830-1874), Horace W. S. Cleveland (1814-1900), Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903), Howard Daniels (1815-1863) and other early practitioners, many unknown today, established the fledgling profession of landscape architecture in the middle decades of the nineteenth century.

***Property Type Development During the Romantic Period***

While considerable activity focused on private grounds during the Romantic Period, as it had in the Early National Period, the Romantic Era also saw the introduction of new public property types. Designed in the Romantic idiom, these new landscapes were of tremendous importance in shaping the nation's growth. As early as the 1820s, general concern had focused on the deteriorated condition of many urban graveyards. Considered symbolic of the moral state of the community, the need to improve burial grounds was deemed important and resulted in the nation's first rural cemetery (see Property Type: Burial Grounds and Cemeteries) established in Cambridge, Massachusetts in 1831. Generally located on the outskirts of cities and designed in the naturalistic style according to the conventions of English landscaping, rural cemeteries, concurrent with Downing's work, were important in popularizing the Romantic style. By the end of the 1830s with the creation of Philadelphia's Laurel Hill (1836) and Brooklyn's Greenwood Cemetery (1838), the great triumvirate of early rural cemeteries was completed. Viewed as a measure of urbanity, rural cemeteries became the rage and were rapidly laid out near towns and cities and in rural areas nationwide, providing an opportunity along the way for landscape gardeners, including Cleveland, Daniels, Copeland and John Notman, to practice their new profession. During the 1860s, in response to Adolph Strauch's (1822-1883) 1855 plan for Cincinnati's Spring Grove Cemetery, the lawn park cemetery, with open, gently rolling grounds with fewer roads and single monuments per plot, became the preferred style.

Offering a beautiful and quiet refuge from the bustle and confusion of the city, rural cemeteries were an immediate success with the public as the site for contemplative strolls and even family picnics. Their great popularity, along with that of public gardens like the Boston

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Public Garden, resulted directly in agitation for public parks, championed in the 1840s by Downing in *The Horticulturist* and by William Cullen Bryant, outspoken editor of the *New York Evening Post*. Eventually awakening to the need for public outdoor recreational space, New York City responded with the establishment in 1857, of the nation's first large-scale public park, Central Park (see Property Type: Parks). In addition to rural cemeteries and public parks, a third property type, the large picturesque subdivision (see Property Type: Residential Subdivisions) made its appearance during the early Romantic Period with the laying out of Glendale, Ohio (1851) and Llewellyn Park begun in 1853 in West Orange, New Jersey.

Horticulture, which dominated the landscape field in the 1820s and 1830s, continued to develop in the Romantic Era, but in a more subservient role than in the past. In the 1840s, as designed landscapes proliferated, the nursery business expanded to meet the demand for native and exotic trees and shrubs. Following in the tradition of Parmentier's nursery with its naturalistic grounds intended as a model for homegrounds' design, George Ellwanger and Patrick Barry founded the Mount Hope Gardens and Nursery in Rochester, New York (1840). The nursery grew to national prominence in the mid-to-late 1800s, supplying stock to customers countrywide. Ellwanger and Barry was only one of many nurseries that flourished as post-Civil War prosperity produced leisure-time interest in gardening. In 1868, the *American Horticultural Annual* published a five-page list of "Nurserymen, Florists and Seedsmen." Based on catalogs received, the list filled over twelve pages by 1871, only three years later.<sup>14</sup> At their peak, these businesses managed wholesale, retail and mail-order operations along with flourishing greenhouses. Their catalogs, illustrated with colorful chromolithographs, offered garden layouts and bedding designs and often became household gardening "bibles" during the great national horticultural awakening of the later Victorian decades (see Property Type: Residential Gardens).

Although the nascent discipline of landscape gardening developed steadily through the 1840s and early 1850s, largely through the work of Downing, designs generally were confined to estates, cemeteries and other small-scale sites where aesthetic concerns were paramount. Meanwhile the country was expanding rapidly, and agitation by Downing and Bryant for a public park reflected an increasing national concern for urban ills. In 1857, with the decision to establish the 800-acre Central Park, an historic milestone was achieved in terms of the social progress of the nation and of large-scale site planning available from then on to landscape designers. From a social perspective, Central Park was a cogent response to overcrowding, pollution, limited access to outdoor space and other problems accompanying urban growth. The park concept, demonstrating the highest use a democracy could make of its open space, was revolutionary at the time and remains a seminal event in the history of

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<sup>14</sup> James R. Buckler and Kathryn Meehan, "Victorian Gardens: A Horticultural Extravaganza" (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution Office of Horticulture, 1988), p. 8.

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urban planning. While public open space had existed in urban squares and town greens, the concept of Central Park was innovative in providing a park, of a large size previously unknown, open to all citizens for *recreational* use, on land owned by the people and developed with public funds. As in the past, Americans looked for sources to England where Victoria Park and Birkenhead Park were established in the 1840s as parks publicly owned and open indiscriminately to all, as opposed to earlier parks owned by the Crown. Although an aesthetic link existed, American parks quickly surpassed English prototypes in focusing on social and environmental concerns.

The fact that thirty-three entries were submitted to the 1858 Central Park design competition is a measure of the profession's progress before the Civil War. The winning entry, the joint work of Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux (1824-1895), reflected the planners' social idealism in conceiving of the park as a democratizing force facilitating social interaction among all classes in a benign, pastoral setting. Like Downing before them, Olmsted and Vaux believed that the natural environment could have a positive effect on human behavior. Offering a refuge from surrounding noise and congestion with resultant mental and physical health benefits, the park could be an instrument of social improvement. The park was to be the "lungs of the city," a beautiful, naturalistic, open space affording myriad recreational opportunities, boating, hiking, strolling, riding, etc., to all citizens, laborer and merchant alike. In planning for the recreation needs of the masses, Olmsted and Vaux created several design elements which became, in varying degrees, the standard features of mid-nineteenth century "pleasure grounds," as these picturesque parks were called, laid out in cities nationwide. Striving always to subordinate details to an overall naturalistic look, Olmsted intended his plan to have an unconscious, positive effect on the viewer. Landscape historian Charles Beveridge has analyzed Olmsted's seven "S" principles of design: scenery, suitability, style, subordination, separation, sanitation and service.<sup>15</sup> Simply stated, Olmsted's program provided recreation, gathering and natural spaces, separation of circulation modes, integration of structures and site amenities with the landscape, complete separation from the adjacent city and an overall design harmony. To achieve his end, Olmsted employed pastoral elements of the "beautiful" and the wilder elements of the "picturesque," including massed and varied plantings, gently sinuous curves, controlled internal views, rugged outcroppings and expanses of greensward.

Central Park was a resounding success with the public, and its implications for the field of landscape architecture were significant as well. In a literal sense, the true birth of the profession occurred in 1863, when Olmsted and Vaux used the term "landscape architect" to

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<sup>15</sup> Charles E. Beveridge, "Frederick Law Olmsted's Theory on Landscape Design," *Nineteenth Century* 3 (Summer 1977): 38-43.



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describe their vocation,<sup>16</sup> called "landscape gardener" by earlier practitioners. The scale of Central Park, the technical expertise displayed there and Olmsted's compelling writings on the social philosophy of park planning provided the necessary design scope and theoretical bases to enlarge the purview of the new profession substantially.<sup>17</sup> Through the tremendous publicity the project received the public was informed of the professional services landscape architects could provide, and a rural landscape park, combining aesthetic with civic functions, became an expected amenity for any advancing city, providing work for Olmsted and a limited number of other practitioners along the way.

The success of Central Park sparked a national interest in park building and general planning to improve the quality of city life. Interrupted by the Civil War, the park movement resumed after 1865 with renewed energy. Olmsted and Vaux, who designed Brooklyn's Prospect Park (1865-1873) and Washington and Jackson Parks, Chicago (1871) were the nation's premier park designers until the dissolution of their partnership in 1872. In their work they established a standard for landscape park design that still informs the planning of naturalistic parks. Olmsted, in his own firm with a variety of partners, continued to design parks, including the Boston park system (1878), and to dominate the new profession of landscape architecture until his death in 1903.

While Olmsted was the period's preeminent figure, other designers, most notably, H.W.S. Cleveland and Jacob Weidenmann (1829-1893), also produced important designs for parks and other sites. Weidenmann, considered the premier cemetery designer of the post-war period, perfected Strauch's lawn park cemetery ideal at Cedar Hill Cemetery, Hartford. Cleveland is best known for his work in the Midwest where urban areas expanded rapidly after the Civil War. Among many projects, his concept for the Minneapolis park system (1872-1895), which advocated a master plan for the entire project, is considered Cleveland's professional triumph. Incorporated within that plan were parkways, picturesque pleasure drives connecting larger park areas, a design concept which Cleveland had first suggested in 1869 in relation to a park system for Chicago. Olmsted also created parkways, most notably Brooklyn's Eastern Parkway (1870), planned with Vaux, and the four parkways connecting Boston's "emerald necklace" parks.

In the latter part of the Romantic Period, elaborate carpet beds and other garden schemes typical of eclectic designs in residential gardening (see Property Type: Residential Gardens) were often added to earlier naturalistic parks or incorporated in new park plans. Surviving illustrations suggest that few designs were too flamboyant for period taste. Clock faces, world globes, zodiac signs - the choices were endless. Generally distasteful to professional landscape architects, carpet beds, topiary and other floral extravagances

<sup>16</sup> Norman T. Newton, *Design on the Land: The Development of Landscape Architecture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 273.

<sup>17</sup> Pregill and Volkman, p. 463.

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apparently were favored by the public through the last quarter of the nineteenth century. During the same period a variety of facilities including bandstands, conservatories, amphitheatres and zoos often were added to parks as the public demanded more active forms of recreation than a simple stroll through a pastoral landscape afforded by pleasure ground parks.

Demanding comprehensive planning and technical prowess, the parks movement, in effect, established the profession of landscape architecture. Although park design was the mainstay of the field, planners worked on many other property types during the post-Civil War years of the Romantic Period. The continued development of the residential suburb, based on Downing's design theories and widely-known from the example at Llewellyn Park (1853), was of tremendous importance for the future of urban planning. Growing from the longstanding conflict between country and city ideals, the new suburbs offered a hybrid existence where urban and rural values could flourish together in a sylvan setting, with access by train to the conveniences of a nearby city. In effect, the suburb offered the amenities of each lifestyle while eliminating the disadvantages. The enclave of middle and upper-income families fleeing urban stresses, suburbs were planned in the Romantic style, in imitation of rural cemeteries, with curvilinear circulation, varied topography, naturalistic plantings and picturesque views. From Riverside, Illinois (1868-1870), designed by Olmsted and Vaux, the Romantic suburb ideal spread to other cities. Although the majority of new subdivisions followed a grid plan, Romantic suburbs were preferred for stylish developments including many established outside major Eastern metropolitan areas.

In addition to parks, cemeteries and residential subdivisions, other post-Civil War Romantic era projects included institutional grounds such as hospitals and government buildings, school campuses, arboreta and private estates and gardens. Social reformers, believing that urban stress was a cause of insanity, established residential asylums in tranquil rural settings designed to restore mental health. Downing had designed asylum grounds before the war, and Olmsted and Vaux's plan for the Retreat for the Insane in Hartford, Connecticut, with its naturalistic landscape, was an important post-war design. With the passage of the Morrill Act in 1862, public university development boomed, particularly in the Midwest and beyond. Although institutional programs often demanded a level of formality in certain areas of a campus, in general, university grounds developed in the 1860s-1880s displayed naturalistic design concepts. Cleveland's plan for the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, maximized the natural setting by siting the campus on a curved bluff above the Mississippi and creating a wooded park adjacent to the principal buildings. With its plan a collaboration between Olmsted and Charles Sprague Sargent, its first director, the Arnold Arboretum, part of the Boston park system, led the way for post-war botanical gardens laid out in a naturalistic style.

Although less well documented than public projects, residential gardens and estates continued to provide opportunities for landscape architects to practice their discipline in the post-War years. Often however, conflict existed between professionals who continued to

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favor the subtle effects of naturalistic design and the public who favored novelty and elaboration for their homegrounds. While the distinctive garden type before the Civil War was the pleasure ground which emphasized naturalism (see Property Type: Residential Gardens), after the War, eclectic gardens gradually became the design ideal. During the Gilded Age, profound social change swept the country as rural agrarian life increasingly gave way to urban and industrial expansion. A by-product of the tumultuous change was the growth of the middle class and proliferation of the suburban garden. With new leisure time resulting from mechanization of many tasks and new affluence resulting from industrialization, the emerging middle class, hungry for knowledge and culture, absorbed all the latest trends in outdoor embellishment. Two books well-known in the period, Robert Morris Copeland's *Country Life* (1859) and Weidenmann's *Beautifying Country Homes* (1870), combined theory, plans and technical details to offer designers suggestions for the improvement of homegrounds. Frank Scott's *The Art of Beautifying Suburban Home Grounds* (1881) was directed at the middle class homeowner who sought to express him or herself through garden design.

Often still laid out with subtle naturalistic elements including curving paths and massed plantings, residential designs, from the 1860s onward for at least three decades, increasingly included Gardenesque elements such as statuary and sundials along with elaborate geometric flower displays and specimen trees and shrubs. The trend reflected the influence of Loudon's writings and the availability of mass-produced goods which became desirable by virtue of being available. Just as the parlor was an expression of taste, virtue and social position, so too was the garden with its clipped lawn, cast iron ornaments and dramatic flower beds of coleus, caladiums, geraniums, verbena, cannas, phlox and pampas grass, all "bedded out" in a profusion of pattern and color. In a related development, families furnished their cemetery plots similarly, albeit more simply, with cast iron benches, urns and ornamental plantings, all intended to express domestic virtues.

The latest innovations in horticulture and the art of gardening were often popularized through large industrial and scientific expositions where new products were tastefully displayed by prominent seedsmen, nurserymen and manufacturers. The best known example was the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition of 1876 where Horticultural Hall was filled with exotic plants, cast iron ornaments, Wardian cases and floral designs. The Exposition's sunken garden, laden with 250,000 plants in elaborate carpet beds, is credited with popularizing *embroiderie* style flower beds.<sup>18</sup> As active recreation became popular, croquet grounds, badminton and tennis courts were laid out on closely clipped lawns. In many residential areas, private front lawns with their succession of elaborate displays formed a distinct contrast with the public streetscape where a simple and unified space was created by the arching canopy of street trees, including basswoods, sycamores, maples and elms, often planted when

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 459.

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the street was laid out. Elaborate, obvious and flamboyant with an emphasis on variety rather than site unity, eclectic gardens mirrored the busy facades of period Queen Anne style houses and embodied the energy of the post-Civil War era.

Often the somewhat haphazard result of population growth patterns or utilitarian need during the Early National Period, designed landscapes, at the amateur and professional level, were increasingly associated with codified design theory in the Romantic Period. Downing, and later Olmsted and other practitioners, provided the theoretical underpinnings that established the design of outdoor space as a legitimate profession. As "high priest[s] of Nature,"<sup>19</sup> period landscape architects approached natural scenery with an intuitive sense of its capacity to be manipulated for the public good and of the need for a comprehensive philosophy to accomplish their goal of improving society. Their holistic approach, encompassing aesthetic, social and ecological concerns, employed both "beautiful" and "picturesque" design theory to achieve a seamless fit between the built and natural world. Although naturalistic design was eclipsed in varying degrees by the more structured, monumental site plans preferred in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Romantic Era landscape architects, with their plans for cemeteries, parks, homegrounds, suburbs and institutional campuses, established a prophetic environmental tradition of ongoing importance in planning for the nation's urban amenities.

*New York State During the Romantic Period*

As in the earlier nineteenth century, New York State during the Romantic Period continued its role as a center for landscape design and horticultural development. Beyond the immediate New York City area, the Hudson River Valley, with its concentration of wealth and the nearby influence of Downing, was the site of considerable activity. In addition to Downing's work, the area's "model" property from the early Romantic Period may well have been Washington Irving's Sunnyside whose naturalistic grounds were widely-publicized through written descriptions, paintings and lithographs. Later in the period, Frederic Church's picturesque estate, Olana (1870-1872), designed with assistance from Vaux, was well known.

With the expansion of the railroads, the invention of the telegraph in 1843, and the telephone in 1876, the Romantic Period was one of constant change and acceleration in the availability of information, goods and services. Central and western areas of the state benefited directly from these improvements in transportation and technology. By 1858, New York boasted 104 nurseries with western counties leading in the number and size of such

<sup>19</sup> H.W.S. Cleveland, *Public Parks, Radial Avenues, and Boulevards: Outline Plan of a Park System for the City of St. Paul* (St. Paul: Globe Job Office, 1885), p. 23, quoted in Pregill and Volkman, p. 448.

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businesses.<sup>20</sup> Ellwanger and Barry's nursery in Rochester and the T.C. Maxwell and W. and T. Smith nurseries in Geneva were industry leaders. Less well known today, with its significance yet to be determined, was the Syracuse Nurseries established in 1830 (see below), toward the end of the Early National Period. Regional enthusiasm for landscape gardening was further spurred by the ongoing development of horticultural societies, noted above, and of locally published horticultural papers including Rochester's *The Genesee Farmer* founded in 1831. With the most current information on topics including horticulture, landscape gardening and rural architecture, New York State periodicals were among the best in the country.<sup>21</sup> Their availability must certainly have affected the quality of many Romantic Era landscape designs produced in the upstate region, including Syracuse.

During the Romantic Period, many upstate communities, benefiting from a climate of enthusiasm for landscape gardening, followed national trends in the field. Rochester's Mount Hope Cemetery (1838) established the rural cemetery idiom for the region. By 1853, Buffalo, Rome, Auburn, Binghamton and Watertown boasted rural cemeteries. Syracuse followed with Oakwood Cemetery in 1859. With Central Park as a model, public parks were developed in several upstate cities after the Civil War. Olmsted prepared plans for Buffalo's park system beginning in 1868 and the Rochester system in 1888. Syracuse established Burnet Park in 1886. Regional institutional campus design of the period also reflected naturalistic design. Downing prepared a plan for the grounds of the mental hospital in Utica. In the 1860s, Hamilton College, Clinton, New York redesigned its grounds in the style of a landscaped park. Residential subdivisions appeared upstate as early as 1856 when Ellwanger and Barry began development of several residential areas near their Rochester nursery. In 1876, Olmsted's plan for the Buffalo park system included a planned residential subdivision, "Parkside," developed in keeping with the Romantic suburb ideal of curvilinear circulation, large lots and naturalistic plantings. Like other property types, upstate residential gardens too reflected period taste, incorporating in varying measure, elements of both the pleasure ground and the eclectic garden (see Property Type: Residential Gardens). In the 1850s, the grounds at "Cottage Lawn" in Oneida were laid out in a picturesque style to complement the designs of Alexander Jackson Davis, architect for the house, fence and garden pavilion.<sup>22</sup> In the 1870s at "Fountain Elms" in Utica, a curvilinear system of paths wound past ribbon gardens and more naturalistic stands of trees.<sup>23</sup> Horticultural fervor pervaded upstate communities

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<sup>20</sup> U.P. Hedrick, *A History of Horticulture in America to 1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950; reprint ed., Portland, Oregon: Timber Press, 1988), p. 245.

<sup>21</sup> M. Christine Klim Doell, *Gardens of the Gilded Age: Nineteenth-Century Gardens and Homegrounds of New York State* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1986), p. 9.

<sup>22</sup> Doell, pp. 170-177.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53.

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before and after the Civil War, and Syracuse, like its neighbors, would embrace current design theory in property types city-wide.

*Syracuse During the Romantic Period*

When the Romantic Period opened, Syracuse had grown from a crossroads to an urban center with enough amassed wealth to turn its attention, however haltingly, to national trends in landscape design. Between 1840 and 1890, codified design ideals would be applied in varying degrees to the city's cemeteries, parks, gardens and other properties. By the 1840s, the Syracuse area's earlier pattern of scattered settlements had been permanently altered by the canal, and later, the railroads, whose combined presence concentrated subsequent development in Syracuse rather than in Salina or Onondaga Hollow. Syracuse, already a transportation hub since the arrival of the Erie Canal, experienced a new growth spurt with the opening of the Syracuse and Utica Railroad through the center of the city in 1839. The city's importance as a rail center would continue throughout the Romantic Era which closed c1890 with nine rail lines connecting in Syracuse.<sup>24</sup> Together the canal and railroads solidified Syracuse's dominance over its rival villages to the north and south with the result that the villages of Salina and Syracuse merged to become the city of Syracuse in 1848.

In fact, the presence of the railroad, like the canal before it, encouraged ongoing local industrial and commercial development which lasted even beyond the Romantic Period, ending finally with the 1929 stock market crash. Slowed only slightly by the Civil War and other lesser interruptions, the city's progress, as measured by wealth, population, industrial and commercial growth, was rapid throughout the Romantic Period. Much of Syracuse's remaining downtown architectural legacy reflects the era's prosperity. Land use patterns developed during the period still are discernible in varying degrees. In general, downtown Syracuse grew as the area's commercial core with banks, stores and other businesses necessary to the local and transient populations. With transportation a critical factor in determining location, many industries located plants and warehouses along the canals and railroads which radiated from the city center. Residential development was at first in relatively close proximity to commercial and industrial areas. Gradually as roads were opened and trolley lines established, the population moved further from downtown. Parks, cemeteries and other open spaces often were laid out on high ground or, in some cases, on land unsuitable for intense development, often because of topography.

Population statistics reflect the city's mid-nineteenth-century boom. Nearly doubling each decade during the early Romantic Era years, the population grew from 11,014 in 1840 to 22,127 in 1850 to 39,010 in 1868; the period closed with the population having more than

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<sup>24</sup> Evamaria Hardin, *Syracuse Landmarks: An AIA Guide to Downtown and Historic Neighborhoods* (Syracuse: Onondaga Historical Association/Syracuse University Press, 1993), p. 12.

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doubled again to  $\pm 100,000$  in 1885. Located on a transportation thoroughfare, Syracuse attracted many immigrants who made the city their home and contributed to the large labor pool necessary for industrial and commercial development. Of the many businesses centered in downtown Syracuse, banking, as the source of financing for the city's many entrepreneurs, was particularly critical for local progress. Following the lead of the city's first bank opened in 1830, thirteen others operated by 1870. Although peak production occurred in 1862, the salt industry continued as a force in the local economy throughout much of the nineteenth century. Its influence on period landscape development was perhaps most closely tied to residential development on the city's northside where the many Italianate houses may well have been surrounded by gardens typical of the era.

After 1862, the salt industry slowly declined as more accessible deposits were discovered elsewhere. Boiling stopped at the last salt block in 1890, and the last solar saltwork closed in 1926. The gradual nature of the industry's decline allowed other industries the time to develop. Some adapted from concerns, including foundries and cooperages, originally connected to the salt business. Others took advantage of post-Civil War technological advances to produce an array of goods including steel, bicycles, gears, typewriters, china and automobiles. Still others produced more disposable products including candles and beer. During the 1860s, the city's wealth quadrupled,<sup>25</sup> and between 1867 and 1907, the value of locally manufactured products increased from \$6 million to \$34 million.<sup>26</sup> With its advantages of central location, excellent transportation and a plentiful workforce, Syracuse enjoyed a remarkable economic stability sufficient to sustain civic progress, to a greater or lesser degree, throughout the Romantic Period.

While generalized prosperity provided the underpinnings for civic improvements, the physical form of those improvements, in terms of designed landscapes, may have been affected by additional factors. To the degree that Syracuse was a transportation center, it benefited from the free flow of cultural ideas, including those related to landscape design. The presence of the Western New York Horticultural Society in the Finger Lakes area (see Early National Period section above), the active nursery industry in Rochester and Geneva and the wide availability of horticultural journals, some of them published in Rochester (see above), must certainly have augmented local awareness of and enthusiasm for horticulture and landscape design. The immediate presence of the Syracuse Nurseries and other smaller nurseries was no doubt of even greater importance for local landscape development.

Established in 1830, the Syracuse Nurseries, under a succession of owners, including Smith, Clark & Powell, Smith & Powell and Smith, Powell & Lamb, operated at least until

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<sup>25</sup> Syracuse Conservation Advisory Council, *City of Syracuse Urban Natural Resource Inventory* (Syracuse: City of Syracuse Department of Community Development, 1979), p. 46.

<sup>26</sup> Spurgeon C. King, *City of Syracuse, New York: Reconnaissance Level Survey of Historic Resources* (Syracuse: City of Syracuse Department of Community Development, 1992), p. 32.

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the end of the century, making the concern, at the time, one of the city's oldest businesses. Newspaper accounts in the 1860s and 1870s<sup>27</sup> chronicle the nursery's growth during Syracuse's post-Civil War boom years from its 1867 size of 300 acres, much of it several miles north of the city, to ± 1200 acres at various area sites in 1879. At least from 1867, the principal commercial operation was approximately one mile west of downtown, north and south of West Genesee Street at Geddes Street. By 1879, at this location, on a 100-200 acre site, were over twelve greenhouses covering 20,000 sq.ft., hothouses for propagating, a two-story office and many acres devoted to cultivation of fruit trees, deciduous and evergreen trees, ornamental shrubs and bedding plants, including verbena, geraniums, coleus, fuschia and roses, all popular for carpet beds. With proper dining of the day requiring fresh fruit, the nursery's stock of fruit trees and vines was particularly noted in advertisements and newspaper accounts. The nursery operated a second retail outlet on Clinton Street at the rear of the County Court House.

North of Geddes and along the route to Baldwinsville, the firm cultivated an additional 700 acres of land, originally swampy, but reclaimed through a scientific drainage system.<sup>28</sup> The New York State Fair Grounds now occupy a portion or all of this former nursery site. At some time, the business also included a site on the road to Brewerton, three miles north of the city.<sup>29</sup> In 1879 a force of 250 men and 150 horses was required on the various farms and at the West Genesee Street operation where thousands of trees and shrubs were packed daily and drawn by horse to the nearby New York Central and Oswego and Binghamton Railroads for shipment nationwide.

Less well-known today than nineteenth-century nurseries in Rochester and Geneva, the Syracuse Nurseries was a major business that apparently competed very successfully with its neighbors to the west. A period newspaper noted:

These nurseries...constitute one of the most important business institutions in our city; and it has no superior, in the essential elements going to make up a fully stocked and reliable establishment, in the country...There can be very few larger nurseries in the world. Extensive importations of seeds and stocks are annually made from Europe...<sup>30</sup>

Civic boosterism aside, by virtue of its scale and importance to the local economy, the Syracuse Nurseries must have exerted considerable influence on local enthusiasm for horticulture and by extension, landscape design. With its extensive stock, including European

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<sup>27</sup> "The Syracuse Nurseries," *Syracuse Journal*, 11 November 1867; "The Syracuse Nurseries," *Syracuse Journal*, 26 April 1869; "Smith & Powell," *Syracuse Journal*, 1 June 1876; "The Syracuse Nurseries," *Syracuse Courier*, 20 May 1879.

<sup>28</sup> "Smith & Powell," *Syracuse Journal*, 1 June 1876.

<sup>29</sup> "The Syracuse Nurseries," *Syracuse Journal*, 26 April 1869.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.



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imports and American natives and exotics, the nursery, along with other smaller competitors, provided a ready plant source for active landscape gardening. In addition, horticulturists trained at the Syracuse Nurseries moved on to other significant gardening positions in the community. William Harradance, who had been chief propagator of ornamentals at the Nurseries, became gardener for James P. Haskins at his pleasure ground estate which became Thornden Park. In connection with his duties as gardener, Harradance operated a "nursery and floral establishment" on the grounds of the Haskins estate at the corner of Beech and Madison Streets.<sup>31</sup> Although period sources do not specifically refer to the design of the nursery grounds, it is very possible that areas of the property were laid out, in the tradition of Parmentier's Brooklyn nursery and the Ellwanger and Barry grounds (see Property Type: Arboreta), as display gardens illustrating how customers might design their own grounds. Newspaper columnists promoted the nursery as "well worth a visit by admirers of the beautiful in nature."<sup>32</sup> Another noted, "The presence of an establishment like this among us is a credit and an advantage in many ways to our city...We are glad to know that there is a growing interest in horticulture and floriculture in this city and county."<sup>33</sup> Although its relationship to specific sites remains for future research, the presence of the Syracuse Nurseries was undeniably a significant asset for designed landscape development in the city.

In addition to ready access to horticultural information and a vast stock of plant material, another factor of particular importance to the Romantic Period landscape of the city, throughout the era, was the sustained interest in landscape issues of one of the city's leading citizens, General Elias W. Leavenworth (1803-1887). In 1880, a reporter stated, "For two generations he has planned and labored to promote our material interests and to beautify and adorn our city."<sup>34</sup> An attorney who served as mayor, congressman and New York Secretary of State among many other posts, Leavenworth, more than any other Romantic Era figure, was instrumental in extending and opening many city streets and in creating the city's pre-pleasure ground parks<sup>35</sup> Disturbed by the Syracuse Company's lack of regard for civic beauty in the late 1820s and by the self-interest of subsequent developers,<sup>36</sup> the General was eternally vigilant in promoting city beautification - and perhaps his own reputation. Commenting in 1880, Leavenworth noted, "Whenever I could gain possession of any little plot of ground I laid it out into a park or breathing place."<sup>37</sup> Armory Park (1849), Leavenworth Park and Street (1854) and Highland Park (1859), among others, were created through Leavenworth's

<sup>31</sup> "Mr. Harradance's Nursery and Green House," *Syracuse Journal*, 17 April 1866.

<sup>32</sup>"Smith & Powell," *Syracuse Journal*, 1 June 1876.

<sup>33</sup> "The Syracuse Nurseries," *Syracuse Journal*, 26 April 1869.

<sup>34</sup> "The Wants of the City," *Syracuse Courier*, 16 December 1880.

<sup>35</sup> "Leavenworth Obsequies," *Syracuse Journal*, 28 November 1887.

<sup>36</sup> "The Wants of the City."

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

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efforts. Given his enthusiasm for landscape issues, it is probable that Leavenworth subscribed to horticulture journals and visited parks and gardens elsewhere. Armed with current design information, intelligence and taste, the General must have played a major role in introducing national design trends to Syracuse.

Leavenworth apparently also led another activity important in shaping the city landscape, the planting of street trees, a feature for which the city became well-known in the nineteenth century. A national obsession by the 1870s, street trees were praised by Downing as "the outward mark of education, moral sentiment, love of home and refined civilization which makes the main difference between Massachusetts and Madagascar."<sup>38</sup> Trees were considered a civic amenity as early as 1839 when Leavenworth, then village president, forced the Syracuse and Utica Railroad to plant buttonwoods along Washington Street as a condition for securing a charter to operate on city streets.<sup>39</sup> Bird's-eye views of the city published in the 1850s and after document commercial and residential streets lined with shade trees, many of them no doubt the result of Leavenworth's efforts. As late as 1880, toward the end of his long career, Leavenworth advocated creation of a city improvement society to oversee extension and improvement of streets and parks.<sup>40</sup> Founded in 1881, the Syracuse Improvement Society included tree planting, one of the best and cheapest means of beautifying the city, as one of its responsibilities. In an era before comprehensive planning, tree planting represented at least a minimal consensus on urban amenities in a city still awaiting creation of a central planning authority, a concept which Leavenworth often had endorsed.

Another prominent local man, George Geddes (1809-1883), may, like Leavenworth, have contributed to period enthusiasm for horticulture. The son of early settler James Geddes, George Geddes was an engineer and "scientific agriculturist" who operated a 450 acre model farm on family land in Fairmount, west of the city. Geddes wrote extensively on the subject of farming, and his farm was twice awarded first prize by the New York State Agricultural Society for scientific methods of farming. Perhaps his knowledge was helpful to the proprietors of the Syracuse Nurseries in their efforts to improve their land along Genesee Street. It is notable that Frederick Law Olmsted spent several months in 1846 at the Geddes farm developing scientific agricultural skills which he subsequently put to use on the model farm he developed on Staten Island.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Andrew Jackson Downing quoted in "Trees in Period Gardens," *Old-House Journal*, March/April 1990, p. 27.

<sup>39</sup> Elias Warner Leavenworth, *A Genealogy of the Leavenworth Family in the United States* (Syracuse: S.G. Hitchcock & Co., 1873), p. 243.

<sup>40</sup> "The Wants of the City."

<sup>41</sup> Laura Wood Roper, *FLO: A Biography of Frederick Law Olmsted* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973), pp. 43-48.

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An additional factor affecting the general development of the city in the Romantic Period was the absence of a comprehensive plan, a lack common to most cities at the time. Enjoying tremendous prosperity, the city expanded explosively on an ad hoc basis, often at the whim of individual property developers, with the result that real estate speculation rather than "planning" in a modern sense was the norm. Streets often were opened in connection with the development of particular tracts with little regard for physical relationships to surrounding routes or for the need for broad thoroughfares leading from the center city to open areas beyond the city limits. The result of this haphazard approach was the many small squares and triangles which Charles Mulford Robinson considered an asset in his analysis of the cityscape in the early 1900s (see Property Type: Parks). While several of these small spaces date from the Early National Period (see above), others, including Billings Park (formerly Warren Park), created when Warren and Salina Streets were extended in c1840 and Fitch Place and Furman Park, created as the city expanded south and west, continued the local idiom through the Romantic Period. In 1881, responding to the perceived need for improved planning, the Syracuse Improvement Society advocated, "The laying out on some general plan the parts of the city not yet laid out, and also those lands adjoining the city, which must at no distant day be embraced within our limits."<sup>42</sup> (A complete study of the degree to which their intent was met by enhanced planning efforts during the Romantic Era is beyond the scope of this nomination.)

In addition to promoting general growth and the planting of trees, the arrival of the railroad produced other changes and improvements in Syracuse landscapes, particularly downtown. Rail routes often determined the location of development activity in the village, and later, the city. Placement of tracks on Washington Street (then Railroad Street) and construction of a station (1839) at Vanderbilt Square, on Washington between Salina and Warren Streets, shifted the commercial center of the city from Clinton Square to Hanover Square, at Warren and Water Streets, as businesses moved toward the terminal. Hanover Square quickly became the city's first major commercial district and then the financial center, the latter a role it played through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Accompanying development gave the square a dense, urban character in contrast with other early squares like Fayette Park (originally Centre Square) whose green space offered an oasis in the congested city. As a condition of operating, railroads also contributed to the early infrastructure of the city. In 1842, the Syracuse and Utica Railroad built a sewer to carry portions of Yellow Brook to Onondaga Creek,<sup>43</sup> an improvement that made swampy areas between Salina Street and Lodi more suitable for development.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> "City Improvement," *Syracuse Journal*, 5 January 1881.

<sup>43</sup> Syracuse Conservation Advisory Council, p. 46.

<sup>44</sup> W.W. Clayton, *History of Onondaga County, New York* (Syracuse: D. Mason & Co., 1878), p. 151.

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As noted in preceding paragraphs, a variety of factors affected landscape development in Syracuse during the Romantic Period. Perhaps most important was an accumulation of wealth, based in part on the presence of the canal and the railroad, which allowed public attention to turn to landscape matters. Important as well were the presence of an active nursery industry and the leadership of well-informed citizens. In terms of public squares and parks, urban growth precipitated the need for open space. Development of open space continued through the city's pre-pleasure ground era and culminated with the establishment of the city's first pleasure ground park, Burnet Park, in 1886 toward the end of the period. In general, the small-scale squares and triangles developed in the mid-nineteenth century showed little use of extensive Romantic style visual imagery. Improvements were often confined to the planting of trees and erection of cast iron fences. In 1846-47, at the suggestion of Leavenworth, the village fenced and planted trees in Billings (then Warren) and Ashland Parks.<sup>45</sup> In 1849, again with guidance from Leavenworth, the city laid out Armory Park on the site of the old Mill Pond, closed largely with fill from the top of Prospect Hill which was graded down  $\pm$  twelve feet, perhaps to improve its suitability for development. Originally called Jefferson Park, Armory Park, an open space largely unadorned historically, later became the site of the city's first state armory (1858) and subsequent armory buildings.

Other small squares and parks included Highland Park, laid out, again at the direction of Leavenworth, on a  $\pm$  ten acre portion of Rose Hill Cemetery where no burials had occurred.<sup>46</sup> Ten years later, c1869, Leavenworth persuaded developers in the Prospect Hill area to set aside land for McBride Place, a public square intended to beautify the immediate area.<sup>47</sup> An undeniable benefit of creation of open space was an increase in adjacent property values, a fact which no doubt encouraged landowners to set aside acreage for park use. An unidentified citizen noted in 1880, "There isn't a park in the city that has not nearly doubled the value of property in its vicinity. The city has never appropriated a dollar to improve the parks, but residents in the vicinity have always contributed the necessary means."<sup>48</sup> In addition, public squares were also valued as fire breaks.

While disclaimer of city expenditures may be an exaggeration, it is known that citizen groups funded improvements to neighborhood squares. The most notable example may have been Fayette Park. Originally set aside to encourage land sales as the city grew, Fayette Park had become, by the 1840s, an elite residential neighborhood. In the 1860s owners of properties surrounding the square hired New York City landscape gardener C. Hastings to redesign the space, which had been laid out earlier in a geometric pattern typical of the Early National Period. Too small to be considered a pleasure ground, Hastings's plan nonetheless

<sup>45</sup> Leavenworth, p. 243.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., p. 253.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> "A New City Charter," *Syracuse Courier*, 28 December 1880.

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incorporated the curvilinear circulation system and informal plantings of pleasure ground design (see Property Type: Public Spaces). In the 1870s, Forman Park was improved in a similar style with funding from area residents. Other small open spaces which may have been improved with private funds include St. Mary's (Columbus) Circle and Leavenworth Circle (see Property Type: Public Spaces). On the outskirts of the city when first laid out, St. Mary's became the center of a residential area as the city expanded south in the 1840s and 1850s. Leavenworth Circle was created c1886, with a fountain, elaborate plantings and benches which may have been funded by occupants of the distinguished houses in the area. Regardless of the source of their improvements the two circles, along with Fayette Park, provided an important sequence of open spaces on the route from downtown along Onondaga Street. As the Romantic Period closed, development of Syracuse's small scale open spaces continued, much as it had begun one hundred years earlier, on an ad hoc basis, without an overall plan. Often resulting from the somewhat haphazard meeting of streets laid through adjacent tracts or more intentional setting aside of open space for public use as the city became densely settled, Syracuse's circles, squares and triangles continued to display local aspirations and realities during the prosperous years before and after the Civil War.

Cemeteries too were a measure of civic progress during the period. Despite objections based on "its nearness to the village and for other reasons,"<sup>49</sup> Rose Hill Cemetery was established in 1841 on twenty-two acres northeast of the village center. As the principal municipal cemetery for eighteen years, it was improved over time with extensive plantings of trees and ornamental shrubs which, together with monuments and cast iron fences, created a very dense landscape. Although it continued as a burial site until 1935, Rose Hill was never acceptable to many citizens. An 1878 history stated, "The topography was unfavorable, more than half of the surface being a steep hill, not easily accessible, and the whole destitute of natural trees and shrubbery. It was by many deemed incapable of those high adornments which the public taste now demands."<sup>50</sup> Dissatisfaction with the site led to the establishment in 1859, of the city's first rural cemetery, Oakwood. Deemed a measure of urbanity, a rural cemetery had been discussed for several years, with newspaper editorials lamenting the absence of such an important amenity in Syracuse. The cemetery's founders, led by Elias Leavenworth, president of the cemetery board until his death in 1887, no doubt were well-informed on the subject of rural cemetery design, perhaps through subscription to horticultural journals which published many articles on the subject and through visits to rural cemeteries in other cities. Howard Daniels, a prominent landscape gardener (see above), who had previously designed fifteen rural cemeteries including those in Watertown and Binghamton, was hired to lay out Oakwood. The employment of a landscape gardener of Daniels's stature was a measure of the perceived importance of the project to the community. In his plan for

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<sup>49</sup> Clayton, p. 145.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

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Oakwood Daniels incorporated, in a masterful way, many elements of naturalistic English landscape gardening to produce an outstanding example of rural cemetery design. The full articulation of the rural cemetery ideal apparent at Oakwood may have been due in part to the ongoing involvement of Leavenworth and to the availability of extensive plant stock at the Syracuse Nurseries and elsewhere. While account books do not exist for the Syracuse Nurseries, Ellwanger and Barry records document purchases made by Leavenworth which could have been used at Oakwood or at a number of other sites where Leavenworth had an interest.<sup>51</sup> As the lawn park cemetery, pioneered by Adolph Strauch at Cincinnati's Spring Grove Cemetery (see above and Property Type: Burial Grounds and Cemeteries) became the preferred design style after the Civil War, Syracuse kept pace with national trends by establishing Woodlawn Cemetery in 1881 at the city's north edge.

The city's Romantic Era cemeteries provided people a sylvan refuge from the urban confusion that accompanied explosive growth before and after the Civil War. Oakwood was an immediate success with thousands of visitors, eager to enjoy the naturalistic landscape. As early as 1863, three years after the opening of the city's first trolley route, horse-drawn streetcars took visitors to the cemetery gate. The opening of the line to Oakwood also promoted growth in Danforth, the village immediately west of the cemetery, which grew rapidly until it was annexed by the city in 1886. Building on the city's tradition of setting aside smaller open areas for public use, Oakwood was an important new step in providing expanded open space for the city. However it did not fully meet the recreational needs of the burgeoning population. Agitation for a large pleasure ground style park resulted in 1871 state legislation enabling the city to receive land donations for park use. After a long delay, whose cause is undetermined but may have related to economic uncertainty following the Panic of 1873, Burnet Park was established in 1886 on +100 acres of farmland west of the city in Geddes. The park served a rapidly growing population including the immediate area northwest where Rowland Hazard had established the Solvay Process Company in 1881, an event that inaugurated the transformation of farmland into the village of Solvay. While their precise role in the park's creation is unknown, members of the then recently established Syracuse Improvement Society are known to have inspected the proposed park site before its acceptance by the city.<sup>52</sup> Their visit is an apparent measure of the organization's ongoing involvement in the extension of urban amenities.

The location of Burnet Park, just beyond the city line, established a pattern for subsequent large park development which to an extent determined pockets of local growth and future city expansion. Following the example of Burnet Park, others of the city's large parks were established by the early 1900s just outside what was then the city boundary. Trolley

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<sup>51</sup> Karen Day, "Cultural Landscape Report for Oakwood Cemetery" (MLA Thesis, SUNY-College of Environmental Science and Forestry, 1994), p. 205.

<sup>52</sup> *Syracuse Standard*, 17 January 1884.

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lines, electrified in the 1880s, provided transportation to park areas, property adjacent to the parks became desirable, and property values escalated. Attracted by the beauty of parkland and the availability of transportation, people gravitated to park neighborhoods. Anticipating growth in the Geddes area around Burnet Park, the city annexed the village in 1886. In 1892, the city assumed ownership of all property of the private Syracuse Water Works Company, including the old Wilkinson Reservoir. Construction of a new reservoir allowed the old reservoir land to be considered a park site. Today's Strathmore area, then the village of Elmwood, grew rapidly following establishment, in 1898, of the city's second pleasure ground, Onondaga Park, on the site of the Wilkinson Reservoir. The city annexed Elmwood in 1899.

Other parks, including Schiller (1901) and Kirk Parks (1909) created at the turn-of-the-century in the pleasure ground idiom, were placed on sites devoted earlier to recreational or other community purposes. During the two decades between the Civil War and the creation of Burnet Park, private entrepreneurs provided facilities for picnics, horse races, bicycle races, fairs, ball games and other outdoor activities. Many of these sites eventually became residential areas, while others became parks. To the degree that parks were established on former recreation lands, park planning in Syracuse consisted of the imposition of designed landscapes on an existing cultural landscape base. As with the ongoing creation of small public squares, the development of the city's pleasure ground parks proceeded as a response to changing circumstances or the availability of donated land rather than an overall citywide plan for land acquisition for park purposes. It was not until the twentieth century that Syracuseans began more comprehensive planning for recreation spaces.

Along with picturesque cemeteries and parks, the city's first known institutional campuses were laid out during the Romantic Period. Most typical of the era was the campus of the New York State Asylum for Idiots (now the Syracuse State School) developed in 1854 on a hill west of the city adjacent to property that would become Burnet Park. The asylum was one of many newly-established social institutions nationwide embodying the period belief in exposure to nature as a means of curing mental illness. As with others of the city's Romantic landscapes, Elias Leavenworth in all likelihood played an active role in planning the asylum grounds. As New York Secretary of State, he encouraged the decision to move the asylum from Albany to Syracuse and, along with the asylum superintendent, formed the two-member building committee, presumably responsible for the grounds as well as the buildings.

Leavenworth served on the asylum board from 1865 until his death in 1887.<sup>53</sup> During that period, Leavenworth no doubt contributed to the development of the property with its curving drives and naturalistic plantings (see Property Type: Institutional Campuses).

Syracuse University is another of the period's known campuses. Established in 1871, the school's hilltop site was selected for its proximity to downtown and perhaps for the view to the north, similar to that from Oakwood Cemetery where the view to Onondaga Lake was

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<sup>53</sup> Leavenworth, pp. 251, 256.

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an important design feature. With only one building through most of the Romantic Period (see Property Type: Institutional Campuses), the university campus remained largely undeveloped until the late 1880s and 1890s when a group of buildings were constructed, apparently without reference to a comprehensive plan.

The city's first planned residential subdivision, "The Highlands of Syracuse" (1872) may well have been laid out in anticipation of an increased housing demand precipitated by the establishment of the university (see Property Type: Residential Subdivisions). During the earlier decades of the Romantic Period, before the advent of planned subdivisions, the city's residential centers had moved from Water Street and other downtown locations to outlying areas considered more desirable because of their elevation and/or distance from downtown noise and congestion. In the 1840s, fourteen mansions were built around Fayette Park, and the park perimeter remained a fashionable address through the 1870s. The establishment of James Street as a stylish residential enclave began with construction in 1842, of the mansions of Moses Dewitt Burnet and Elias Leavenworth. Leading to high ground northeast of the city center, James Street was originally an Indian trail whose name was changed from Foot Street to James Street in recognition of William James, one of the partners in the Syracuse Company. For several decades after its settlement James Street developed as a fashionable address, widely-recognized for its high style residential architecture. In the middle of the twentieth century many of the mansions were demolished and the sites redeveloped for commercial use. Particularly during the years immediately before the Civil War and for at least two decades following, fine residences were also built on West Onondaga, West Genesee and South Salina Streets. Although substantial and generally elaborately landscaped, these earlier large properties were developed site by site rather than as part of planned subdivisions.

The Highlands represented the establishment in Syracuse of the concept of residential areas planned more or less in entirety prior to actual development. Standards were set for street tree planting, roadways, sidewalks, lot sizes and setbacks, and a landscaped open space, Walnut Park, was set aside for communal use. Expanded streetcar service provided necessary transportation to the new area. The Syracuse example was related to early residential developments at Llewellyn Park, Riverside and elsewhere (see above), but smaller in scale, less articulated in design and lacking the self-sufficiency, in terms of urban amenities, of an independent suburb. With The Highlands and subsequent developments including University Heights (1896), Syracuse followed the pattern of many cities in the second half of the nineteenth century. During this period, real estate speculation, unrestrained by overall city planning, and transportation improvements, both railroad and streetcar systems, rather than general community welfare determined the physical face of urban expansion. General Leavenworth noted the problem with his 1880 statement, "In the fifty-three years I have lived here...There have been public-spirited men, but they all cared more for their own interests



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than they did for the interests of the city."<sup>54</sup> Although coordination from one development to the next may have been lacking, amenities included as marketing devices added to the quality of life in the city. Infrastructure improvements and the planting of street trees raised the city's general standard of living as each new residential district opened. As the decades have passed many subdivisions have been absorbed by surrounding development, and their boundaries, once distinct, are now unclear to the casual observer.

Syracuse's residential gardens, as much as any other Romantic Era property type with the exception of the rural cemetery Oakwood, reflected the application locally of codified design theory. Benefiting once again from access to horticultural information and extensive plant stock and from opportunities to travel by rail or canal to other designed sites, Syracusans created stylish gardens as a complement to the high style houses they built on James, West Genesee, South Salina, West Onondaga and other streets and at Fayette and Forman Parks. These fashionable streets generally were improved with street trees, often planted under the supervision of Elias Leavenworth. An 1878 observer noted "the carefully gardened grounds" and "the magnificent avenue of James street [sic], embowered in its voluptuous banks of foliage."<sup>55</sup> The earliest gardens for which detailed written accounts exist belonged to prominent Syracusans and were built on James Street beginning in the 1840s with the Leavenworth property. Apparently laid out with elements of both early American and pleasure ground style gardens, the grounds included winding paths, shade and ornamental trees, terraces, flower gardens and orchards (see Property Type: Residential Gardens). By 1855, another James Street property had been devoted more completely to pleasure ground style design. According to local historian M.C. Hand, the John Wilkinson garden,

... was extensive, bounded on the north by James, and on the south by Hawley street [sic] and surrounded by a high, tight board fence...The fragrance of the blooming flowers, the pebbled walks, winding here and there among the deep green shrubbery, trailing vines, some in flower, others in their rich foliage clinging to arches that were formed over the walk, beyond a rustic moss covered bridge, near which were rockeries encircled with wild flowers, and artificial mounds covered with a well clipped turf, and bordered with flowers and foliage plants. Near the centre of this extensive garden of beauty, more prominent than all its other attractions, clothed in a thick growth of English ivy, was standing twenty feet of the trunk of a forest tree that had been a monarch here long before Father LeMoine discovered our salt fountains... Mr. Wilkinson was seated in the woodbine covered summer-house.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>54</sup> "The Wants of the City."

<sup>55</sup> H.P. Smith, *Syracuse and Its Surroundings* (Syracuse: H.P. Smith & Co., 1878), p. 11.

<sup>56</sup> Hand, p. 18.

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While the Leavenworth and Wilkinson gardens occupied large residential street lots, other properties developed in the 1850s took advantage of even larger sites at a greater distance from the city center where more extensive pleasure grounds could be developed. Presumably laid out at the time the house was constructed, 1852-54, the fifteen-acre grounds at Renwick-Yates Castle were naturalistic with winding roadways, picturesque plantings and rustic structures. In the 1870s the property received more formal treatment with an Italian garden, fountain and statuary (see Property Type: Residential Gardens). Still larger was the James P. Haskins estate laid out 1850-54 in a picturesque style on 100 acres east of the city. The Haskins property later became the Davis estate, Thornden, and finally Thornden Park in 1921. Both Yates Castle and the Haskins estate are known to have been open to the public and could well have inspired visitors to incorporate pleasured ground design elements in gardens on smaller city lots.

In keeping with national trends, following the Civil War, many Syracusans, while retaining some element of naturalistic design, added a wide variety of features including carpet beds, specimen plants, mass-produced statuary and urns to create eclectic designs typical of the later Romantic Period. By 1878, John Greenway, a prominent local brewer, had improved his farm estate at the east end of James Street with specimen plantings, large yard ornaments, a fountain, a summer house and greenhouses. In a small triangular park in front of the property at the head of James Street, was an elaborate array of carpet beds, apparently maintained by Greenway.<sup>57</sup> Many smaller eclectic gardens were created on properties throughout the city (see Property Type: Residential Gardens).

By the close of the Romantic Period, Syracusans had improved their city's public and private landscapes with designs that reflected understanding and acceptance of codified landscape design principles, albeit adapted locally to the needs and wants of the community. A location somewhat distant from large urban centers may have delayed by a few years the application of national design trends. Eventually however, the accumulation of wealth, the leadership of informed citizens, access to design information and plant stock and other factors encouraged the creation of outstanding period designs, including Oakwood Cemetery, Thornden and the Renwick-Yates property. Recognizing the importance of open space to the city's general welfare, Syracusans approached the end of the nineteenth century poised to increase their effort to systematically set aside parkland and other designed landscapes as the community continued to grow.

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<sup>57</sup> Illustration in Clayton, opposite p. 144.

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The City Beautiful Movement and the Progressive Era 1893-1930  
The Country Place Era 1890-1930

*The City Beautiful Movement and the Progressive Era*

During the forty years between the establishment of Central Park (1857) and the turn of the century, the field of landscape architecture progressed steadily, albeit slowly and quietly. From a handful of practitioners in the 1850s, the number increased to some fifty or more by the 1890s.<sup>58</sup> While a number of offices produced designed landscapes during the period, it is undeniably true that the new profession consisted primarily of two unequal parts: the prolific national practice of the office of one remarkable individual, Frederick Law Olmsted, and a small number of other independent designers whose range of projects reflected the work of the Olmsted office but on a lesser scale. As the first generation of practitioners retired from the field, their places were taken by a younger generation including Downing Vaux (1856-1926), Warren H. Manning (1860-1938), Samuel Parsons, Jr. (1844-1923), Nathan Barrett (1845-1919), Charles Eliot (1859-1897), Henry S. Codman (1859-1893), John Charles Olmsted (1852-1920) and F.L. Olmsted, Jr. (1870-1957) among others. In many areas of the country, their services were supplemented by commercial nurserymen who continued the mid-century practice of providing design advice.

Like architects in the early era of their profession, these pioneer landscape designers received their training as apprentices to older practitioners and through travel and study abroad. These methods were, for the most part, the only kinds of professional training available for landscape architects in the nineteenth century. Although Harvard's Bussey Institution offered courses on horticultural and agricultural subjects, technical courses for landscape designers were few and far between throughout the post-Civil War period. However during the 1890s developments in landscape architecture and related matters led rapidly to increased professionalization within the field.

The decade was one of rapidly growing interest in all subjects dealing with the landscape and out-of-doors. In 1897, the American Park and Outdoor Art Association was formed as a general association of members interested in landscape art. Reflecting the important role women then played in homegrounds design, the nation's first ladies' garden club was established in Athens, Georgia in 1890 at precisely the time American artists were actively exploring garden motifs in their work, thus further popularizing horticultural

<sup>58</sup> Bremer W. Pond, "Fifty Years in Retrospect: Brief Account of the Origin and Development of the ASLA," *Landscape Architecture* 40 (January 1950): 59.

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pursuits.<sup>59</sup> The Newport (RI) Garden Club followed in 1911<sup>60</sup> and finally, a national gardening organization, The Garden Club of America (GCA), was founded in 1913 with promotion of education in both horticulture and landscape design as one of its key goals. By the 1930s, over 2,000 garden clubs<sup>61</sup> nationwide carried out, in varying degrees, civic, educational and horticultural projects, reflecting in their quantity and variety a sustained national interest in landscape matters.

An upsurge of literature devoted to gardening further reflected the period's vastly increased enthusiasm for landscape arts. The most important new periodical was *Garden and Forest* published weekly from 1888-1897 by the Arnold Arboretum (Boston) with its eminent director, Charles Sprague Sargent (1841-1927) as editor. Read by professionals and, to an extent, the general public, *Garden and Forest* dealt with ornamental horticulture, botany and landscape gardening. One of the most important landscape publications of the nineteenth century, the journal was additionally significant because one of its feature writers, Mariana Griswold Van Rensselaer (1851-1934), was a preeminent art and architecture critic of the day. In 1893, her columns were reformatted for her seminal book on the art of gardening, *Art Out-of-Doors: Hints on Good Taste in Gardening*. The book was published in time for the World's Columbian Exposition (1893) in the hope that the fair, in conjunction with the text, would publicize the art of landscape gardening as the fourth art of design along with architecture, sculpture and painting.<sup>62</sup>

Along with *Art Out-of-Doors* and other books addressing gardening concerns, a new type of literature, the more professional textbook, began to appear during the 1890s. Related to earlier nineteenth-century publications, the new books were more explicit in their effort to integrate all aspects of design, planning and construction.<sup>63</sup> The prototype for this sort of book was *Landscape Gardening* (1899) by Frank A. Waugh (1869-1943), founder of the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Massachusetts. Others, including *An Introduction to the Study of Landscape Design* (1917) by Henry Vincent Hubbard and Theodora Kimball, followed in the early twentieth century.

Nearly forty years old, the profession of landscape architecture approached the 1890s without formal organization or a systematic method of training. Given that emphasis on professionalism in various disciplines had grown throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century - among many organizations, the American Institute of Architects was founded in

<sup>59</sup> William H. Gerdtz, *Down Garden Paths: The Floral Environment in American Art* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1983), p. 107.

<sup>60</sup> Mac Griswold and Eleanor Weller, *The Golden Age of American Gardens: Proud Owners/Private Estates 1890-1940* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1991), p. 16.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Gerdtz, p. 116.

<sup>63</sup> For more complete discussion, see Pregill and Volkman, p. 568.

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1857 and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers in 1880 - the lack of standards within the landscape architecture field was keenly felt. With national interest in landscape matters demonstrated through the period's new organizations and copious publications, it was not surprising that leaders within the field of landscape design established the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) in 1899. Founded by a core group of eleven landscape architects who practiced largely on the East Coast, the society was intended from its inception to be a formal professional organization providing technical information to members and setting minimum standards for professional competency.<sup>64</sup> With increased organization, viability of the profession grew, and by 1940 membership had expanded to 442<sup>65</sup> in chapters nationwide. The need for communication within the field led to the creation of the journal, *Landscape Architecture*, published continuously since 1910.

With professionalization came the demand for instruction in the field of landscape design. Harvard responded in 1900 with establishment of the first university-level courses offering professional training in landscape architecture. With a curriculum developed by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. and Arthur Shurcliff (1870-1957), the program, whose scope was similar to today's accredited programs, originally offered a bachelor's degree but quickly changed to a master's.<sup>66</sup> For the next several decades, the program produced most of the nation's prominent landscape architects, including Henry Vincent Hubbard (1875-1947), Elbert Peets (1886-1968) and Thomas Church (1902-1978).<sup>67</sup> Other programs, often housed in colleges of agriculture, quickly followed Harvard's lead. By 1910, the University of Massachusetts, Cornell University and the University of Illinois had comprehensive professional programs.<sup>68</sup> Still others were established in the next decade with the result that many new graduates were soon applying for office experience nationwide. Opportunities to study abroad increased with the establishment in 1915 of a Fellowship in Landscape Architecture, eventually called the Rome Prize, at the American Academy in Rome. The Academy, founded in 1894, was the creation of Charles Follen McKim whose successful experience as an architect for the World's Columbian Exposition (see below) convinced him of the value of studying classical architecture in Rome. Originally focused on architecture, painting and sculpture, the Academy's eventual inclusion of landscape architecture allowed American students to immerse themselves in the study of classical spatial relationships, particularly Italian villa sites where preparation of measured drawings was a valuable study method. The Garden Club of America established a second fellowship in 1923.

<sup>64</sup> Pregill and Volkman, p. 567.

<sup>65</sup> Pond, p. 66.

<sup>66</sup> Pregill and Volkman, p. 567.

<sup>67</sup> William H. Tishler, ed., *American Landscape Architecture: Designers and Places* (Washington, DC: The Preservation Press, 1989), p. 12.

<sup>68</sup> Pregill and Volkman, p. 567.

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While late nineteenth and early twentieth-century advancements in organization and education raised the level of professionalism within the field of landscape architecture, a single event, the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition held in Chicago, produced an unprecedented awakening of the general public's interest in landscape design. Planned in conjunction with the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America, the fair's purpose, like that of earlier expositions, was to exhibit the products of the nation's manufacturing and handiwork skills. The fair was planned by a "who's who" team of professionals including architects, landscape architects, artists and engineers. Their success in working toward an agreed-upon design goal demonstrated the value of interprofessional collaboration, a lesson put to use in subsequent city planning efforts around the country. The spatial and design concepts used in laying out the fair were derived from the classical planning principles popularized by the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris where many American architects of the period had studied. At its best, the Beaux Arts tradition taught a program rather than a style and offered an historical foundation for individual creativity. Although devotion to classical ideals evidenced in the fair's buildings and outdoor spaces eventually would be scorned as a fatuous dedication to the past, at the time, the fair presented to the public an idealized vision of urban opulence and grandeur on a scale and in a form never before seen in America.

The overall plan for the exposition, a collaborative effort of Frederick Law Olmsted and his younger partner, Henry Sargent Codman (1859-1893), demonstrated the period's growing preference for formal rather than naturalistic treatment of the landscape. Where Olmsted's largely unexecuted 1871 plan for Chicago's Jackson Park, the eventual site of the fair, showed a small formal basin and a large natural lake, the 1893 fair plan included a long formal pool as its axis with the natural lake to the side, off the central axis. Oriented on a site line perpendicular to Lake Michigan, the Olmsted/Codman plan centered on the Court of Honor, a visually powerful architectonic space with the basin at its center and classical style buildings facing inward from a rigid setback line. To the north, a narrow space and canal led to the naturalistic lake with its wooded island. The plan was further articulated with terraces, balustrades, bridges and monumental sculptures. The grand buildings forming the Court of Honor were painted white in imitation of classical ruins with the resulting nickname for the fair, the "White City."

Although the fair was clothed in classical garb, the strength of its plan derived not from the historical association of its detailing, but rather from its successful balancing of space and structures in a unified composition. All portions of the site were functionally and spatially related through visual and physical sequencing of each designed space. This total integration of the site plan was achieved to a considerable extent through use of the Beaux Arts principles of bilateral symmetry, classical scale in the proportion of spaces and a series of organizing axes which created a sense of movement. Applied previously to single structures and their sites, these principles, as employed at the fair, showed their applicability to large, multipurpose outdoor spaces. The 27 million visitors to the fair were awestruck by its sheer size, its glittering whiteness, monumental sculpture and strings of electric lights. The

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fair's idealized vision of urban beauty aroused people's interest in civic design by demonstrating the improvements integrated planning could bring to cities and towns. While the fair's classical detailing popularized the Neoclassical and Beaux Arts styles in architecture, its site plan, successful regardless of its architectural garb, suggested the unifying capacity of well-structured geometric spaces. This emphasis on the integrative capability of clear geometric spaces became the central design principle for a new urban planning approach, the City Beautiful Movement, which the fair's success spawned.

The Columbian Exposition site plan was the most widely-known work of landscape architecture since Central Park. Many saw it as a turning point in American arts, an event that finally put America on the world's cultural map. Henry Adams called the fair "the first expression of American thought as a unity."<sup>69</sup> At the very least the fair was a remarkable feat of organization and design, widely enough revered to produce imitators nationwide during the decade following its closing. These imitations generally mimicked the 1893 fair's site plan with water features as an organizing component, architectonic central open spaces and neoclassical buildings painted white. The first imitator was the California Midwinter International Exposition of 1897 and the last, the Panama-California Exposition held in San Diego, 1915-1916.<sup>70</sup> Although none of these fairs was as well-conceived as the Chicago World's Fair, their geographical range and popularity with the public played an important role in establishing the new national ideal of urban beauty central to the City Beautiful Movement.

The term, "City Beautiful," was coined by Rochester, New York journalist and principal theorist of the movement, Charles Mulford Robinson (1864-1917). Inspired by the splendor of the Chicago fair, Robinson's writings focused attention on the planning and improvement of cities, with particular emphasis on "civic aesthetics" or the appearance of cities. His articles in the *Atlantic Monthly* and *Harper's Magazine* and his books, including *The Improvement of Towns and Cities, or the Practical Basis of Civic Aesthetics* (1901) and *Modern Civic Art, or the City Made Beautiful* (1903) appeared at a time when little attention had been paid to planning of cities as a whole. His descriptions of improvements made in the appearance of cities in America and Europe offered his readers, in communities nationwide, encouragement to undertake local beautification projects. With the American public awakened to the value of civic design both by the fair and often by travel to European cities, noted for monumental designed spaces, Robinson's writings were especially well-received and effective, at least in theory.

In reality, the City Beautiful Movement intended more than the simple beautification of cities. Building on the nineteenth-century tradition of social reform which used nature to improve society, City Beautiful designers saw classical planning, as evidenced in the fair's

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<sup>69</sup> Henry Adams, *The Education of Henry Adams* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1918), p. 343, quoted in Pregill and Volkman, p. 527.

<sup>70</sup> Pregill and Volkman, p. 528.

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spatial and structural relationships, as a means of improving the environment and thereby, society. The movement emphasized the ability of highly structured, formal and monumental spaces, along with classical architecture, to create an urban beauty capable of uplifting society. Landscape historians Pregill and Volkman have defined four City Beautiful design components which were applicable to projects large and small.<sup>71</sup> The first component, "Civic Art," promoted urban beauty through use of public art, including buildings, fountains, sculptures, mosaics, light fixtures and other features, all unified by classical-style detailing. In many cities, City Beautiful achievements were in fact limited to construction of one, or at most a few, Beaux Arts style civic buildings and/or the placement of a monumental sculpture in a central location. "Civic Design" emphasized monumental spaces as a functional expression of urban community and as a means of organizing human activity. Not since the Renaissance had there been such broad recognition that outdoor space was as valuable a planning component as the structures such space surrounded. "Civic Reform" also helped to define the City Beautiful Movement by promoting good urban design as a means of combating the spread of urban slums.

The final component identified by Pregill and Volkman was "Civic Improvement" which urged "clean-up, fix-up" campaigns to achieve urban beautification. Although less impressive in scale than full-blown Civic Art or Civic Design projects, fix-up campaigns were the only sort of projects viable in many cities and towns. Installation of sidewalks and outdoor lighting, street paving, planting of trees and painting of buildings were manageable projects reflecting the City Beautiful ideal albeit at a reduced scale. Women's clubs often spearheaded such projects providing, along the way, their communities' only planning leadership.<sup>72</sup> The National League of Improvement Associations was founded in 1900 and merged in 1904 with the American Park and Outdoor Art Association as the American Civic Association. Many of today's downtown revitalization efforts demonstrate the continued relevance of City Beautiful concepts.

Applied to a greater or lesser degree in various cities around the country, the components of City Beautiful design were used to create focal points that would visually unify the city, to establish an efficient civic center, to provide healthful living conditions and to establish hierarchical land use patterns, among other varied goals. The first, and perhaps best known application of City Beautiful principles on a large scale was the 1901 McMillan Plan for Washington, D.C. The work of Daniel Burnham, F.L. Olmsted, Jr., Charles McKim and Augustus Saint-Gaudens, the plan intended to revitalize the monumentality and order of L'Enfant's 1791 plan for the city which had been diminished over time by intrusions and omissions. Plans for other cities followed, and the movement crested with the 1909 plan for Chicago by Burnham who, along with Charles Robinson, was the era's preeminent planner.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 529.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 530.



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Despite its many positive attributes, the City Beautiful Movement had negative qualities which contributed to its relatively short period of dominance within the landscape design field. In its enthusiasm to create urban beauty, the movement sometimes ignored social needs and imposed preconceived monumental forms on cities at the expense of affordable housing and neighborhood life - an early form of urban renewal. In addition, the movement's Neoclassical style was perceived by many as elitist, extravagant and inappropriate for an egalitarian society. With positive and negative qualities alike, the City Beautiful Movement occupied a tenuous position between the naturalistic approach to design of the nineteenth century and modern city planning of the twentieth century. Along with the many Beaux Arts style buildings and sculptures extant in cities nationwide, the movement's lasting legacy may have been its recognition of the need to consider physical and social needs of the city as a whole and, like the fair that preceded it, its encouragement of a collaborative approach to large-scale planning.

Although the classical trappings and emphasis on design of the City Beautiful Movement were cast aside in the years after World War I, the movement's impetus toward overall planning was absorbed in the evolving "scientific" planning techniques of the new profession of city planning. The First National Conference on City Planning was held in 1909. In the same year, Wisconsin became the first state to authorize cities to establish planning commissions and prepare city plans, and the first college-level courses in urban planning were offered by James Sturgis Pray at Harvard's School of Landscape Architecture. Other schools also developed courses in urban design, and in 1929 Harvard founded the country's first School of City Planning. (A full discussion of the the field of city planning is beyond the scope of this project.)

*The Country Place Era*

During the 1890s, some of the same forces which produced the 1893 World's Fair, particularly the vastly increased wealth of an industrialized America and a national enthusiasm for European classicism, also had a tremendous effect on the design of residential properties. The fair itself, with its emphasis on axially and architectonic spaces, generated widespread enthusiasm for ancient classical and Renaissance design. American architects, including Richard Morris Hunt and McKim, Mead and White, reflected their Ecole des Beaux Arts training in building designs inspired by the Italian, French and English Renaissance. Establishment of the American Academy in Rome in 1894 (see above) furthered opportunities for Americans to study abroad. Architecture during the period advanced from the eclecticism of the post-Civil War period when details from many periods and styles were often combined in one building. In the new "single-track" or "historical eclecticism" of Hunt and others, detail on a given building was confined to one period, although adjacent buildings might be in very different styles.

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At the same time that architects, absorbing the lessons of Europe and the 1893 fair, were prepared to execute grand designs, a newly wealthy class of American industrialists, with unabashed hubris, demanded large, architect-designed mansions with suitably scaled grounds. As early as the 1870s, a variety of books on the Renaissance, including Walter Pater's *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873), were available to American readers. Like their architects, wealthy Americans traveled to Europe where England and Italy, with its recently excavated Roman sites and Renaissance *palazzi*, were major attractions. With typical cultural insecurity, the capitalist elite returned with visions of life in an English Tudor mansion or Italian villa. Landscape architect and historian Norman Newton (1898-1992) dubbed the resulting period in residential landscape architecture, the "Country Place Era," in reference to the large number of estates designed in the period 1890-1930. Like the structures at the World's Columbian Exhibition, estate buildings, newly architectonic in line and volume, required an immediate outdoor framework equally architectonic. As had occurred at the fair where the wooded island was off to the side, naturalistic design, in vogue for residences for decades, was now pushed to the perimeter of the property. In the immediate environs of the house, geometric spatial forms, projection of axes and sight lines and other classical techniques created the architectural base necessary to give the house stability on its site and a visual connection to its surroundings. In essence, landscape architecture, like architecture, imitated historic styles and became more structured to complement the newly fashionable academic domestic buildings.

Direct contact with European prototypes was not the only factor creating enthusiasm for life on a country estate at the turn-of-the-century. Everywhere but in the South, the booming American economy made thousands of families wealthy enough to afford estates with extensive gardens.<sup>73</sup> Newly rich oil barons and hog butchers often sought to reinvent personal history, to create "background," with magnificent properties, which, with their leaning toward Europe, seemed to imply creation of a fixed class system and resulting preservation of their still raw wealth. As in the past, lavish garden-making was an acceptable arena for displaying wealth, now on a scale seldom before seen in America.

For those who could not or did not travel to Europe, secondary experience of Renaissance design was available through two widely-read and influential books, prototypes for the many garden style books that followed. *Italian Gardens* (1894), artist, architect and landscape architect Charles Platt's (1861-1933) record of his European travels, was published at precisely the moment when historic eclecticism in architecture demanded highly structured landscape designs. Platt's was the first study to document the typical Italian villa and garden since the early nineteenth-century work of Percier and Fontaine and W.P. Tuckermann's 1884 work on the subject. In his text and accompanying paintings and sketches, Platt conveyed for his American audience the enviable sense of overall structure of the typical villa and grounds.

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<sup>73</sup> Griswold and Weller, p. 14.

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In effect, Platt presented the design principles of the 1893 fair, but at a residential scale - just the inspiration needed for American estate design then poised to move in a marked new direction. Through both his book and his own estate designs for rich and powerful clients, Platt became well-known nationwide and established the pattern for garden design during the Country Place Era. Another source of information was James Sturgis Pray (1871-1929), an early professor of landscape design at Harvard, who by 1900, taught his students the basic elements of Italian garden design.<sup>74</sup>

In 1904, Edith Wharton produced *Italian Villas and Their Gardens*, which contained insightful observations on the greatest gardens of Italy, was widely-read and furthered American interest in classical design. A variety of European books on Italian gardens were also available to American audiences in the early 1900s. In the decades following publication of Platt's and Wharton's seminal books, American writers too, produced many volumes focusing on estate and garden design. Examples include *American Estates and Gardens* (1904) and *Beautiful Gardens in America* (1915). In an era before women's suffrage, when the lives of "ladies" were somewhat limited, a disproportionate number of authors were women who turned to gardening as an acceptable and rewarding outlet. Continuing the tradition of Mariana Van Rensselaer's *Art Out-of-Doors*, they discussed garden design and expanded their topic to include gardening *per se*. *The Garden Month by Month* (1907), *The American Flower Garden* (1909) and *The Well-Considered Garden* (1915) are examples of the genre. After the turn of the century, nearly every one of these gardening books made reference to the design theories of Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932), the English landscape designer and writer whose influential books first appeared in 1899. Beyond the many books on the topic, enthusiasm for country living was further encouraged by the Country Life Movement<sup>75</sup> which glamorized rural life. For the majority of Americans, who then lived in cities, a return to the country on a large estate or, for those less wealthy, the suburbs, became a desirable goal. Often based on English prototypes, new publications founded at the turn of the twentieth century included *Country Life in America*, *The House Beautiful* and *House and Garden*, all of which promoted the ideal country life with gardening a frequent focus. The advent of the automobile was a further spur to estate life in picturesque areas now more easily accessible and thus available for the suburban movement's most grandiose manifestation.

Regardless of geographic location, country estates shared a number of design elements derived from classical landscape architecture. An axial arrangement of sight lines connecting one space with another produced formality and a sense of clear spatial structure. Space was considered a plastic material to be molded to the needs of the site. Architectonic character

<sup>74</sup> Troy State University, Department of History and Social Sciences, *The Italian Garden Transplanted: Renaissance Revival Landscape Design in America, 1850-1939* (Troy, AL: Troy State University, 1988), p.2.

<sup>75</sup> Pregill and Volkman, p. 565.

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and integration of inside and outside were achieved through the extension, along axes and sight lines, of interior rooms into exterior spaces equally geometric in form. Exterior spatial boundaries were clearly defined or implied by vertical elements including walls, pergolas, balustrades, steps, urns, hedges and specimen trees. Water, in the form of pools, basins, fountains, lily ponds, runnels and cascades, was also an essential design feature. Meticulous attention was paid to proportion, scale and detail. Plant material tended to be firm rather than loose, with evergreens favored for their compactness and ability to convey architectural character. Beyond the more immediate environs of the house, formal gardens often blended into a naturalistic lawn and which led in turn to wild perimeter areas. In many cases a variety of specialty gardens were included in the overall scheme; blue gardens, white gardens, morning and afternoon gardens, iris bowls and rhododendron dells were frequent features.

Within the context of estate grounds, the design of flower beds changed as the decades passed. During the early years of the Country Place Era, flower beds generally took the form of formal parterres planted in gaudily colored annuals. In the 1910s, flower garden design began to change as Gertrude Jekyll's enthusiasm for the cottage garden with its luxuriant, informal combinations of annual and perennial flowers influenced American gardeners. Interest in this "old-fashioned" style garden, filled with plants native to America or introduced early in the country's history, was a manifestation of the Colonial Revival spirit, a nationwide phenomenon which emerged, in part, in response to immigration and the perceived growing ethnicity of the country. An old-fashioned garden was intended to confirm one's firm anchorage in America's colonial past. In terms of landscape architecture, the Colonial Revival's most complete expression may have been the "restoration" of Williamsburg.

The accumulation of individual wealth created a growing demand for grand estates as the twentieth century unfolded, and increasingly the practice of landscape architecture consisted of country place design. Many practitioners devoted nearly all their professional energy to large residential projects, many of which were notably alike as a result of the sameness of clients' requirements.<sup>76</sup> With railroads providing rapid transportation, a landscape architect's services were available on-site in widely spaced locales. The Olmsted firm, under the direction of John C. Olmsted and Frederick L. Olmsted, Jr. as Olmsted Brothers beginning 1898, occupied a dominant position in estate design. During the decades 1910-1930, the firm completed more estate designs, coast to coast, than any other office.<sup>77</sup> In the 1890s, Olmsted, Sr. had introduced the era of formal estate design with his plans for the grounds at Biltmore (1888-1895), the George W. Vanderbilt mansion in Asheville, North Carolina. There Olmsted combined a pastoral outer landscape with an inner area of elaborate formal gardens which extended the architectonic lines of the mansion designed in the French chateau style by Richard Morris Hunt. Together with Olmsted's plan for the Court of Honor at the 1893 fair,

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid., p. 574.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 575.

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Biltmore awakened Americans to a more formal, architectural style in landscape design. Estate designs by Olmsted Brothers include Ormston (c.1915) on Long Island and Beacon Hill House (c.1913) in Newport, Rhode Island, among scores of others.

Charles Platt's designs for Faulkner Farm (1897) and Weld (c1905), both in Brookline, Massachusetts, and Villa Turicum (c1925), the McCormick estate in Lake Forest, Illinois, were among the period's most accomplished designs. Nearly as well known as Olmsted Brothers and Platt, Warren Manning (1860-1938), a founder of the ASLA, designed the recently restored Stan Hywet Hall in Akron, Ohio along with many other estates for clients including the Rockefeller, Sprague and Seiberling families. Other prominent designers during the period include Ferruccio Vitale (1875-1933), who, in large part, was responsible for establishment of the Fellowship in Landscape Architecture at the American Academy in Rome (see above) and Fletcher Steele (1885-1971), famous for his inventive design work begun in 1926 at Naumkeag, the Mabel Choate estate in Stockbridge, Massachusetts. In the Midwest, Jens Jensen (1860-1951) developed the Prairie style in landscape architecture, applying its principles of horizontal lines and use of native plant materials to estates along Lake Michigan and elsewhere.

In an era when becoming a professional of any sort was a daunting challenge, women landscape architects made a notably large contribution to country place design, a branch of landscape architecture open to them when public projects were largely out of reach. At first denied admission to the new schools of landscape architecture like Harvard and MIT and membership in the ASLA (with the exception of Beatrix Jones Farrand, who was a founding member), women often combined training at one of the design schools set up for their education with informal training from a male mentor well known in the field. Women began studying at the Lowthorpe School of Landscape Architecture and Horticulture for Women, Groton, Massachusetts, in 1901, at the Pennsylvania School of Horticulture in 1910 and at the Cambridge School of Architecture and Landscape Design for Women in 1915.<sup>78</sup> These schools took a collaborative approach to education, producing graduates skilled in both architecture and landscape architecture. Farrand studied with Charles Sprague Sargent at the Arnold Arboretum, Ellen Shipman (1869-1950) was encouraged by Charles Platt and Marian Cruger Coffin (1876-1957) studied independently before being admitted to MIT as a "special student."<sup>79</sup> In addition to a male tutor, most successful women practitioners had independent means and family social connections which provided them the entree for their first commissions. To remedy the need for money and position for future female practitioners, some women designers, most notably Ellen Shipman, made a point of hiring only women, a decision which played a role in the extraordinary success of women during the period. Important designs by women landscape architects include Farrand's Dumbarton Oaks,

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<sup>78</sup> Griswold and Weller, p. 19.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

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Washington, D.C., begun in 1926, Ellen Shipman's Rynwood (1927), Glen Head, New York and Marian Coffin's work at Winterthur in Delaware begun in the 1920s.

For all its grandiose display, the Country Place Era lasted a relatively short time, evidence in its brevity of the transience of American private fortunes. Dependent on a vast and stable pool of cheap, largely immigrant, labor, the estate era could not survive the stock market crash of 1929 and the revised tax policies of the New Deal. Castle Hill, the Crane estate in Ipswich, Massachusetts, visited by the family six weeks per year had required a garden staff of 100,<sup>80</sup> a situation seemingly at odds with American social ideals and typical of the lavish scale impossible to maintain during the Depression. With the major private landscape architecture offices subsisting mainly on big residential projects which received extensive publicity, the public naturally came to view the profession as serving the wealthy, only a very small part of the population. It has been estimated that 90 percent of all landscape projects between 1900-1930 were residential designs, many large enough to be considered estates.<sup>81</sup> (An exception was the World War I years when many designers worked for the federal government planning military housing projects.) A profession born in the service of the public at Central Park seemed, by the early decades of the twentieth century, devoted to the needs of the wealthy few. However, with the epochal changes in the country's economy in the 1930s, the profession was forced to change, and the number and size of large offices devoted to residential work quickly diminished. With design opportunities created under the New Deal, the profession would once again turn its attention wholeheartedly to public projects of value to society as a whole.

*Property Type Development During the City Beautiful Movement*

With the profession largely consumed by palatial residential design during the early twentieth century, less attention was focused on other property types than in previous periods. Nonetheless significant projects of all types were completed by a variety of practitioners. In terms of park design, creation of new pleasure ground style parks became increasingly rare. While the second half of the nineteenth century had seen pleasure grounds replicated in cities nationwide, at the turn of the century, cities without a park system often found large tracts of land no longer available or too costly to acquire. To a degree, the eventual advent of the automobile and access to the country itself also reduced the perceived need for "country parks." Where feasible and desirable however, new park systems were created. Of particular note was George E. Kessler's (1862-1923) park and boulevard plan (1893) for Kansas City, Missouri. Naturalistic in its selection of park sites, the plan was classical in its use of a system of linear boulevards detailed with classical pergolas, geometric flower beds and

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>81</sup> Pregill and Volkman, p. 569.

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straight rows of trees. Executed before the design effects of the 1893 fair were felt, Kessler's plan demonstrated that the impetus toward formal spatial organization existed before the opening of the exposition. His plan, the first to apply such formal treatment to a citywide park system,<sup>82</sup> was as widely published as Central Park had been,<sup>83</sup> and together with the World's Columbian Exposition, it promoted classical design to a national audience. Generally, as cities became more populous and heterogeneous, Kessler, John Charles Olmsted and other designers attempted to bring order to the tumultuous cities through designs that were more architectural, formal and recreational rather than pastoral.<sup>84</sup> Formal spaces certainly had been part of pleasure ground design, most notably Bethesda Terrace at Central Park, but increasingly such structured, geometric spaces became dominant design features. John C. Olmsted planned comprehensive park systems for many communities, including Dayton, Seattle and Spokane, and expanded upon his stepfather's park designs in Boston, Hartford and Atlanta, among other cities.

Where new parks were not a necessity or possibility, the City Beautiful Movement sometimes recast older urban parks in its own image of social betterment through celebration of urban, rather than rural, beauty. Evocation of "country" was swept away by addition of structures celebrating neoclassical design on a large urban scale. At Brooklyn's Prospect Park, McKim, Mead and White added a classical peristyle and reshaped the picturesque Children's Playground and Water into a formal Rose Garden and the Vale of Cashmere, complete with classical balustrades. Equally obvious evidence of the transformation of park design and purpose was the addition of extensive recreation space and equipment during the Reform Park Era, 1900-1930.

Along with civic beautification projects, social reform was an integral part of most City Beautiful campaigns. Progressive Era reformers, concerned about the perceived failures of the American city, established playgrounds and other small parks as a means of improving the health and character of the urban poor. With urban land values rising as cities grew in the late nineteenth century, workers, many of them non-English-speaking immigrants, found themselves crowded into tenements without access to fresh air and recreation. At playgrounds, organized activities were intended to socialize the working class to American values of hard work and self-reliance. In place of pastoral scenery and unstructured recreation, supervised sports, games, exercise and other activities were the new means of curing social problems. Concurrent with rising concern for the well-being of urban workers, a national trend toward more active sports, like baseball, football and gymnastics, encouraged development of reform parks and the facilities they provided.

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<sup>82</sup> Pregill and Volkman, p. 529.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 447.

<sup>84</sup> Tishler, p. 48.

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The first reform parks were actually playgrounds, often connected with schools where after-school and summer programs offered ongoing socialization. Progressive churches and social agencies like Jane Addams's Hull House also added playgrounds to their facilities. The playground concept was very popular and spread quickly, soon forcing city governments to install play equipment in existing parks and to add playgrounds to their overall park systems, with location often based on availability of cheap transportation. The Boston Park Commissioners led the way with the establishment of Charlesbank, an "open-air gymnasium," (1889) where inclusion of play apparatus, pools and a track had considerable influence on subsequent reform park design. Before 1900, a dozen cities, thanks often to private funding, had playgrounds of various sorts.<sup>85</sup> In 1906, the movement toward active recreation was institutionalized with the establishment of the Playground Association of America.

In pleasure ground design, what active recreation spaces there were generally had been placed near the park periphery to ease access and preserve the naturalism of the park core.<sup>86</sup> With the shift in park function, more extensive athletic facilities often were placed in older parks and new parks were designed with an emphasis on participatory sports. Olmsted Brothers set a reform park design precedent with their 1904 plan for Chicago's South Parks' playgrounds which were planned more carefully than earlier playgrounds with distinct areas organized by activity and sex.<sup>87</sup> In general, reform parks that followed were symmetrical and formal in plan, with a central pavilion or field house set among trees, a large flat turfed or graveled area for ball games, an exercise area, playlots for small children, an encircling path and a perimeter of trees.<sup>88</sup> Their orderly plans placed them squarely in the Beaux Arts design tradition. Over time a variety of facilities, including dance pavilions, amphitheatres and specialty gardens, often were added. When not occupied with country place design, many landscape architects produced designs for reform parks. Olmsted Brothers was particularly active in playground design, and Arthur Shurcliff's plan for Burr Playground in Newton, Massachusetts was well-known in the field. By the mid-1910s, landscape architects had established relatively standard designs for a variety of playground types differentiated largely by size and age of intended users and characterized more by utility than artistry. As the Reform Era progressed into the 1920s, many city parks departments accepted the concept that their systems should consist of two kinds of parks: the small, neighborhood reform park for frequent use and the more distant, large country park for holidays.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>85</sup> Newton, p. 623.

<sup>86</sup> Galen Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982), p. 40.

<sup>87</sup> Newton, p. 625.

<sup>88</sup> Pregill and Volkman, p. 515.

<sup>89</sup> Cranz, p. 82.



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In the final analysis, the City Beautiful Movement's most common manifestation may have been the erection of Beaux Arts style monuments, arches and statuary in existing or newly created plazas and other imposing public spaces, sometimes surrounded by new and grandiose civic buildings. At its most ambitious, the movement intended to produce comprehensive plans for beautifying entire cities rather than these discrete ensembles of structures. In reality the gridiron plan and high property values in many cities made radical alterations of existing street arrangements to accommodate City Beautiful Movement concepts a financial and logistical impossibility. In New York, for example, despite Progressive Era intentions to reshape the city, circumstances limited improvements to monuments like the Dewey Triumphal Arch and Colonnade (1899) erected in Madison Square and numerous Beaux Arts style buildings, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1895-1926), which lent imposing scale if not overall design integration to the city.

Design of institutional campuses, particularly colleges and universities, provided variety for practices otherwise devoted to residential work. Universities, where image was important, lent themselves naturally to the formality of classical planning, sometimes becoming models of Beaux Arts design where cities, because of space and financial limitations, could not. In some cases, like the campus planned for Columbia University in the 1890s, the architect-in-charge, in this case Charles F. McKim, was responsible for site plans as well as building plans. At Columbia, with clear reference to his Ecole des Beaux Arts training, McKim created a terraced, architectonic quadrangle where bilateral symmetry and projection of sight lines connected the pantheonic Low Library with surrounding buildings. Landscape architects Olmsted Brothers, and later Charles Platt, planned developments at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana where an axial spine, cross axes, architectonic terraces and buildings of similar style created order and visual harmony. Of the many university landscaping plans produced in the early twentieth century, those of Beatrix Farrand are among the most outstanding. In 1916, she began a thirty-year connection with Princeton University where her designs were notable for their attention to detail and their imaginative choice of materials, including vines, groundcovers, shrubs and espaliered and natural trees. Farrand's other campus designs include Yale (1922-1945), Vassar (1926-27) and the University of Chicago (1929-1936). In general, designs of other campus types including hospitals and social service complexes tended to continue in a more naturalistic vein.<sup>90</sup>

As in the Romantic Period, design of housing enclaves during the City Beautiful and Progressive Eras continued to take the form of both suburbs, largely self-sufficient communities, and residential subdivisions, smaller housing developments, generally within a city, adjacent to a city or adjacent to a suburb where a full range of services was available. In both cases, planned residential areas were a response to growing populations and the continuing perception that life in a rural or country-like setting was preferable to life in the

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<sup>90</sup> Pregill and Volkman, p. 599.

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city center. Ongoing advances in transportation allowed great freedom of choice in where to live. In general, access to suburbs was by railroad, various rapid transit lines developed over time and eventually the automobile, while access to subdivisions was by streetcar and later by auto.

Period suburbs were usually developed in one of three ways: as a commercial project developed on speculation, often for wealthy prospects; as a philanthropic project, often developed by a foundation for lower income families; as worker housing developed by industry for employees.<sup>91</sup> When well-designed, these late nineteenth and early twentieth-century suburbs exhibited carefully developed, site-specific plans, a mixture of land uses, including residential, institutional and commercial, and infrastructure improvements incorporating ongoing advances in health and safety standards. Developer suburbs include Roland Park created outside Baltimore in 1891 according to designs by George Kessler and later plans by the Olmsted firm. Inspired by Roland Park, the Country Club District in Kansas City, Missouri was begun in 1908. The District's innovative plans by George Kessler and Hare and Hare (Sidney J. Hare and his son, S. Herbert Hare, principals) included carefully planned open space and self-perpetuating deed restrictions. The Country Club District became a prototype for innumerable high-quality subdivisions around the country.

With social reform an important component of early city planning efforts during the City Beautiful Movement and Progressive Era, attention naturally focused on the need to provide suburban-type housing, perceived as desirable, for all socioeconomic groups. To meet this need, reform-minded philanthropic groups and public agencies developed a significant number of suburbs adapting the "Garden City" model originated in England in the late 1890s by Ebenezer Howard (1850-1928). The first of the type was Forest Hill Gardens, sponsored by the Russell Sage Foundation and begun in 1910 with plans by Olmsted Brothers. Philanthropic housing schemes proliferated nationwide during the next two decades, with Radburn, New Jersey (1928-1929) particularly successful in planning for the automobile. Industrial suburbs, generally not as highly designed as developer or philanthropic suburbs,<sup>92</sup> nonetheless offered improved housing to workers previously crowded into inadequate spaces. Examples include Vandergrift, Pennsylvania (1895), Kohler, Wisconsin (1913) and Goodyear Heights, Akron, Ohio.

At their best, residential subdivisions, like suburbs, offered an alternative to city parks as creators of the benefits of rural life for an essentially urban population. Curving, tree-lined streets provided the desired tranquility, while increasingly high standards for infrastructure improvements provided facilities serving public safety, health and welfare needs. In many cases subdivision designs were promoted as a sales gimmick that distinguished one development from another. Unlike suburbs, subdivisions did not offer a full range of services.

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 546.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., p. 555.

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Instead they were generally laid out in open areas newly serviced by streetcar lines, many times filling the area between transportation routes as the need for housing increased with population growth. In reality, many subdivisions featured a gridiron plan with small house sites offering few of the highly-articulated design features of the best suburbs.

The design ideals of the City Beautiful Movement and Country Place Era were adopted in varying degrees in communities throughout upstate New York. Buffalo apparently led the way with its Pan-American Exposition (1901), one of many planned nationwide in the wake of the 1893 World's Columbia Exposition. The Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society occupies what was the fair's only permanent structure, the New York State pavilion, a textbook example of neoclassicism. Elsewhere in Buffalo, the McKinley Monument (1907) in Niagara Square typifies the period's commemorative impulse and the grandiose scale of Beaux Arts era public spaces. Utica followed suit with the placement of the Swan Memorial Fountain (1910) on the parkway within the park system planned by Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. in 1908. Other monuments followed in the 1910s, and together with the city's public library (1904) and Savings Bank of Utica (1898), they exhibit local enthusiasm for classical design on a grand scale. Buffalo and Utica are only two of the endless number of upstate cities and towns that celebrated their civic progress with improvements to public open spaces in the form of monuments, buildings and structures in classical styles.

While New York State's country places were most often built in the Hudson River Valley or on Long Island, a few remarkable gardens, "just as fashionable and elaborate as gardens closer to New York,"<sup>93</sup> were created by leading citizens in upstate communities. Among the earliest was Sonnenberg Gardens, Canandaigua, designed by Ernest Bowditch's (1850-1915) firm with plans implemented, starting in 1902, by landscape architect-in-residence, John Handrahan. The estate, planned as a total complex, employed site lines, classic overviews, a pergola and other elements of neoclassical design to create both formal and informal gardens. Derby, the Kellogg garden west of Buffalo on Lake Erie, was the work of Mrs. Spencer Kellogg and was praised by Ellen Shipman as "the finest formal English garden I've seen in America."<sup>94</sup> In Rochester, George Eastman's estate was laid out, beginning in 1902, by local landscape architect, Alling de Forest (1875-1957). An urban mini-farm, the estate included formal gardens, greenhouses and vegetable gardens.

In addition to country places, upstate campuses were within the scope of landscape design work in the early twentieth century. Working at Hamilton College in the 1920s, Beatrix Farrand emphasized a central quadrangle, an overview of the valley below and the use of native plants in the planting schemes for many campus buildings.

As in earlier time periods, the example of designed landscapes in neighboring communities, combined now with the ready availability of landscape architectural services and

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<sup>93</sup> Griswold and Weller, p. 72.

<sup>94</sup> Shipman quoted in Griswold and Weller, p. 89.

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the increasingly free flow of landscaping information through literature and travel, certainly contributed to Syracusans' continued enthusiasm for horticultural pursuits at the turn of the twentieth century.

*Syracuse During the City Beautiful Movement and Country Place Era*

Syracuse's long period of prosperity, which stretched back to the arrival of the Erie Canal, continued, more or less unabated, through the Progressive Era, ending finally in 1929. With the pattern of the city's industrial, commercial and residential areas well defined by the later decades of the nineteenth century, physical change in the early twentieth century consisted largely of increasing density in each sector of the community, with additional expansion at the city's boundaries. Sustained growth increased Syracuse's need to manage development in core areas, expansion in outlying areas and expansion of parks, public squares and other urban landscapes. In terms of land use issues, the early twentieth century in Syracuse was distinguished from the late nineteenth largely by the formal introduction of urban planning, an ideal of the City Beautiful Movement (see above).

Because the decline of the salt industry, Syracuse's first major business, was gradual over a sixty year period ending in 1926, other industries were afforded time to develop to a level sufficient to maintain and expand the local economy. Industries of particular importance to the city's ongoing prosperity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were Crucible Steel, founded in 1876, Solvay Process, founded in 1881, and the H.H. Franklin Motor Car Company, which grew from its founding in 1901 to employ 3200 workers during its peak production years which ended in 1929. In response to industry's need for workers, the city's population, which had doubled several times in the nineteenth century, doubled again in the period 1900-1930, bringing the total to +200,000. An increasing population demanded additions to the local housing stock. In many cases downtown residential areas were demolished in favor of commercial development. In the 1910s and 1920s, Fayette Park, once the site of elegant mansions, was transformed into a business and service area. A notable measure of the city's advance, the University Club was built in 1917, on the site of the William Teall House at the northeast corner of the park.

While the city center lost housing, outlying areas, away from the congested central city, were rapidly infilled with a variety of single-family and multiple-family dwellings, most often on a grid laid out between transportation routes. Until the advent of the automobile, location of the city's transportation corridors determined new areas of residential growth. With electrification of the trolley system begun in 1888 and completed in 1900, average trolley speed tripled, and more distant sectors of the city became practical as residential sites. In 1896, all streetcar lines were consolidated under the Rapid Transit Company whose terminal was on the north side of Clinton Square. The company policy of laying track through undeveloped land and paying for street paving was a further encouragement to settlement of outlying areas. As more and more tracts became accessible, and the city

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expanded to incorporate already established population centers, annexation of bordering areas became feasible. In addition to an influx of immigrant workers during the late nineteenth century, annexations were responsible for much of Syracuse's population growth during the City Beautiful and Progressive Eras. Geddes, Danforth, Brighton, Elmwood, Eastwood, Onondaga Valley and many smaller districts were annexed during the period, 1886-1928.<sup>95</sup>

Along with the Rapid Transit Company, the Syracuse Improvement Society, founded in 1881 at the close of the Romantic Period, made ongoing, privately-funded improvements to the city's infrastructure. Street paving projects carried out in the 1890s, in keeping with the City Beautiful ideal of civic improvement, produced high-quality asphalt paving radiating in all directions from the city center. Street tree planting continued through the Progressive Period, with the most successful efforts apparently privately-funded as they had been in the past. A 1929 newspaper account noted although the city boasted 53,000 trees, current planting efforts were woefully inadequate, with private citizens having spent ten times what the city had on street trees.<sup>96</sup>

In addition to the ongoing upgrading of civic amenities, another factor which must have affected the landscape development of the city was the establishment in 1911-1912, of the New York State College of Forestry (now the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry) with courses in "Landscape Architecture and City Planning." The first bachelor's degree in "Landscape Engineering" was awarded in 1913. In 1915, a 1908 graduate of Harvard's newly created school of landscape architecture was appointed head of the Department of Landscape Engineering, thus bringing to the Syracuse-based program, the direct influence of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., who had established the Harvard curriculum. Its early founding date placed the College of Forestry program among the country's leaders in promoting formal development of the profession of landscape architecture. (Analysis of the direct impact of the program on creation of Syracuse's designed landscapes is beyond the scope of this nomination.)

In addition to its commitment to various civic improvement projects, Syracuse demonstrated its participation in the City Beautiful Movement through city planning efforts undertaken early in the twentieth century. The city's first City Planning Commission was established by the Common Council in 1914, one year after state legislation enabled all cities and incorporated villages in the state to create and maintain a city planning commission. The nation's first planning commission had been established seven years earlier in Hartford, Connecticut.<sup>97</sup> Informal planning had occurred in Syracuse for several years particularly in regard to park development, elimination of railroad grade crossings, various downtown improvements and subdivision review carried out by the City Engineer. Creation of the

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<sup>95</sup> Syracuse Conservation Advisory Council, "Stages of Annexation" Map, p. 45.

<sup>96</sup> Unidentified newspaper article, dated 26 November 1929, in Syracuse Parks Department files.

<sup>97</sup> Pregill and Volkman, p. 560.

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Planning Commission exemplified the city government's increased bureaucratization in the face of burgeoning demands for services. The city's first planning document, *City Planning for Syracuse* published in 1919, discussed work begun and in progress during the commission's first five years. Of particular concern were the growing street system, parks and playgrounds, and grade crossing elimination. In 1922, a zoning ordinance was passed, providing further evidence of the city's understanding of the need to control use of private land in order to implement any sort of overall plan. During the 1920s, with the city still growing, the Planning Commission was occupied with subdivision review, zoning administration and parks planning and design, among other activities. During the Depression, comprehensive city planning came to a standstill, and the Commission was dissolved temporarily in 1932. Until that point however, Syracuse continued its earlier pattern of citywide designed landscape development reflecting national trends adapted to local circumstances, now with the added overlay of City Beautiful-inspired urban planning, albeit in a primitive form.

Early twentieth-century design activity in the city's public spaces consisted in part of improvements to existing public squares and traffic islands (see Property Type: Public Spaces). In Syracuse, as in many other cities, for at least two decades following the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, the City Beautiful Movement manifested itself largely in attention to civic art in the form of new Beaux Arts style buildings and the addition of sculpture and monuments to public open spaces. Popularized by the monumental sculptures at the fair, larger-than-life statuary was perceived as an appropriate expression of prosperity and a connection to past eras of comparable material glory. Among the statues added to public squares were the Redfield and Forman Memorial placed in Forman Park in 1908, the Goethe and Schiller statue erected in Schiller Park in 1911, and the General Gustavus Sniper equestrian statue placed in Schlosser Park in 1905. Of the monuments erected in the city's open spaces, the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument placed in Clinton Square in 1911 is the most expressive, in its scale and style, of the Beaux Arts ideal. In several small open spaces, notably the flower beds at city hall and the railroad station, city gardeners continued the late Victorian practice of elaborate carpet bedding.

In terms of cemetery design during the City Beautiful period, the national trend toward more simplified grounds was exhibited at Morningside Cemetery established in 1899 adjacent to the older rural cemetery, Oakwood (see Property Type: Burial Grounds and Cemeteries). In keeping with the lawn-park ideal, the circulation system was less dense and the vegetation less abundant than in earlier cemeteries. Individual graves were marked with flush tablets and generally only one monument was permitted per lot.

In the nineteenth century, many cities, beginning with New York and its plans for Central Park, demonstrated an impetus toward urban planning through the setting aside of open space for park purposes. Demonstrating this impulse locally, Syracuse had established its major pleasure ground style parks based on the availability of land or the public's traditional patterns of recreation, rather than an overall plan for an integrated park system (see

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Property Type: Parks). Responding, in part at least, to the 1893 fair's promotion of the urban planning concept, turn-of-the-century Syracusans determined that more comprehensive planning for parks was needed. Consequently in 1905, the city turned to City Beautiful advocate, Charles Mulford Robinson, for his advice on civic improvements. Robinson's ideas included linking existing and new parks via broad avenues and upgrading of the city's unique array of small squares and triangles. To implement his extensive plans, Robinson suggested establishment of a Park Commission and hiring of an expert to design the improvements.

In keeping with the spirit of the City Beautiful Movement, Syracuse created a Park Commission in 1906, a full eight years before establishment of the first Planning Commission. Housed at first in the Department of Public Works, the Parks Department emerged as a separate entity in 1917. Soon after its 1906 establishment, the Park Commission hired landscape architect, George Kessler, famed for his work in Kansas City and elsewhere, to develop a linked park system for Syracuse (see Property Type: Parks). Although Kessler's plan was not implemented, the city based its 1916-1917 design for a parkway along Onondaga Creek on Kessler's concept. Syracuse pursued another of the City Beautiful ideals, civic reform, with its creation of playgrounds as a means of improving urban life. With direction provided by Syracuse's women's clubs, the city laid out its first reform park, Frazer playground, in 1910. Soon after, a playground was built in Schiller Park, just behind the Garfield School (no longer extant), a location in keeping with the national trend of placing playgrounds adjacent to schools. By 1929, the city had 16 playgrounds.

In addition to playgrounds, larger parks were also incorporated into the city's Progressive Era planning. In response to a doubling of population (due in part to annexations) and increased demand for recreational facilities, the city created new parks and added amenities to existing parks in both central and outlying areas. More adjusted to the city than their ancestors had been, twentieth-century Americans enjoyed urban life and sought excitement and activity, not escape, in their parks. Pleasure ground parks in many cities were improved with space for active sports and with other attractions. A zoo, a newly-important urban amenity, was added to Syracuse's Burnet Park in 1916. The former private pleasure ground, Thornden, became a city park in 1921. Already visited by the public for decades, as a public park Thornden provided permanently accessible open space for the rapidly growing area east of Syracuse University. Its acquisition as park land paved the way for Reform Era improvements including ballfields, a swimming pool, an amphitheatre, and several specialty gardens. Perhaps most significant from a design perspective was a rose garden opened in 1924. Typical of the specialty gardens included in reform parks, the rose garden was intended to both entertain and educate the public. Its formal, geometric layout is typical of Beaux Arts design and comparable to the classically-derived gardens planned for many of the period's large country estates. Elmwood Park established in 1927, on the site of private recreation grounds on the city's southwest side, exemplifies the need then existing to provide open space as the population grew at the city's outskirts.

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Another local development related to parks in providing recreation was White City. An amusement park, White City was perhaps the area's most literal imitation of the World's Columbian Exposition. White City was built in 1906 on Onondaga Lake in Solvay, beyond the city border to the west. Although it stood outside the geographic boundaries of this study, its existence was particularly noteworthy due to its formal site plan with a central pool, various terraces, stairs, balustrades, a massive entry gate and light fixtures, all classically detailed, painted white and brilliantly lighted at night in imitation of the 1893 fair. White City lasted only until 1915 when automobiles increased travel opportunities, and the amusement park was demolished.

Related in concept to Thornden Park's rose garden, the Pass Arboretum was established in 1925 as an educational facility for the city. Because they were devoted to specimen plantings then considered unnatural, arboreta had not been popular during the pleasure ground era. With the growing emphasis on specimen trees, shrubs and flowers in late nineteenth-century landscapes, arboreta joined zoos as desirable urban amenities. Creation of an arboretum in Syracuse was a natural progression from the city's long history of interest in trees exhibited earlier in street tree planting and in plantings at Oakwood Cemetery, Thornden and other private properties. An unidentified newspaper account noted that in 1920, College of Forestry students planted 20,000 on the slopes of the Mount Olympus area of Syracuse University. The planting provides further evidence of strong local interest in arboriculture.

Syracuse's principal campuses developed significantly during the decades of the City Beautiful Movement and Progressive Era (see Property Type: Institutional Campuses). At Syracuse University eleven new buildings were added around the turn of the century, their placement decided on an ad hoc basis with reference largely to the north line of the Hall of Languages (1871-1873). Responding perhaps to period enthusiasm for Beaux Arts design principles, the University sought a more formal plan for its expansion in the years, 1907-1908. The Revels-Hallenbeck plan, never followed in entirety, was devised by two of the school's architecture professors. It projected an axial arrangement of buildings around a quadrangle, a hierarchy of smaller quadrangles and a central, domed auditorium as the campus focal point. A subsequent plan devised in 1927 continued the earlier trend toward formal arrangement of buildings with the placement of Hendricks Chapel (1930) as the focal point between the main quadrangle and lesser open spaces to the west. The first plan for the New York State College of Forestry (founded 1910) was axial and symmetrical. Of the originally planned buildings, Bray Hall (1917) was one of only two constructed. Placed at the head of a terraced lawn, it was eventually flanked by various buildings constructed in subsequent decades.

Expansion of the city's white collar population, improvement of the street car system, the advent of the automobile and the attractiveness of unregulated real estate as an investment were factors promoting the growth of new residential areas in the early twentieth century. University Heights developed c1902-1915 and the adjacent area, Berkeley Park, developed c1915, each offered housing on the highlands east of the city in the vicinity of Syracuse



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University (see Property Type: Residential Subdivisions). While University Heights followed a grid plan, Berkeley Park employed Romantic Era design principles including winding roads which took advantage of natural topography, a short median planted with trees and shrubs, and an extensive planting of 200 mature trees throughout the tract. In each development available infrastructure improvements were incorporated, most notably the placement of electric lines along rear property boundaries in Berkeley Park. Together the two developments, one with a grid plan, the other a naturalistic plan, document parallel approaches to residential subdivision design in the early twentieth century. Elsewhere in the city, new subdivisions offered even larger housing sites than those near the University. Sedgwick Farm was developed beginning c1902 with large single family lots, irregular streets, a planted entry median and amenities, including a tennis club, designed to promote community as advocated by Olmsted in his plans for residential areas. With the establishment of city parks in the area and extension of street car lines, the southwest quadrant of the city became a desirable address. Located on high land around Onondaga Park, Strathmore "By the Park" was developed beginning c1919 with winding roads and site plans designed to maximize views to the adjacent park. While Strathmore, Berkeley Park and Sedgwick Farm were noteworthy for their attention to overall design, many other areas of the city were laid out as extensions of existing grids, a practice typical of subdivision development nationwide in the early twentieth century. Although many of Syracuse's earliest residential sectors have succumbed to commercial development, housing areas from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries remain largely intact and document the city's expansion during that period.

Enjoying sustained prosperity at the turn of the twentieth century, some Syracusans adopted elements of Country Place Era design for their residential gardens (see Property Type: Residential Gardens). While immense, estate-scale properties were no longer available within the city limits, several properties of significant size were developed beyond the city borders. Upland Farm (1893) was the 400-acre Solvay estate of Frederick R. Hazard, head of the Solvay Process Company. The estate's 40-room mansion (demolished 1940) was designed by Joseph Lyman Silsbee, and the grounds were planned by Olmsted Brothers. The Olmsted firm was apparently responsible for various other area properties including the Arthur Chase estate in DeWitt, begun c1926. The most notable known Country Place style garden within the city limits was the Hiscock garden on James Street. Exhibiting the formal structure of Italian garden design, the Hiscock grounds (c1890s) also included informal mass plantings of perennials and naturalistic grasses - a translation, perhaps, on the local level of Olmsted's formal and naturalistic areas at the 1893 World's Fair. Other gardens were less high style, concentrating instead on the cottage garden form, considered more appropriate for the bungalows and Tudor style houses of the Arts and Crafts period. Ceramicist Adelaide Robineau's garden on Robineau Road (c1905) was a noteworthy example of the style. Many properties citywide, though they may not have had extensive gardens, did exhibit foundation plantings which grew in popularity from the late 1890s onward. Their relative simplicity was

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inspired by neoclassical design and quickly became preferred over the scattered specimen plantings of the late Victorian period.

As Syracuse matured during the Progressive Era, it was increasingly quick to adapt national landscape design trends to local circumstances. In the early and mid nineteenth century, a time lag of a decade or more characterized introduction of new design concepts; by the early twentieth century, Syracuse had rapidly embraced new ideals related to urban planning as evidenced in the efforts of its Park Commission and later the City Planning Commission to provide adequate open space for the growing city.

### The Depression Years 1930-1940

Unlike earlier eras in the history of American landscape architecture, the Depression years did not so much constitute a stylistic period as a period of intense government involvement in landscape design and resulting extensive development of the American public landscape. With national upheaval following the 1929 stock market crash and the 1932-1940 environmental catastrophe of the Dust Bowl, the country looked to the federal government for solutions to social and economic problems. Where minimal government presence had characterized the past, the Depression caused the majority of Americans to welcome the public works and employment programs that were part of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal, begun in 1933 with an explosion of federal activity. In addition to programs dealing with social, economic and industrial problems, Roosevelt addressed less familiar demands connected with recreation, housing, soil and forest conservation and water resources. Of the many new federal agencies begun or expanded during the New Deal, several were of particular importance for the field of landscape architecture.

Either through direct employment by the government or through private consultation, landscape architects provided direction and design services for projects of the National Park Service and the United States Forest Service (both of which existed before the Depression), the Soil Conservation Service, the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Public Works Administration and the Resettlement Administration among others. Varying in scale from the seven state Tennessee Valley Authority to New York City playgrounds, landscape projects included large-scale regional development plans, resource conservation plans, national and state park planning and design, housing programs and small site design, particularly for urban recreation.<sup>98</sup> While no individuals dominated Depression Era design, together, landscape architects abandoned their preoccupation with private estates and returned to the public sphere that had characterized the profession's beginnings at Central Park, albeit now on an

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<sup>98</sup> For a more complete discussion of these project areas, see Pregill and Volkman, Chapter 26.

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unprecedented scale. Landscape historian Phoebe Cutler noted the importance of landscape architects to the nation's development in the 1930s with the statement, "As befitted the collective spirit of the day, no one landscape architect stands out, but as a group the profession proved to be to the United States of the 1930s what Daniel Burnham was to Chicago and Frederick Law Olmsted was to Boston thirty and fifty years before."<sup>99</sup> Demand for landscape architectural services was so great that in the mid-1930s, an estimated 90 percent of all landscape architects were employed, one way or another, by the government - a complete reversal of the Country Place Era when fewer than 10 percent were in public practice.<sup>100</sup> With its energies redirected toward more publicly-oriented work, the profession of landscape architecture gradually shed its early twentieth-century image as serving only an elite minority on big residential projects.

New Deal era recreation, conservation and housing projects designed by landscape architects were most often executed by one of the two vast armies assembled by the government to combat unemployment. Throughout its nine-year existence, 1933-1942, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) completed activities related to preservation and management of natural and cultural resources, including construction of park roads, reforestation of barren areas, tilling of nurseries and rebuilding of historic structures. The Works Progress Administration (WPA), in existence 1935-1943, was considerably larger and broader in its effect. Employing some eight million people, the WPA completed projects as varied as the magnificent Timberline Lodge in Oregon, the canal system in San Antonio, innumerable park structures and endless hours of playground supervision. Viewed in their entirety, these projects represent the conversion of a national calamity into national assets in the form of parks, roads, bridges, dams, forests, and on a smaller scale, stone furniture, picnic shelters and playgrounds, to name only a few of the resources built in every nook and cranny of the country during the Depression.

Of the many types of projects undertaken in the 1930s, improvements made to large parks at all levels from national to municipal and creation of smaller, urban recreation parks are those most relevant to Syracuse's designed landscape history. The movement toward national parks began with the establishment of the world's first such park, Yellowstone (1872), and was formalized with creation of the National Park Service in 1916. Under its first director, Stephen Mather, the National Park Service relied heavily on landscape architects to guide its development. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., James S. Pray and Warren Manning were among the consultants who promoted establishing boundaries in relation to topography and development of comprehensive plans for managing natural and developed areas, among other park service goals. During the 1920s, Daniel Hull, a Park Service landscape architect, developed a distinctive, nonintrusive, rustic style for park buildings and structures. With its

<sup>99</sup> Phoebe Cutler, *The Public Landscape of the New Deal* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 5.

<sup>100</sup> Pregill and Volkman, p. 625.

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emphasis on native materials, "parkitecture," as it is sometimes called, became the model for park building projects at all levels during the New Deal.

An emphasis on overall planning and design of park improvements in a rustic style were among the characteristics of state park development during the 1920s and 1930s. While Yosemite had been set aside as a California state park in 1864, and several states, notably New York with its Niagara Falls and Adirondack Preserves (1885) and Michigan with Mackinac Island (1885), had set aside scenic areas from the 1880s onward, the spread of state parks throughout the country began with the 1921 meeting of the National Conference of State Parks. Convened at the suggestion of National Park Service director, Stephen Mather, the conference was intended to address the problem of overcrowding of the national parks through establishment of state facilities offering the intensive recreation wanted by a leisure-rich public, newly mobile thanks to the automobile. With expanded day-use recreation facilities in state parks, the scenic wonders of the national parks were to be spared potential damage from intensive use. Development of state parks, rapid in the 1920s, accelerated even faster under the New Deal, with Texas, Virginia and Arkansas among the states establishing park systems. Generally employing the National Park Service's rustic style, albeit in sometimes inventive ways, landscape architects planned improvements, implemented by CCC and WPA crews, in new and existing state parks, as well as county and municipal parks, nationwide.

Another area where landscape architects were employed during the New Deal was the design of small-scale recreation parks in urban areas. In the 1930s, parks no longer needed the philosophical justification of social reform for their existence (see Property Type: Parks). Growth of cities, increased leisure time, rising unemployment, elimination of streets as safe play areas and increased numbers of retired people were all factors in the perceived need for new recreation facilities. With the demand great, park administrators concentrated on expanding their systems rather than on the educational programming prevalent in reform parks. In many cases, expansions were funded by the federal government which placed recreation facility development near the top of its expenditures list.<sup>101</sup> Money literally poured into subsidized recreation park design and construction, often through WPA projects. With its huge population, New York City required the most recreational outlets, and under Parks Commissioner Robert Moses, the parks department assembled a massive force of designers, draftsmen and engineers and absorbed a major share of all WPA expenditures.<sup>102</sup> Generally measured more by number than finesse, recreation parks featured standardized designs where utility, evident in large, multi-purpose, hard-surfaced areas, linear circulation and minimal plantings, was more important than attention to aesthetics.

<sup>101</sup> Cutler, p.10.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

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In addition to large and small park design, landscape architects also addressed urban housing problems during the New Deal. With jobs lost and wages lowered, modest housing became a community need in many areas. Encouraged by the United States Housing Authority, many cities planned low-rent housing projects, sometimes using landscape architects to create site plans incorporating open space as an important, not a leftover, element in the overall design.

The Depression years provided the profession of landscape architecture the fullest employment it had ever known. In return, the profession left a legacy of outdoor spaces nationwide which, at their best, reflected their creators' grounding in Country Place Era classical design where strong architectural form shaped clear, unambiguous space upon the land. New Deal recreation and other projects were often successful in direct proportion to their ability to influence human behavior through thoughtfully designed, orderly plans where the public need for recreation and the need for conservation of natural areas were carefully balanced.

*Syracuse During the Depression Years*

Syracuse's century of progress dating from the arrival of the Erie Canal came to an end with the stock market crash in 1929. During the 1930s, the city's population decreased slightly, businesses suffered, the tax base declined and unemployment grew rapidly. Abandoning its earlier efforts at comprehensive planning, the city dissolved its Planning Commission in 1932 and turned its attention to relief programs for the thousands without jobs. Changes in the local transportation system altered familiar aspects of the city streetscape. The canal had been filled in the 1920s and its bed converted to Erie Boulevard. In 1936, trains ceased operating on downtown streets, and their tracks were elevated. By 1938, buses had replaced electric trolleys, and for the first time in one hundred years there were virtually no railed vehicles on city streets.

With unemployment rampant, local government responded quickly; Syracuse was "among the first cities to push work projects municipally in connection with State and Federal governments as a means of relieving unemployment."<sup>103</sup> As early as 1931, the city had been able to take advantage of the State Temporary Emergency Relief Administration (TERA) set up to disburse both state and federal funds to localities for relief work. Before the WPA began operating in 1935, local relief jobs had been provided by the Syracuse-Onondaga County Consolidated Work Bureau using both federal and city funds. Between 1932-1935, innumerable improvements were made to the city's landscapes. Projects included site improvements at Elmwood Park, grading and planting at the Pass Arboretum, the Sunnycrest golf course and many school playgrounds, construction of new playgrounds, construction of

<sup>103</sup> "Our Parks," *Syracuse Herald-Journal*, 10 July 1940.

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field houses, tennis courts and swimming pools in various parks and improvements to the zoo at Burnet Park among many, many other undertakings.

State headquarters for the WPA were established in Albany in July, 1935. Soon after, district offices were set up at strategic points to facilitate operations and permit direct communication with communities sponsoring projects; Syracuse lay within the Syracuse-Onondaga County District. In its first request for WPA funding, the city planned a total of 39 projects employing 2,895 people at a cost of \$1.9 million, largely federal funds. By early 1938, federal funds for local projects totaled nearly \$11,000,000 in addition to city/county contributions of \$1,750,000.<sup>104</sup> Recounting WPA successes, the district director, William Lynch, noted:

It is with a deep sense of gratification we are able today to look out on such splendid public improvements as [the sewer system] at Ley Creek; the newly developed municipal airport; the grounds of the New York State Fair, that, by the hand of the WPA laborer, have been transformed into one of the most beautiful exposition sites in the eastern part of the country; the fine modern pavements that were laid in W. Fayette St., Butternut St., ... the farm-to-market roads (150 miles of them) which took the farmer of Onondaga County out of the mud ...<sup>105</sup>

Lynch also commented on WPA involvement in "a citywide recreation program" where "more adequate facilities for playgrounds" and "recreation attendants" were provided with federal and city funding. During the 1930s, Syracuse's park system expanded from  $\pm$  400 acres to  $\pm$  1000 acres<sup>106</sup> under the direction of Commissioner William A. Barry, appointed in 1931 following the death of the first commissioner of parks, Frank M. Westcott. Following the Depression era's national trend toward recreation park development (see Property Type: Parks), the parks department concentrated on creation of small parks, many of them connected with schools. During the 1930s at least 10 school playgrounds were opened, with improvements and staffing often funded through TERA or WPA programs. Evening use of playgrounds by adults for horseshoes and other activities was one aspect of the period trend toward year-round use of park facilities as field houses became centers for community activities, and other programming extended beyond the summer season.

In addition to neighborhood playgrounds, the city strove to establish larger recreation facilities, sometimes through improvements to older parks, and other times in new locations demanding recreation services. For example in the mid-1930s, Sunnycrest Park was laid out with a golf course, tennis courts and other facilities to serve Eastwood, originally a suburb, but annexed by the city in 1927. By 1940, various local newspaper accounts boasted of a

<sup>104</sup> Unidentified local newspaper dated 4 March 1938, in Onondaga Historical Association's WPA files.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> "Our Parks," *Syracuse Herald Journal*, 10 July 1940.

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park system with "32 supervised play centers, 85 park and playground baseball diamonds, 58 tennis courts, 10 swimming pools, seven community houses" and various "groves, picnic areas, lily ponds, cascades, rustic walks, inviting lawns [and] noted gardens." Considered together, the amenities enumerated in the press document a park system that had evolved over several decades to include extensive facilities for both passive recreation, favored in the nineteenth century, and the more active recreation popular in the twentieth century.

Given the city's apparent leadership in establishing municipal work projects funded through federal and state programs, it is perhaps not surprising that the Syracuse Housing Authority, established in 1935, had by 1940 completed the nation's first United States Housing Authority housing project. Syracuse's Pioneer Homes (1938-1940) was designed according to Housing Authority guidelines, funded with federal loans, and, of 350 projects underway in the late 1930s, it was the first to be finished.<sup>107</sup> Considered together, the housing project and the many work relief projects devoted to landscape and other urban improvements demonstrate the city government's strong leadership role in bettering the lives of its citizens during the Depression.

### *Conclusion*

Taken as a whole, Syracuse's historic designed landscapes are significant in varying degrees as evidence of the city's physical growth and social and cultural development during the period, 1785-1940. Expansion of the city's actual physical area is documented in public open spaces centering first at Washington and Clinton Squares and extending over time to outlying parks, like Sunnycrest Park developed at the community's eastern edge. Social development is embodied in the city's establishment of specific property types designed to meet a stated community need. Cemeteries were perhaps the earliest examples of property types dedicated to a social need, while pleasure grounds, and later playgrounds, met the growing city's need for outdoor activity, perceived as a means of bettering society. Syracuse's cultural progress was measured to some degree by its adoption of national trends in landscape design. From the earliest days when a remote location precluded stylish designs, Syracuse became increasingly modish in its executed landscape designs as advances in transportation and communication aided dissemination of new theories of landscape aesthetics. Although a time lag of a decade or more often characterized the adoption of national trends, Syracusans demonstrated their awareness of and interest in high style through the employment of nationally significant designers, including Howard Daniels at Oakwood Cemetery and Charles Mulford Robinson for an analysis of city open spaces. The presence of Daniels, Robinson, George Kessler and the Olmsted firm certainly set an example of quality work for local designers, professional and amateur alike. While their designs were seldom innovative, area

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<sup>107</sup> Hardin, p. 131-132.

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practitioners did demonstrate understanding of national ideals which they adapted to local wants and conditions.

Of the city's extant historic designed landscapes, only Oakwood Cemetery is currently known to hold significance beyond the local level. Its naturalistic landscape, laid out by a master landscape gardener, demonstrates clearly the design ideals of the Romantic Era. Other extant properties, including Sedgwick Farm, Upper Onondaga Park and Clinton Square are significant locally as examples of national design trends adapted to the city's circumstances. Other properties have either been lost completely, as in the case of distinguished gardens, or altered drastically, as is the case with many public squares. In terms of number and area, Syracuse's most important property type is parks which embody the city's first efforts at overall urban planning and its considerable willingness to meet public needs for breathing space. In developing its parks, the city was able to take advantage of natural assets, including varied topography and extensive native vegetation, which increased possibilities for successful park design. While the location of some parks, like Kirk and Elmwood, was based on the public's traditional patterns of recreation, others, particularly playgrounds and recreation parks, were placed in newly-populated areas in response to public demand. Still others, like Burnet and Onondaga Parks, were placed at the city's edges where they encouraged growth in their immediate area. Although efforts to create a linked greenway corridor through all quadrants of the city proved to be politically and economically unfeasible, city officials attempted long-range planning and did succeed in providing extensive areas of self-contained green space serving, at one level or another, all sectors of the community. The most prolific period in park development was the Reform Era, 1900-1930, when several major parks, including Thornden and Elmwood, were first developed along with numerous playgrounds which greatly increased the sheer number of city parks. Much of the city's landscape design during the period bears the imprint of local individuals, including parks superintendent, David Campbell, and planning consultant, Clarence Howard, whose work demonstrates the dominant theme in Syracuse's designed landscape development - interpretation at the local level of design and planning theories first introduced elsewhere in the country. Syracuse's historic designed landscapes can be evaluated on the local, state and national level under National Register criteria A and C in the areas of landscape architecture, community planning and development, entertainment/recreation and social history among others.

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**SECTION F: ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES**

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Property Type: Burial Grounds and Cemeteries

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**PROPERTY TYPE: BURIAL GROUNDS AND CEMETERIES**

**I. DESCRIPTION**

**Definition:**

A distinct area designated for the burial of the dead.

**Subtypes and Landscape Features:**

***Burial Grounds (1600 - 1850):*** A communal burial site (usually less than 10 acres) established and utilized by a family, religious, or community group.

Environment: n/a

Setting: Often adjacent to homesteads or religious/community buildings, or associated with specific historical events.

Natural Systems and Features: Generally flat, natural topography.

Buildings and Structures: Usually not present, although may be bordered by an associated building (e.g., church). May include storage buildings and an on-site (e.g., gatekeepers) residence. Site engineering systems not critical.

Vegetation: Generally no formal plantings. Some preexisting trees may be incorporated. May include small formal gardens during later additions.

Spatial Organization: Typically a single spatial area, with smaller subspaces laid out in a grid pattern. Individual plots typically very close, sometimes irregularly placed or contiguous.

Circulation: May not be present. When pathways are present, corridors generally defined by burial patterns.

Water Features: n/a

Furnishings and Objects: Gravemarkers of wood, native field stone or other similar materials (e.g., sandstone, slate) that portray epitaphs and flat carvings. Simple monuments, individual mausoleums and/or cairns may be present.

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**Rural Cemetery (1830 - 1870):** A burial site (usually less than 200 acres) designed in a naturalistic style to evoke a romantic view of nature, art and death. Generally serves a large portion of the community.

**Environment:** Generally located on the periphery of densely populated areas with site selection determined by natural features. May overlook a settlement area.

**Setting:** Usually defined by a recognizable border area and land use pattern different from the cemetery itself. May be adjacent to natural water features.

**Natural Systems and Features:** Typically varied natural topography including wooded rolling hills, natural swales and ridges. Spring fed ponds, streams and/or lakes may be present.

**Buildings and Structures:** Generally visually prominent and grouped together near the entrance. May include an entrance gate, chapel, greenhouse, gatekeepers residence, and greenhouse, often incorporating an Egyptian Revival and/or Gothic style. Mechanical (e.g., drainage) and engineering (e.g., stabilization of monuments and burial markers) systems are important.

**Vegetation:** Usually profuse, in informal groupings intended to create naturalistic scenes. A variety of indigenous and exotic species varying in color and texture may be present. Materials may be interspersed along circulation system.

**Spatial Organization:** Typically space is laid out to provide a sequential experience. Usually asymmetrical, conforming to natural contours. Burial grounds are clustered although single plots may exist. Controlled internal views along with planned external views are critical elements.

**Circulation:** Abundant roadways and pathways are curvilinear, consistent with natural topography and integral to the overall spatial organization. Serpentine routes lead from the entrance and continue throughout to burial plots. May include oval or circular portions. Materials usually natural.

**Water Features:** Typically an important element when natural resources are present. May include man-made ponds, lakes and/or streams.

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Furnishings and Objects: Generally display a variety of types and styles including elaborate gravemarkers, funerary sculpture, mausolea and monuments of stone, marble, granite, bronze, etc. Often incorporates a Gothic or Egyptian Revival design motif. Ornate iron fencing or curbstones may be present around family lots. Benches, urns and other cast-iron objects may also be present.

Lawn-Park Cemetery (1855 - 1920): A burial site (usually less than 200 acres) laid out in a simple manner incorporating principles of order and unity to promote accessibility of nature and art. The first cemetery type managed by professionals. Generally serves the entire community.

Environment: Usually located within or immediately adjacent to densely populated areas. May be located along late nineteenth and early twentieth century transportation corridors. May be a newly-developed or redesigned cemetery.

Setting: Typically determined by different land use patterns that encircle the cemetery. May or may not have a fence border.

Natural Systems and Features: Generally smooth or gently sloping topography that includes scattered wooded areas and open space. Lakes, ponds streams and islands may also be present.

Buildings and Structures: Buildings most often located near the entrance and may include a chapel, greenhouse, storage and maintenance buildings. Classical Revival styles are often represented. Other structures may include an entrance gate and foot bridges.

Vegetation: Usually characterized by spacious, grassy areas. A variety of trees and shrubs usually present, less cluttered and more unified in terms of species and placement than in earlier periods. Flower beds near the entrance and at roadway intersections may be present. Trees may be incorporated as perimeter plantings.

Spatial Organization: Typically formal, simplistic and symmetrical, incorporating a sequence of several large spaces that provide visual openness, unity and harmony.

Circulation: Curvilinear system that may or may not conform to the natural topography. Roads and pathway systems are limited (as compared to previous period) to improve accessibility and ease of maintenance. Materials may be natural or man-made.

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Property Type: Burial Grounds and Cemeteries

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Water Features: Typically an important element usually represented as a lake or pond. Becomes integral to setting and spatial organization.

Furnishings and Objects: Monuments and mausolea often in classical styles, great in number but standardized in style, form and placement. Also includes benches and lighting.

## II. SIGNIFICANCE

Early American burial customs are reflective of religious, cultural and societal norms influenced by European traditions and practices. As English, French and Spanish colonies were established, many traditional rituals concerning the internment of the dead were continued in the New World. Though these influences initially affected physical and associative characteristics of colonial burial sites, burial grounds and cemeteries in America eventually became distinct from their European antecedents, differing in terms of "private ownership, family control, commercial activity, natural landscape and cremation".<sup>1</sup> Whether it was an isolated pioneer grave along a trail, family graveyard plot, churchyard, public burial ground or cemetery, these properties were sacred landscapes, communicating "the cultural values and practices of the past that help instruct us about who we are as a people."<sup>2</sup> The evolution of burial grounds and cemeteries in Syracuse generally paralleled that of other American cities. Individual pioneer grave sites of the eighteenth century gave way to established village and churchyard burial grounds in the nineteenth century. Later, physical growth and health concerns in cities, combined with the nation's embracement of art and nature during the mid- to late-nineteenth century, led to designed public cemeteries located outside the city core. As the country entered the twentieth century, cemeteries came to be professionally managed, with a profound impact on overall landscape design as well as individual elements such as monuments, gravemarkers, plant materials and other landscape features. Syracuse is blessed to have a variety of extant burial grounds and cemeteries, ranging from early nineteenth century individual grave sites to formal and elaborate twentieth century cemeteries. The richness and importance of these outdoor museums are manifested by their architectural diversity, association with significant historic persons, period landscape

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<sup>1</sup> David C. Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Univ. Press, 1991), p.3.

<sup>2</sup> E. W. Potter & B. M. Boland, *Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Cemeteries and Burial Places* (National Register Bulletin 41, 1992), p.1.

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features reflecting cultural attitudes toward death, and for the insight they provide on the evolution of community and ethnic heritage.

Pioneer burial grounds beginning in the sixteenth century were vernacular in design and very functional for internment of the dead. They usually were identified by a single wood or fieldstone grave marker, although the earliest plots may have had no markers at all and identified graves only by a burial mound of newly uncovered earth. Such pioneer burial grounds reflect the hardships of life in a new undeveloped country. The first known non-Native American burial grounds were thought to be isolated graves, located where death occurred or near pre-existing Native American burial grounds.<sup>3</sup> The difficulties of daily life and an inability to protect or maintain the sites may have resulted in this burial style. Out of necessity, people were often buried where they died. In Syracuse, for example, one local history tells of Ephraim Webster, one of central New York's earliest pioneers, who in 1787 had the "melancholy task" of burying Benjamin Nukerk at the spot of his ill-fated death resulting from "delirium tremens."<sup>4</sup>

As the young nation grew in population and settlements became established, the clustering of burials became more common. One type of domestic burial grounds, the family graveyard, was quite popular outside of major settlement centers throughout the colonies, particularly in areas outside the Puritan influence in the northeast. The distance of the family farm or plantation from the church necessitated the dead be buried near the homestead. These plots usually were well-kept, and offered families a place to honor their dead. Often family plots contained several generations of burials, bonding the family to the land and creating a tangible record of family history. Such family plots commonly took on a distinctly regional or local character. The Crawford-Dorsey House and Cemetery in Clayton County, Georgia, for example, "represents a historic Southern plantation: the earliest graves are covered by seashells."<sup>5</sup> In cases where land ownership changed hands, issues of care and reverence for the site became concerns. A famous case in point involved the tomb of George Washington. The Mount Vernon Ladies Association purchased his estate in 1858, due in part to their concerns for the safety of his burial site.<sup>6</sup>

The influence of Judeo-Christian traditions contributed to another form of burial, the churchyard grave. Prevalent in America from the seventeenth into the twentieth century, this practice was considered the preferred choice by early Spanish and English colonists.<sup>7</sup> A burial adjacent to or even inside the church provided protection and the spiritual and physical

<sup>3</sup> Sloane, p.14.

<sup>4</sup> Franklin Chase, *Syracuse and its Environs* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1924), p. 297.

<sup>5</sup> Potter, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Sloane, p. 16.

<sup>7</sup> Potter, p. 4.

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closeness necessary until Judgment Day. Salvation was thought to be made possible if a "decent earth or vault burial, in a safe and protected place" was performed.<sup>8</sup> Land was purchased and owned by religious or community groups and in some cases used for burials prior to the construction of the church. The Welsh Church (NR Listed), a rural church in central New York, was constructed over six decades after the establishment of the adjacent cemetery in 1809. The physical closeness of the grave sites also encouraged a sense of community among residents when a death occurred. For many metropolitan cities, however, this burial style soon led to overcrowded sites and questionable health conditions. St. Philips Episcopal Churchyard (Charleston, SC), with space for two thousand graves, was reported in 1859 to contain about ten thousand bodies.<sup>9</sup> Relocation of churchyards was also common as cities expanded and agricultural fields were developed for residential houses or commercial buildings. The New Lots Cemetery in Brooklyn was forced to move across the street next to the church "in order to make room for a school."<sup>10</sup> With space at a premium, American churchyards generally exhibited a roughly-geometric pattern reminiscent of the English churchyard. Still, these churchyards, rarely larger than a few acres, usually displayed a distinct informality, with "graves ... not carefully plotted, so lines of them often weaved across the grounds."<sup>11</sup> A few trees and shrubs, and an occasional pathway became the other common features of the churchyard. The care of the site was typically left to the sexton, who was also responsible for maintaining the church. Other examples of early churchyards include Trinity Church (New York City, c1700) and St. John Episcopal (Elizabeth, NJ).

Public burial grounds provided yet another site where settlements could inter their dead. The need for these arose from a variety of circumstances where churchyard burials were not possible or appropriate, including communities where religious doctrine was rejected,<sup>12</sup> specific acts such as suicides that prohibited churchyard burials,<sup>13</sup> individuals fatally afflicted by health epidemics such as yellow fever, or indigents not able to afford a grave. It is believed this style initially was introduced in seventeenth-century New England by the Puritans. Initially, common land was made available in the center of town adjacent to the Meeting House. Burial areas were typically not enclosed, at times serving other functions such as cattle grazing. Later, secular/public burials were provided beyond the village "common" to serve other community and urban settlement areas. Sites were confined to small parcels within the center core of a community, limited in size by land availability or

<sup>8</sup> Sloane, p.18.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid. p. 20.

<sup>10</sup> Kenneth T. Jackson, and Camilo Jose Vergara, *Silent Cities: The Evolution of the American Cemetery* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1989), p.11.

<sup>11</sup> Sloane, p. 20.

<sup>12</sup> Potter, p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> Sloane, p.27.

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street patterns. As Americans migrated west, common burial grounds became significant elements in the landscape:

. . . you can't drive ten miles or fifteen miles without seeing a cemetery. We have at least eight thousand cemeteries in Texas, . . . [but] only about two hundred and fifty of them have a telephone. . . [A]nybody who was anybody fifty of a hundred years ago and had an entourage of twelve to twenty-five people and owned one thousand acres of ground . . . established a cemetery. That is the reason we have so many cemeteries." - *Cemetery administrator, Forth Worth, Texas.*<sup>14</sup>

As commerce developed in the late eighteenth century and cities expanded both physically and economically, the public's perception of the community burial ground and churchyard changed. Prompted by fear of overcrowding due to epidemics, a need to protect burial sites, and an emerging desire to relocate burial sites away from the public green (see Property Type: Public Space), New Haven, Connecticut established a new concept in planned burial sites that would have a profound impact for years to come. In 1796, the New Haven Burying Ground (now called Grove Street Cemetery) was established by a volunteer organization led by Senator James Hillhouse to replace the original burial ground that had served the community for almost 160 years. The six-acre cemetery was designed by Josiah Meig, and followed a geometric pattern. The cemetery was segregated, providing sections for "religious groups, Yale College, the poor, "Negros", and "strangers" with the remainder . . . divided into family lots." A charter for the new corporation was obtained from the state, recognizing the cemetery as a sacred place. Family lots were sold and maintained by the new owners. Willow and lombardy poplar trees were introduced by the corporation to reinforce the grid pattern and emphasize "the regularity and stability of the institution."<sup>15</sup> Though not exclusively considered a public burial ground, the private ownership of New Haven introduced landscape features and concepts of family lots which reflected a change in traditional burial customs.

Early burial grounds in Syracuse are generally representative of types found elsewhere in the country in terms of design style and location. They reflect the influence of local ethnic cultures and religious groups, and illustrate the pattern of early settlement in the community. The first known burial site in the Village of Syracuse was located at the present day corner of South Clinton and West Fayette Streets. Burials here were performed until 1819 for individuals who died while working on construction of the Erie Canal.<sup>16</sup> Two other extant examples of isolated pioneer burial grounds are located on the city's south side, both related to

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<sup>14</sup> Jackson, p.12.

<sup>15</sup> Sloane, p. 32.

<sup>16</sup> Chase, p. 298



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the military defense needs of the country. In 1814, two army captains were buried in the Village of Onondaga Hill; the gravemarkers on this 12' x 16' burial plot indicate they died from smallpox. Another isolated burial ground is the Onondaga Arsenal site, built in Onondaga Hollow (Valley) in 1811 for "500 stand of arms at Onondaga, for possible use on the frontier."<sup>17</sup> The .068 acre site is owned by the city and is commonly known as *Arsenal Park*.

Early Central New York settlement patterns also played a significant role in the location of burial grounds. The earliest sites were isolated pioneer or family burial grounds, since "the community burying ground was not thought favorably of for many years after settlement began."<sup>18</sup> Eventually, however, each settlement had public burial grounds for their citizenry. From 1819 until 1824, the Village of Syracuse utilized burial grounds in the nearby villages of Salina, Onondaga Hollow and Onondaga Hill. By 1824 Syracuse established its own public burial site, located on the present day corner of South Franklin and Water Streets. It was laid out by John Wilkinson and Owen Forman,<sup>19</sup> and known as the "Old Cemetery" or "old burying grounds" (by a 1834 map of Syracuse). It was used by the village until approximately 1850. After ten years of inactivity, the Syracuse Common Council designated the site a park, calling it *Franklin Park*. A map of the site was made by the City Engineer in 1860, and identified a total of 404 graves.<sup>20</sup> The park and cemetery, however, were short-lived, as the city authorized the Syracuse Northern railroad "to make its connection with the New York Central and Hudson River railroad across the old cemetery lot".<sup>21</sup>

As the Village of Syracuse grew and began annexing nearby settlements, associated public burial sites were incorporated into the city. To the north, the impact of the salt industry along Onondaga Lake compelled the Village of Salina to establish a burial ground as early as 1794.<sup>22</sup> As the northside developed, burial grounds were moved a number of times (see Property Type: Public Spaces). By 1829, *First Ward Cemetery* (extant) became the permanent site. This somewhat gently sloping 3.7 acre site served as an active burial ground for over 85 years. In 1938, the city buried existing gravemarkers after a falling gravestone fatally injured a child.<sup>23</sup> East of Syracuse in the village of Lodi, the *Lodi Cemetery* was an active burial ground from 1834 until c1887. Oliver Teall, Erie Canal Superintendent and

<sup>17</sup> Spencer, *The 12 Who Came: The History of Onondaga Valley*. (Syracuse: Onondaga Valley Press, 1975), p. 36.

<sup>18</sup> Newspaper article entitled "Ancestral Graves", March, 1895.

<sup>19</sup> "Cemeteries Old and New Described," *Syracuse Journal*, March 20, 1939.

<sup>20</sup> *Three Old Syracuse Cemeteries, First Ward, Franklin Park and Rose Hill*, Syracuse Public Library, Local History & Genealogy Department, 1967.

<sup>21</sup> "Plot Listed as Park," *Syracuse Post-Standard*, Date Unknown.

<sup>22</sup> Chase, p. 297.

<sup>23</sup> Walmsley and Co., *Syracuse Historic Landscape Resource Survey*, (Syracuse, New York: Department of Community Development, 1989).

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"father" of the Syracuse Water Works, donated this one-acre site on Beech Street "if the village would clear and fence it."<sup>24</sup> To the west, the *Geddes Burying Grounds* (1822-1854) was located on the 1200 block of East Genesee Street (presently Dave Ball Chevrolet) and served the village of Geddes. The extant *Onondaga Valley Cemetery* (1806) on the city's south side initially provided burial needs for Onondaga Hollow (Valley) residents.

Towards the middle of the nineteenth century, however, additional cemetery space was needed as the community's population continued to grow. To address this, the city in 1841 purchased a site on the north side, along a hill facing Lodi Street. At 11.8 acres, *Rose Hill Cemetery* at the time was the largest public burial ground in the city, "serving a population of varied means, nationalities and religious tenets."<sup>25</sup> Beginning in 1837 until the last recorded burial in 1935, between 7,000 and 11,000 bodies are believed to have been interred at Rose Hill. Grave sites were laid out in the typical grid fashion, with segregated sections for ethnic groups. The cemetery included such prominent individuals as Harvey Baldwin (Syracuse's first mayor); Alfred Hovey (another city mayor, significant in the "Jerry" rescue of William Henry); Oliver Teall and veterans from several wars. A potters field, an area designated for the indigent population, was located on the north end and is estimated to hold two to three thousand bodies. A caretaker's cottage and chapel, designed by Syracuse architect Horatio Nelson White, was constructed c1865 along Willow Street.<sup>26</sup> In 1951, the city began "renovations" of Rose Hill, leveling many gravemarkers along its western half and burying them. Despite this action, Rose Hill has remained primarily intact and represents the largest of the city's early public burial grounds. In 1992, this significance was recognized when the cemetery was designated as a locally protected site by the Syracuse Common Council.<sup>27</sup>

The diversity of Syracuse's early ethnic and religious population also influenced early burial grounds. A colony of "market gardeners from Scotland" are buried near the 200 block of Jamesville Avenue. City records list the 60 burial plots as the *Rose-Lawrence and McClure -Scott Cemeteries*, in use from approximately 1844 until 1910.<sup>28</sup> Closer to downtown, the old *St. Mary's Cemetery* was located on a hillside near the corner of Burt and South Almond Streets where Syracuse University's School of Social Work now stands. The cemetery served the Catholic population of St. Mary's Church (Immaculate Conception Roman Catholic Church) from 1845 until c1910 (see Property Type: Public Spaces). Between 1911 and 1912, bodies were removed and reinterred in a newer and larger St. Mary's Cemetery in the Town of DeWitt.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Chase, p. 298.

<sup>25</sup> "Rose Hill: Syracuse's Historic Burial Ground," *Portraits of the Past*, Onondaga Historical Association, 1992.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> City of Syracuse, *Rose Hill Cemetery*, Protected Site Application, 1991.

<sup>28</sup> *Syracuse Herald-Journal*, 18 August 1989.

<sup>29</sup> Chase, p. 298.

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The deplorable overcrowded state and unhealthy conditions of many burial grounds in large cities continued into the nineteenth century. Despite attempts to relocate them or increase their size, the number of public burial grounds often was not sufficient to meet the needs of a young and growing nation. American attitudes toward death were changing as well. The word "cemetery," from the Greek meaning "sleeping chamber," became commonly used to describe burial grounds. Rather than perceiving death as an inevitability, as reflected in gravemarker carvings of earlier burial grounds, Americans began to perceive cemeteries as places to invoke a peaceful "transition from life to eternal life".<sup>30</sup>

At the same time, cemeteries in the mid-nineteenth century began to reflect the aesthetic ideals of the Romantic Movement, which had wide-ranging influence in all fields of design, literature, and the arts. In landscape design romanticism called for a "naturalistic" style, where man manipulated nature to enhance its inherent sublime beauty. Romantic philosophy, with its appreciation of the natural and fascination with the supernatural, was made perfectly manifest in the design of cemeteries. Located outside the city in serene rural settings, Romantic-Era cemeteries were designed not only for the dead but for the living as well, and became America's first large-scale landscapes designed for public use and enjoyment. These public "pleasure grounds" were the precursor to the pleasure-ground style parks which would follow in later decades (see Property Type: Parks).

Romantic ideals in the design of cemeteries were first expressed in Europe, and may have been represented best by the Pere Lachaise Cemetery in Paris, which opened in 1804. The cemetery overlooked the city and offered vistas along winding roads through wooded areas. It soon became a favorite location of Parisians for weekend visits, to enjoy viewing of nature as well as the monuments. The influence of this unique "public garden cemetery" soon reached America when horticulturist Henry Alexander Scammel Dearborn and Alexander Wadsworth combined to design Mount Auburn Cemetery in 1831.<sup>31</sup> Set ten miles outside the center of Boston, the 72-acre site was much larger than earlier public burial grounds, and offered a country-like atmosphere. Serpentine roadways through the wooded hills and deep ravines were constructed to "divert the visitor from the efficiency of the urban grid system." The monotony of daily living was replaced by the diversity and richness of uncontrolled nature alongside interesting architecture. Common to this and other American rural cemeteries was the family plot, a new component brought about by cemetery founders for equality and community. The cemetery offered families and single-lot holders a safe and secure place to bury their dead. Family plot sizes varied and were available to those in the community who could afford them. Once purchased, families were responsible for the care and maintenance of their areas. Gardeners and sculptors were typically hired by the family to develop these often painstakingly ornate areas. Typical family plots would have a large

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<sup>30</sup> Sloane, p.55.

<sup>31</sup> Sloane, p.44-49.

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family monument as the center piece, with individual gravemarkers surrounding. Mausolea of Egyptian or Gothic Revival design styles also were very prevalent. The individuality of monument styles and the varied plant materials within each clustered family plot reinforced the naturalistic style of the cemetery. Monuments provided an opportunity to display American artistry in the form of architecture and funerary sculpture, where symbols of eternity, hope and peacefulness were commonly-used motifs.<sup>32</sup> Other cities quickly followed Mount Auburn's lead as the country responded to the new attitudes towards death, nature and art. Laurel Hill (Philadelphia, 1836) and Green Mount (Baltimore, 1838) are both NR - Listed examples of rural cemeteries.<sup>33</sup> Other examples were created in Cincinnati (Spring Grove, 1844); Providence (Swan Point 1846); Washington, D.C. (Oak Hill , 1848); Milwaukee (Forest Home, 1850); Atlanta (Oakland, 1850); Chicago (Oak Woods , 1853 and Graceland, 1860) and Hartford, Conn. (Cedar Hill, 1863).<sup>34</sup>

New York State's first rural cemeteries opened in 1838, only seven years after Mount Auburn. In Rochester, a 53-acre site which would become Mount Hope Cemetery was purchased by the city in August of that year. The city's growing nursery and seed industry, combined with personal visits to Mount Auburn by local residents, influenced the establishment of Mount Hope.<sup>35</sup> Although similar in design to Mount Auburn, Mount Hope did differ as one of the few publicly owned rural cemeteries in America. Most others were private commercial endeavors requiring special permission from government authorities to purchase and develop land. New York City also became the location of many rural cemeteries, in an attempt to solve the overcrowding and unsanitary conditions of city and church burial grounds. As with Mount Hope, Green-Wood Cemetery (Brooklyn) was established in 1838. The grounds were designed by Major David B. Douglas, and incorporated six lakes, 22 miles of roads and 30 miles of paths. A *New York Times* article in 1866 described the cemetery "as one of Brooklyn's greatest attractions, on par with Manhattan's Central Park or Fifth Avenue."<sup>36</sup> Other New York City rural cemeteries included: Trinity Church (Manhattan, 1842); Calvary (Brooklyn, 1848); Cypress Hills (Brooklyn, 1849); Salem Fields (Brooklyn, 1850); Woodlawn (Bronx, 1853) and Silver Mount (Staten Island, 1866).<sup>37</sup>

The statewide population growth and prosperity resulting from the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 influenced the establishment of rural cemeteries throughout New York State, as did state legislation passed in 1847 authorizing the incorporation of rural cemeteries.

<sup>32</sup> Jackson, p.18-19.

<sup>33</sup> Potter, p.5.

<sup>34</sup> Sloane, p.56.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p.58

<sup>36</sup> Jackson, p.19.

<sup>37</sup> Sloane, p.93.

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Communities in the state which developed rural cemeteries during the mid-nineteenth century include Albany (Rural, 1841); Troy (Oakwood, 1848); Rome (Rome Rural, 1851); Poughkeepsie (Rural, 1852); Niagara Falls (Oakwood, 1852); Syracuse (Oakwood, 1859); Tarrytown (Sleepy Hollow, 1849); Watertown (Brookside, 1853); Binghamton (Spring Forest, 1853); Oswego, (Riverside, 1855) and Dryden (Dryden Rural, 1864).<sup>38</sup>

As with other communities in New York State, Syracuse was strongly influenced by the rural cemetery movement. Newspaper articles in the 1860s suggest that one of the earliest rural cemeteries in the city may have been planned at the present day site of Schiller Park. The area, known at the time as Round Top, was purchased in 1856 as a site for a "Protestant or general burial ground,"<sup>39</sup> and by 1863 it was known as *St. Cecilia Cemetery*. An early painting of the city shows the site as a wooded hilltop with curvilinear paths, very much in the tradition of the rural cemetery movement.<sup>40</sup> In 1901 the cemetery was purchased by the city, and redesigned for use as a public park.

St. Cecilia was never fully developed as a cemetery because another site in the city was "thought to possess superior advantages."<sup>41</sup> The site south of the city was called *Oakwood Cemetery* (1859), a remarkable example of a rural cemetery, designed by the nationally-known landscape architect Howard Daniels (1815-1863).<sup>42</sup> The original 82-acre site was purchased only 1-1/2 miles from the center city, largely due to the efforts of Elias Leavenworth and Hamilton White, two highly-regarded community leaders. This type of private initiative was a typical ingredient for the success of many rural cemeteries. A newspaper article from the period described the physical characteristics and serenity of Oakwood as "filled with trees, mounds, vallies [sic], lawn, etc., and is watered by a living stream. To our minds, this spot seems to have been originally intended for the sweet and holy purpose to which it is now proposed to devote it."<sup>43</sup> Daniels took advantage of these characteristics in the cemetery's design. Views and sequential experiences were carefully planned with the support of deep ravines, shrubbery and trees, winding pathways and dramatic topography. A vast abundance of vegetation was introduced to compliment the native oak grove, pine, maple and hickory tree species already on the site. The importance of vegetation also was represented in the names of paths throughout the cemetery (Magnolia Ave., Oak Ave., White Oak Ave., Woodland Ave. and Pansy Path).

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p.93.

<sup>39</sup> *Syracuse Journal*, 15 May 1865.

<sup>40</sup> Onondaga Historical Association collections.

<sup>41</sup> *Syracuse Journal*, 15 May 15 1865.

<sup>42</sup> Oakwood Cemetery is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and has been designated a local protected site under the City of Syracuse zoning ordinance.

<sup>43</sup> *Syracuse Journal*, 8 June 1859.

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Oakwood was an immediate success, selling 1,500 lots in less than a year. Expertly-designed monuments and mausolea exhibiting a variety of architectural styles enriched the romantic landscape and became one of the cemetery's hallmarks. Visitors entered the cemetery under an Arch Bridge (1902), a Romanesque-style structure that also served as a railroad bridge for the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western trains. An entrance park and superintendent's residence were originally located outside the entry gates. These were later destroyed during the construction of Interstate Route 81. Other buildings located near the entrance included a gambrel-roofed barn (c1891), and greenhouses (c1903 demolished). The Victorian Gothic mortuary chapel, designed by Joseph Lyman Silsbee in 1879, is located a short distance from the original entrance. Situated along the serpentine roadway system were various austere and sometimes exotic monuments and mausolea. Monuments such as the 28-ft. James Crouse Monument (1860) made of Italian marble; Amos P. Granger Monument, designed by Syracuse architect Archimedes Russell (c1870); carved stone chair and baby shoes of the Lester Tucker Monument (c1869); and carved tree stump of the Mamie Loftie Tree Stump Memorial (1894) indicate the creativity and individuality afforded lot-holders. Mausolea in the cemetery ranged from the grand to the exotic. The Elias Leavenworth Mausoleum (c1866) was a Gothic Revival tomb, with paired gothic arches on each of the four sides. The Gothic Revival-style James Crouse Mausoleum (1884) came complete with bronze doors. The John A. Green Mausoleum (1866) was designed by Syracuse architect Horatio Nelson White, while the original C.T. Longstreet Gothic Revival style mausoleum was replaced in 1880 with a pyramid shaped vault.

The setting, landscape features, and funerary sculpture exhibited by Oakwood Cemetery fully articulate the rural cemetery style. The design of the site by Howard Daniels, a nationally significant master landscape gardener, is further reflected by the integrity of existing grounds:

Post-1859 areas have been planned in a manner entirely sympathetic to the original design intent, and both original and later areas feature a wealth of funerary art and architecture, significant as art objects and as a design component. With all the characteristics of a landscape type of great importance in American history, combined here with great artistry, Oakwood possesses high artistic value. Oakwood's rich, natural features, along with improvements made throughout its long history, still delight its many visitors and the cemetery continues to function as a peaceful oasis for both the living and dead, just as it did in 1859.<sup>44</sup>

Near the end of the nineteenth century, Oakwood and other rural cemeteries throughout the country became faced with an increasing number of gravemarkers, monuments

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<sup>44</sup> U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service. *Oakwood Cemetery, Syracuse, New York*, National Register of Historic Place Nomination Form, 1990.

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and mausolea. The naturalistic design of the rural cemetery, originally the principle characterizing feature, was compromised as rural cemeteries became increasingly popular. At the same time, changing attitudes of Victorian-era society created a need for a new type of cemetery. The circumstances and setting of death itself changed. Death was less likely to occur in the home, and more likely to occur in an impersonal hospital or nursing home. The Civil War produced an unprecedented number of military casualties, creating a growing interest in national cemeteries and war memorials. Burial grounds for war dead were often established on or near the field of battle. These sacred sites were manifest expressions of American ideals of democracy and patriotism, and required simplicity of design respectful of their inherent symbolism. Both for military cemeteries and civilian, professional management became increasingly necessary to assure proper maintenance and development.

All these factors combined to produce a new type of cemetery referred to as the "landscape lawn plan"<sup>45</sup> or "lawn-park cemetery."<sup>46</sup> Adolph Strauch (1822-1883), a horticulturist trained in England, is considered the first to introduce the lawn-park style in the United States. His first design of this type was for Cincinnati's Spring Grove Cemetery in 1855, a rural cemetery originally designed in 1844 by Howard Daniels. At the urging of lot-holders, Strauch offered suggestions regarding a marshy area at the front of the cemetery. He viewed the cemetery differently from Daniels, believing there were too many roadways and pathways, and trees and shrubs were planted "too close in a vain effort to heighten the picturesque effect."<sup>47</sup> Strauch favored creation of smooth flowing lines, removal of fences to open views, and expansive lawns scattered among trees and shrubs. The marshy area was carefully designed to divert water into a series of connecting lakes. Views across the water were broken by sections of open land. Burial lots were made larger, vegetation less abundant and monuments more standardized. Strauch also promoted the importance of landscape unity, advocating professional design and maintenance of the cemetery. This new unity of cemetery features was a significant change from the rural cemetery ethic which encouraged individualism and elaborate display by lot-holders. As with other shifts in landscape attitudes, technology played an important role in developing the lawn-park cemetery model. The industrial boom following the Civil War saw the arrival of the mechanical lawn mower and mass production of monuments, which made possible the open lawns and expansive views, and the unity of cemetery features, which characterize this style.

Strauch's ideas had a profound impact on cemetery design for the remainder of the nineteenth century. Landscape architect Jacob Weidenmann (1829-1893), who wrote the first manual on cemetery management (c1887), considered Strauch the founder of the modern

<sup>45</sup> Philip Pregill and Nancy Volkman, *Landscapes in History*, (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1993), p. 399.

<sup>46</sup> Sloane, p.4.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p.100.

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cemetery. Similar accolades were expressed by other landscape architects, such as Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903) and Ossian Cole Simonds (1857-1931). Lawn-park cemeteries soon became common, sometimes competing with older rural cemeteries. West View (1884) and Oakwood (1850) cemeteries in Atlanta were located only four miles apart. As with Spring Grove in Cincinnati, Oakwood Cemetery (Chicago) incorporated the lawn-park style into the existing rural cemetery. In most cases, new cemeteries were organized to provide for the growing needs of rapidly expanding cities, such as Woodlawn Cemetery in Detroit and Knollwood Cemetery in Cleveland. Many communities in New York State, such as Valhalla (c1900) and Pinelawn (1902), also established lawn-park cemeteries. Pinelawn was designed by Samuel Parsons and reflected a formal circular layout characteristic of the City Beautiful movement.<sup>48</sup>

Syracuse embraced the lawn-park cemetery style at the same time as many other cities. Economic development and resulting population growth of the late-nineteenth century created a need for additional cemetery space, and several cemeteries developed during the period show influence of the lawn-park aesthetic. *St. Agnes Cemetery* opened in 1873 through the efforts of Rev. James O'Hara, pastor of St. Mary's Cemetery. The cemetery is a 93-acre site located on the city's southwest side, on a hill overlooking Valley Drive. Rev. O'Hara had earlier attempted to establish a cemetery site on Round Top in 1863, calling it St. Cecilia's Cemetery. Legal battles over the ownership of the site ended internments after only 13 years, and all bodies were later moved to St. Agnes.<sup>49</sup> Spatial organization of St. Agnes represented a more formal and standardized approach to gravemarker selection and circulation patterns. By 1884 there were already 1,131 graves and 4,500 shade and ornamental trees,<sup>50</sup> and the cemetery continues to serve the local Catholic population today.

*Woodlawn Cemetery* was established in 1881 by the Trustees of Woodlawn Cemetery Association. This secular extant cemetery is 105 acres, located on the city's northside along Grant Boulevard. According to one newspaper account, it was established as a result of the overcrowding at Rose Hill Cemetery.<sup>51</sup> A mortuary chapel was added in 1910, and by 1935 over 26,000 burials had been performed, including a Civil War veterans plot. The Lily Post monument was erected in 1887 by a Civil War veterans groups of the same name.

Cemeteries were sometimes altered to incorporate lawn-park ideals. *Myrtle Hill Cemetery* began as the Geddes Burying Ground in the early nineteenth century, and includes graves of some of the area's earliest settlers. The property was expanded several times over the years, and during the late nineteenth-century came to exhibit characteristics of the lawn-park cemetery.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., p.139.

<sup>49</sup> Chase, p. 300.

<sup>50</sup> *Syracuse Standard*, 4 January 1884.

<sup>51</sup> *Syracuse Post-Standard*, 18 March 1930.



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Property Type: Burial Grounds and Cemeteries

A newspaper article written in 1900 described *Morningside Cemetery* as the "New Cemetery in the City," with "novel ideas introduced." The Morningside Cemetery Association was incorporated in November of 1899 with a 105-acre site directly south and west of Oakwood Cemetery, bisected by Comstock Avenue. J.H. Shepard, the superintendent of the Riverside Cemetery in Rochester, was hired to design the site.<sup>52</sup> A sample of rules and regulations published by the cemetery in 1901 reflected the ideals of lawn-park style: no gravemarkers or headstones shall be more than six inches thick; no stone rising above the level of the lawn will be erected over any of the single graves; granite is recommended, and; only one monument is allowed per lot. A community mausoleum along Comstock Avenue was later built by Eastern Mausoleum Company of Buffalo, New York in 1912. By the 1960s the cemetery had sold some of its tracts to the city and Syracuse University. During the same period, initial management agreements with Oakwood Cemetery eventually led to a merging of the two organizations.<sup>53</sup>

The development of Syracuse burial grounds and cemeteries is an important component of the growth and development of the city. Early in the twentieth century Syracuse boasted approximately 100 burying grounds.<sup>54</sup> Though this number has significantly diminished, representative examples from many periods in city history still exist, including early pioneer and public grounds, potter's fields, rural cemeteries, and lawn-park cemeteries. Early burial grounds inspire an emotional connection to daily life of the fledgling community and provide a visual map of early settlement patterns in the area. Rural cemeteries such as Oakwood attempted to immerse the visitor in nature, providing a distinct separation from the city environment. Development of the lawn-park style correlated with the development of local parks, both being spurred by economic expansion of the city and the ideals of the City Beautiful Movement. City cemeteries also tell the story of Syracuse's ethnic and religious communities. Sacred Heart Cemetery, just outside the city, was established in 1904 to serve the local Polish population, and a number of crosses and monuments made by family descendants are in a traditional style found in native Polish villages. Within the city, the small Jewish Orthodox cemeteries along Jamesville Road, between Colvin Street and Interstate Route 481, utilize a unique style of terracing gravemarkers.

Burial grounds and cemeteries in Syracuse can be evaluated on the local, state and national level under National Register criteria A, B, and C in the areas of architecture, landscape architecture, and community planning and development. Normally, cemeteries are not considered eligible for the National Register, however, a cemetery will qualify if it derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from

<sup>52</sup> Newspaper source unknown, 21 October 1900.

<sup>53</sup> Sloane, p.236.

<sup>54</sup> *Syracuse Journal*, 20 March 20 1939.

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distinctive design features, or from association with historic events. Syracuse burial grounds and cemeteries are also eligible for listing as local protected sites under local ordinance regulation.

### III. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

#### Burial Grounds

- A. Burial grounds must be originally intended to serve a religious group, family or municipality.
- B. Property must exhibit integrity of location, design, materials and feeling as noted in requirements that follow.
- C. Gravemarkers or archaeological evidence must be present.
- D. Burial grounds must be laid out as a single rectilinear spatial area with subspaces containing individual plots.
- E. Burials grounds must be the work of a citizen group or amateur designer responding to the local or national trends of cemetery designs and philosophy of use.
- F. An associated homestead, or religious/community building can be present.

#### Rural Cemetery

- A. Cemetery design must employ a naturalistic approach to create an experience of art and nature as a diversion from daily urban living.
- B. Property must exhibit integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship and feeling as noted in requirements that follow.
- C. Topography must be rolling and irregular, with natural swales and ridges present.
- D. A series of sequential experiences that control views and conform to natural contours must be evident.
- E. Walks and drives must be curvilinear and follow natural contours.
- F. Cemetery must include gravemarkers, monuments, mausolea or other furnishings, usually exhibiting Gothic or Egyptian Revival design styles.
- G. The massing and placement of vegetation material should provide evidence of framing views and directing circulation.
- H. Natural or man-made lakes, streams, ponds or waterfalls can be present.
- I. Cemetery can be the work of a master landscape architect, gardener or engineer.

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**Lawn-Park Cemetery**

- A. Cemetery must be designed to balance the beauty of the natural landscape and open lawn with the artistry of the monument.
- B. Property must exhibit integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship and feeling as noted in requirements that follow.
- C. Cemetery must be laid out in a geometric and unified manner that incorporates open views.
- D. Cemetery must possess a unified assortment of gravemarkers, monument and mausolea.
- E. Trees and shrubs arranged around spacious lawn areas can be evident.
- F. Natural or man-made lakes or ponds can be present.
- G. Cemetery can be the work of a master landscape architect, gardener or engineer.

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Property Type: Public Spaces

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**PROPERTY TYPE: PUBLIC SPACES**

**I. DESCRIPTION**

**Definition:**

An area of public land within a settlement designed primarily for civic, economic and/or utilitarian purposes.

**Subtypes and Landscape Features:**

***Public Square (settlement to 1940):*** A planned public open space (generally less than 10 acres) within a settlement, often with adjacent residential, commercial or civic buildings, designed to accommodate civic functions, commercial activities, and/or passive recreation.

**Environment:** Located within a settlement, often at the center.

**Setting:** Usually surrounded by dense concentrations of civic and commercial or residential buildings. May be associated with a specific civic or commercial activity.

**Natural Systems and Features:** Typically a flat or sloping site. Natural topography and/or vegetation may be present.

**Buildings and Structures:** Typically not present as original features, but later additions such as gazebos, restrooms, and information booths may occur.

**Vegetation:** If present, generally lawn with shade trees, often including ornamental trees, shrubs and flowers.

**Spatial Organization:** Varies. Can be highly geometric or organic, usually in response to immediate context. Designed to accommodate a flexible program of activities. May be a single open space, or contain subspaces and/or focal points connected by pedestrian paths and separated by planted areas.

**Circulation:** Pedestrian circulation accommodated by paved pathways or broad paved areas. Sometimes the entire space is paved to allow unrestricted pedestrian movement. Vehicle access prohibited or highly controlled.

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Water Features: Fountains common in later examples.

Furnishings and Objects: Visual focal points such as monuments, sculptures, and flag poles, often present. Benches, lights, trash receptacles are common. May include other furnishings and objects related to specific activities.

**Public Green (settlement to 1850):** An open green space (generally less than 10 acres) within a settlement, evolved from vernacular patterns of land use and conveyed to a local government for public use.

Environment: Usually centrally located within a settlement.

Setting: Often associated with early religious, residential, or civic buildings.

Natural Systems and Features: Typically a flat or sloping site. Man-made topography may be present.

Buildings and Structures: May include community (e.g., gun house, school, meetinghouse, workhouse), civic (e.g., courthouse, jail etc.), or religious (e.g., church, etc.) buildings.

Vegetation: Usually minimal planting, generally shade trees and a grass lawn. Later additions may include ornamental shrubbery, flower beds, and trees planted in groups or as specimens.

Spatial Organization: Usually an open, irregular-shaped space with a definable boundary such as trees, fencing, or surrounding streets. May be geometric during later periods. Views may be directed toward a particular area of the site or to a central object.

Circulation: Pedestrian movement through the space is often unrestricted, though pathways may be present.

Water Features: Usually no water features present. May include ornamental fountains as later additions.

Furnishings and Objects: May include signage, fencing, flag poles, statues, and monuments. Later additions may include benches, lampposts, bandstands, etc.

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**Traffic Island (1870 - 1930):** An open space formed at the juncture of two or more major vehicular streets designed to facilitate traffic flow and as a visual focal point within an urban circulation system.

**Environment:** Typically urban.

**Setting:** The center of major vehicle traffic intersections.

**Natural Systems and Features:** n/a

**Buildings and Structures:** Generally no buildings or structures. Mechanical and site engineering systems may be critically important.

**Vegetation:** Usually subordinate to central object (see Furnishings and Objects, below). Can include flower beds, grass areas, shrubbery, and specimen trees. Laid out to reinforce basic spatial geometry.

**Spatial Organization:** A confined, geometric space, sometimes symmetrical, with a single prominent visual focal point in the center. Space is most often circular in shape, but can take other forms.

**Circulation:** Vehicle circulation occurs around the perimeter. Pedestrian circulation through the space is usually accommodated, though sometimes (as in cases of high volume vehicle traffic) the space is inaccessible to pedestrians.

**Water Features:** Fountains are commonly present as a central feature.

**Furnishings and Objects:** Central element an integral feature, usually designed as a vertical landmark, such as a statue, fountain, monument, or obelisk. Furnishings such as benches and lighting sometimes present.

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## II. SIGNIFICANCE

The public square is one of civilization's most enduring landscape types, with a documented history that can be traced back at least as far as ancient Greece, where the Agora in Athens served as the urban center of civic and economic activity. More than a utilitarian space, the square has in many ways served as a symbol of civic society, a ubiquitous landscape feature shared by urban communities throughout the western world over the past two millennia. Where the garden may be thought of as the embodiment of private life, and the church the embodiment of spiritual life, the public square is the embodiment of civic life, a place where communities express their wholeness, and demonstrate their cultural values in the rituals of daily life. Public spaces in America have their roots in European squares, as colonial immigrants incorporated them as integral components of early settlements. Squares in America served multiple utilitarian and ornamental functions, and were used as early burial grounds, marketplaces, grassy areas for pasturing cattle and the locus for public meetings, gatherings, speeches and military events. Usually centrally located in a community, squares often reveal the earliest beginnings of a settlement, with civic, commercial and/or religious buildings constructed on their perimeter. Many were located along transportation routes, which for early settlements was typically water - a river, lake, ocean, or canal.

The first documented public square in America is thought to have been in one of the New World's earliest settlements, St. Augustine, Florida. After an attack by Sir Francis Drake in 1586, requiring the town to rebuild, a "waterside plaza" was developed.<sup>1</sup> A wood engraving from 1861 shows buildings laid out around an "open-ended plaza" that could be seen from the water. Other more formal public squares were introduced in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century, as colonial settlements became firmly established. In Philadelphia, five public squares (8-10 acres in size) were incorporated into the 1682 grid pattern layout for the city designed by William Penn. The 1733 plan for Savannah, Georgia designed by James Oglethorpe included a three-acre public square for each "ward." A ward "had forty house sites of 5500 square feet laid out in four rows with two five-house groupings in each row."<sup>2</sup> In both examples, squares were an integral component of city form, representing "rational thought, order and a reaction against the unhealthy and cramped

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Zucker, *Town and Square: From the Agora to the Village Green* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1973).

<sup>2</sup> Philip Pregill and Nancy Volkman, *Landscape in History: Design and Planning in the Western Tradition* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1993), p. 341.

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medieval urban environments of Europe."<sup>3</sup> Another example, The New Haven Green (New Haven, Conn.), was one of nine public spaces laid out in the original town plan. It was used for an astonishingly diverse range of functions, serving as both a graveyard and marketplace, and also as the site of a meetinghouse, jail, grammar school, country house and courthouse.<sup>4</sup> Other examples of public squares within an urban area include Lafayette Square (Washington, D.C.), an important element in Pierre L'Enfant's 1792 plan for the city; Rittenhouse Square (Philadelphia); Washington Square (New York City); and the 1859 Public Square in Cleveland, Ohio. Spanish settlements in the southwest, beginning in the sixteenth century, incorporated "public squares"<sup>5</sup> or "plazas"<sup>6</sup> as essential components to town planning. In the Laws of the Indies, King Philip II developed rules regarding town planning for the colonist. These were quite detailed and included specifics for the shape (square or rectangle) and size (a minimum of 200 x 300 feet) of these public spaces.<sup>7</sup>

While many public squares were located within city centers to serve the needs of commerce and civic gatherings, public squares also were established in residential areas. Most noted of these is Louisburg Square in Boston, laid out in 1826. This square (actually rectangular) continued as a public square for bordering houses that were built around it by 1834. Author Paul Zucker refers to public spaces such as this as "enclosed urban squares," whereas French<sup>8</sup> and Dennis<sup>9</sup> call them "residential squares" - the prelude to the neighborhood park. Wooster Square, in New Haven, Conn. was developed on six acres of farmland purchased in 1824. A fence was built around the rectangular space and trees planted within it. By 1840, many residential houses had been constructed around the square, and within ten years it was considered New Haven's most fashionable residential district. Unlike Louisburg Square, however, some the original residential houses were replaced by industrial buildings during the early part of the twentieth century. This dramatic change in character and definition of the square was addressed by preservation efforts in the 1980s.<sup>10</sup>

Early American settlements, especially those in rural areas, also established public squares by less formal methods. These early public spaces sometimes evolved from a town "common" or "green area," developing into a square as the community became urbanized.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 341.

<sup>4</sup> Ronald L. Fleming and Lauri A. Halderman, *On Common Ground: Caring for Shared Land From Town Common to Urban Park*, (Cambridge, MA: The Harvard Common Press, 1982), p. 11.

<sup>5</sup> Zucker, p. 254.

<sup>6</sup> Pregill and Volkman, p. 336.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 336.

<sup>8</sup> Jere S. French, *Urban Space: A Brief History of the City Square* (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Pub. Co., 1983).

<sup>9</sup> Michael Dennis, "Architecture and the City: Residential Squares," (Lecture/Seminar handouts for a Cornell/Harvard University project in Syracuse University Library, 1918).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.



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Historic literature and archival material often confuses the issue, as the terms "square," "green," and "common" were often used interchangeably to describe any early public space, and were not necessarily indicative of the form, function, or historic evolution. Even in rural communities, however, squares were often deliberately planned and laid out to serve certain functions or meet specific public needs. Squares in rural communities were perceived as urban elements in the countryside, often enclosed by two-story brick houses, producing an urban-style scale and enclosure causing one observer to comment that "entering these villages is like entering a house and shutting out the world."<sup>11</sup>

Public spaces in Syracuse and surrounding villages were established both formally, as part of a deliberate city planning process, and organically, through long-time cultural patterns of land use. The first of the city's planned public squares was probably *Washington Park*, in the Village of Salina. In 1798, this high ground on the southeast edge of Onondaga Lake was surveyed by the State of New York in response to the lake's growing salt industry. The village was laid out in a grid pattern reminiscent of Penn's plan for Philadelphia and Olgethorpe's plan for Savannah, with a three-acre square called "Center Square" serving as a central public space. The square served a myriad of functions, as it became the location of an early burial ground (later removed), one of the first public schools, and a building that housed a fire wagon and hearse. The First Ward Presbyterian Church was located on the northwest corner of the square between 1822 and 1855. The name was changed to Washington Park sometime in the 1840s to eliminate confusion with another "Center Square" (Fayette Park) in the Village of Syracuse. Though it was put to many uses, Washington Park was more a social center for the village than a business center. The park was surrounded by residential houses, while businesses and manufacturing buildings are concentrated along nearby Wolf and Salina Streets. Another example of an early local public square was *St. Mark's Square* (at one time also called Center Square), located southwest of Salina in the Village of Geddes, near the present day 1600 block of West Genesee Street. The site survived into the early twentieth century, when it was built upon.

Public squares in Syracuse, as in other cities, have typically been associated with transportation routes and places of commerce. When Joshua Forman re-surveyed portions of present day Syracuse in 1819, it appears that he set aside land to serve as a common area (earlier precedence may have suggested this when Forman and Gordon Needham donated land to the Village of Onondaga Hollow in 1807<sup>12</sup>). A few years later the Erie Canal was constructed through the center of the village, bisecting this space which was from that time on known as *Clinton Square*. A number of commercial structures, including a stone bridge and buildings such as the Mansion House (1806), "yellow building" (a 1824 brick commercial block) occupied its perimeter by that time. Buildings in large numbers were soon constructed

<sup>11</sup> Zucker, p. 248.

<sup>12</sup> Spencer, *The 12 Who Came: The History of Onondaga Valley*, (Onondaga Valley Press, 1975), p. 31.

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to accommodate the growing business brought by the canal, and Clinton Square became the central open space in a thriving commercial area. By 1837, the Village had declared the square "a public marketplace," an area where farmers and peddlers could sell their wares, and it remained so throughout most of the century. The square was also a center of civic activity. A new county courthouse was built on its northwest corner in 1830, and the village's Liberty Pole and municipal flag pole were located there. Civic gatherings took place in the square, such as the one to honor General Marquis LaFayette (American Revolutionary War hero).

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the primacy of Clinton Square as the city's civic and economic hub was being challenged by nearby Hanover Square. With its closer proximity to the railroad tracks along Washington Street, Hanover Square took over some of the public market place functions that had historically taken place in Clinton Square. More changes were forthcoming. In 1911, the monumental Beaux Arts-style Soldier's and Sailor's Monument was erected in the heart of the square, providing a vertical focal point and a new aesthetic character. When the Erie Canal was filled in a dozen years later, the square was used for vehicle traffic and parking, changing its character once again. The most recent design, in 1981, recaptures a measure of the square's earlier spirit as place for public activity. While the Erie Canal helped to define Clinton Square, it also inspired a second public square further east at the intersection of Lodi Street. A 1848 map of the city identifies that area as *Lock Square*. This space is now occupied by a municipal building.

Other public squares in Syracuse were created more through the force of circumstances than by intent. As the city expanded, it incorporated pre-existing roads and turnpikes within the grid plan layout of new streets. The intersection of old and new roads often produced triangular pieces of leftover land which eventually were developed as public spaces. Early examples include *Billings Park* (corner of South Salina and South Warren); *Union Park* (corner of North Salina, Kirkpatrick and Union); *Schlossler Park* (corner of North Salina, North State and East Laurel); *Slocum Park* (corner of Elliott, Putnam and Dudley); and *Furman Park* (corner of Cortland and Midland). Though parks in name, small urban spaces such as these functioned more as public squares, serving a wide range of public needs. Some were primarily ornamental, small islands of shade and greenery, while others were utilitarian, accommodating trade and other activities. A 1905 photograph of Furman Park shows the site with "planted flowers and shrubs surrounded by a near fence."<sup>13</sup> *Ashland Park*, on the city's northside, served in the early twentieth century as a public market place.

The triangular-shaped *Hanover Square*, formed by the intersection of diagonal Genesee Street with the geometric grid pattern of Salina, Warren, and Water Streets is a prime example of a public space formed from "leftover land." Because of its location a block south of the canal and a block north of the railroad terminal, Hanover Square historically functioned as a transfer point and meeting place. For many years the space served as a "cart

<sup>13</sup> *Syracuse Herald*, 24 July 1905.

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stand ... there the trucksman solicited business of carting household goods or anything else one wanted moved." This was one of the primary sites in downtown for public gatherings, such as political meetings, news announcements, speeches and sermons. The first news of General Lee's surrender ending the Civil War was delivered publicly in the square, and upon the death of Abraham Lincoln local politician Charles Sedgwick was asked to give a public eulogy here. During the later part of the nineteenth century, the area became the financial and banking center of the city, as reflected by the construction of the Gridley Building (first Onondaga County Savings Bank - 1867), Syracuse Savings Bank (1875), Third National Bank (1886), Gere Bank Building (1894), Bank of Syracuse (1896) and Onondaga Savings Bank (1897). A drinking fountain was located at the west end of the square from 1872 until 1896. Later, a public "comfort station" served the general public from 1915 until 1962.

While some public spaces in the nineteenth century were locations for commercial and civic activity, others were located in residential areas. In 1833, three men (Lewis H. Redfield, Dr. Mather Williams and Henry Davis, Jr.) purchased thirty acres of land between the Villages of Syracuse and Lodi from Daniel Comstock. A need to redirect Genesee Street further to the north permitted a small rectangular portion of this land to be dedicated as a public square in 1839. In honor of Joshua Forman, one of the founders of the city, this square was called Forman Square. It soon became known as *Forman Park*, and by the 1860s it was bordered by several residential houses. During this period, trees were planted and a fence built around the park's perimeter, apparently to keep cattle out. Little was done to improve the park for many years until one of the area homeowners, Riley Miller, organized a committee of neighborhood residents. This led to the forming of the Forman Park Association around 1871, and the ensuing years saw a series of park improvements. The 1.3 acre park retains a large degree of its nineteenth century form today, although the residential houses that once surrounded the site have been replaced by retail, office and religious buildings.

A short distance west of Forman Park along Genesee Street, *Fayette Firefighters Memorial Park* is another example of a nineteenth-century public square originally developed in a residential setting. Before being developed, this land was used for hunting and as a military training ground, at one time even housing a bivouac building. Genesee Street ran diagonally through the site, dividing it into two triangles. Through legislation drafted by village president Elias W. Leavenworth, the street was moved to the south in 1839, and the site became a single 1.2-acre rectangular space. Originally called "Centre Square," the site's name was changed to Fayette Park c1841, apparently to honor a visit by General Marquis LaFayette. Within a decade, the park was surrounded by private homes of many prominent city residents. An attempt to improve and maintain that park was made in the 1870s through private subscriptions. Landscape gardener C. Hastings was commissioned to design the grounds, and introduced a curvilinear network of paths through a dense but informal grove.

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Focal points of sculpture and flowers were located near entries and the perimeter.<sup>14</sup> The park was redesigned in the 1930s, and has been altered several times since then. In 1972, the name was officially changed to Fayette Firefighters Memorial Park, commemorating local fire fighters. All of the nineteenth century residential buildings have been lost, except for the (1842) Hamilton White House,<sup>15</sup> the one remaining house typifying the architecture and scale that once characterized the site.

Like Fayette Park, many public squares also serve as commemorative sites, locations for all types of civic monuments and memorials. The City Beautiful Movement, with its emphasis on focal points and civic display, inspired a flurry of monument-building in the early twentieth century, creating a popular trend which continued in earnest through the 1960s and to some degree continues even today. In Syracuse, dozens of monuments were located in public squares to honor important historical figures, military veterans, or special events. Two of the most prominent monuments in downtown Syracuse are the Soldier's and Sailor's Monument, erected in Clinton Square in 1910, and the Columbus Monument, erected in St. Mary's Circle in 1934. In both these cases the monument became a major city focal point, and brought new meaning and a new identity to a pre-existing public square. Other examples in Syracuse include the Sniper Monument (1905), erected in Schlosser Park to honor Gustavus Sniper, a local Civil War veteran; the Redfield-Forman Monument (1909), erected in Forman Park; and in *Kosciusko Park*, where a monument honors local war heroes of Polish descent. Three separate monuments were erected in the city to recognize William Kirkpatrick, superintendent of the Onondaga Salt Springs (the "Boy with Parrot," erected in *Demong Park* in 1903; "Indian Bowman," placed on a fountain in Union Park in 1904 and the "LeMoyne Fountain," erected in Washington Park in 1908). Some squares became depositories for multiple monuments. Billings Park contains monuments to veterans of World War I ("Rock of the Marine," 1920) and the Spanish-American War ("The Hiker," 1924), while Fayette Park received three separate monuments honoring local fire fighters.

While public squares are typically the result of conscious planning, other types of public spaces are more vernacular in origin, evolving from long-standing cultural land use patterns. In colonial New England, the terms "common" and "green" have traditionally been used to refer to such public spaces which played an integral role in the social, cultural or religious life in a community. Though the terms are often used interchangeably, it is helpful to understand the distinction between these two related property types. According to Fleming, town "greens" often evolved from earlier "commons," lands established for public use by early Puritan immigrants and held in common by all members of the community. Ownership of

<sup>14</sup> Walmsley and Co., *Syracuse Historic Landscape Resource Survey* (Syracuse, New York: Department of Community Development, 1989).

<sup>15</sup> Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and also designated as a Local Protected Site by the City of Syracuse.

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such lands was often conveyed to the municipality at some later time, preserving the land for public use.

Commons in early New England resulted from the Puritan philosophy of early settlers which one author refers to as "community-based nature of religion."<sup>16</sup> To the Puritans, the community was more paramount than the individual. Members of the community were guided by the "ecclesiastical pragmatism" of their community Elders.<sup>17</sup> Families were interviewed by the Elders, and, if unwilling to abide with the community standards were asked to leave. Common lands, a concept originating from English common law practices, were set aside to be shared by the entire community. These early common pasture/agriculture spaces were usually located just beyond the town and are not considered to be designed landscapes.<sup>18</sup> They did, however, influence the location of early settlement areas, providing sites with natural grasslands or marshes (these land types were much easier to use than wooded areas, which required significant labor in clearing trees). One of the earliest livestock common areas was the Boston Commons. A 1722 map of the city shows the commons located outside the settlement to the west.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to introducing the common-pasture/farmland concept, the Puritans in colonial America also brought with them attitude that public buildings were central to community life. Puritans envisioned the ideal town as one "in which houses clustered around a meetinghouse, and fields in turn surrounded the clustering of structures."<sup>20</sup> The meetinghouse (also the place of worship) was a significant feature in Puritan villages, as was the meetinghouse lot (an informal space owned by the church). The lot served as a common area for church and family uses, and provided temporary overnight stays for families who owned livestock. A "close" or "paddock" area was established to provide a safe and secure location for cattle until they could be moved to the common pasture outside the village the next day.<sup>21</sup> Residents were expected to worship twice on Sundays, necessitating space for families to congregate between services. Later "warminghouses or "noonhouses" were constructed on the lot to provide shelter during the day. These shelters were particularly useful during the winter months. The number of shelters varied from community to community. In Stonington, Connecticut, the common contained 30 warminghouses by the 1700s.<sup>22</sup> The meetinghouse lot eventually became known as the "town common," taking on other uses such as burial grounds, and if large enough, military training.

<sup>16</sup> Fleming, *On Common Ground*.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>18</sup> Zucker.

<sup>19</sup> Fleming, p. 10.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

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By the late-eighteenth century, a shifting of the common as a place for agricultural use to one for civic use began to occur. With this transformation, the church's influence on the common began to wane, to the point that by the 1830s most church-owned commons had transferred to town government ownership. The use of the term "the green" became more prevalent as a result of this secularization. Meetinghouses were used for non-religious activities; structures such as powderhouses were erected, and cannons were even installed to provide for defense. Greens became more and more associated with public assemblies, and by the nineteenth century were frequently bordered by taverns, inns and other commercial establishments. Some towns established more than one green, each with a specific purpose. In Maine, greens were transferred to the town government not by the church, but by local land owners.

As towns grew and became more urban, greens evolved accordingly. A higher density of users, and later advent of automobile traffic, led to many greens becoming formalized in some way. Configurations became more geometric as street patterns dictated form. Some greens were reduced in size as available land was taken up by businesses and industries. One New England town lost half its green area between 1775 and 1782 because of this encroachment.<sup>23</sup> Other villages that developed into manufacturing communities eliminated their greens altogether, in favor of municipal buildings, schools and firehouses. A feeling of nostalgia towards the green swept over still other towns, as a sense of civic pride and patriotism created a movement to beautify them. Erection of commemorative monuments (the "Minuteman" in Lexington Battle Green), planting of maple and elm trees (Washington Square in Salem, MA), and installation of amenities such as pathways, lampposts, benches and fencing (Dedham Common in Dedham, MA, Lawrence North Commons in Lawrence, MA and Little Compton, Rhode Island) were all common improvements made in public greens initiated and paid for by local residents. Village improvement societies were established, embracing the nationwide movement towards the romantic view of nature (see Property Types: Parks; Burial Grounds and Cemeteries). These town improvement programs were particularly popular after the Civil War, and continued into the twentieth century.

Not settled in any significant degree until the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Syracuse does not have the long tradition of public land use which resulted in greens and commons in older New England settlements. Nevertheless, several public spaces in the city evolved from land originally held in common by residents. Though serving as a formal public square since the Erie Canal was opened in 1825, Clinton Square is thought to originally have been a grassy green area used by locals. Many other public spaces in Syracuse, including present parks, squares, and traffic islands, owe their existence to previous vernacular patterns of land use. Bissell Woods and Robinson's Woods were both privately-owned lands serving as de facto public picnic grounds, a use legitimized when they were each

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 24.

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purchased by the city as land for public parks (Upper Onondaga and Lincoln, respectively). Many public spaces were donated to the community by private citizens. The *Onondaga Village Green* (formerly Onondaga Hollow Village Green) in the city's Valley section reveals the intent by founding fathers to provide a permanent public space for residents. In 1807, Joshua Forman and Gordon Needham donated 1.4 acres along the northside of Seneca Turnpike, "for a Green for the use and ornament of village and the inhabitants," with the provision that the "Green shall forever remain open and unenclosed." An additional agreement was made to convey a nearby lot for the village school house,<sup>24</sup> perhaps indicating a desire to develop a New England-style village green.

Like parks, greens and squares are public spaces designed to serve a variety of civic, economic, and social needs. But some public spaces are designed primarily to serve visual and functional roles without accommodating actual human activity. Referred to by one author as "the radial square,"<sup>25</sup> the traffic island has been a common feature of urban landscapes at least since the sixteenth century. Origins of the traffic island can be traced back over 400 years, when the city of Rome incorporated them as part of the "Baroque street system, [of] receiving and dispersing the traffic flowing through it."<sup>26</sup> Such spaces were important as focal points providing unity and order in Renaissance-Era civic planning, employed "as a means of relating the various disparate urban elements into a structured system."<sup>27</sup> Designed traffic islands commonly featured a vertical element serving as a city landmark, contributing to the identity of neighborhoods and helping to orient travelers and clarify city layout. These spaces also provided an opportunity for grand architectural and artistic expression in the many forms of monuments and sculptures which were employed. Traffic islands became an essential component of urban design throughout Europe in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, as city after city devised "rational" plans reflecting the ordered geometry of renaissance styles. Some, like Picadilly Circus in London, featured obelisks or other sculpture. Others, such as the Place de l'Etoile in Paris contained large structures (the Arc de Triomphe) imbued with powerful symbolism and meaning.

In America, the traffic island became popular as a designed landscape during the City Beautiful Movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as Beaux Arts design philosophy dominated architecture and planning (see Section E: Statement of Historic Contexts). With the Beaux Arts emphasis on focal points and hierarchy in circulation systems, traffic islands were prominent features of City Beautiful Era urban design. As cities strove to reinvent themselves in the image of the "White City" of Chicago's Columbian Exposition (1893), urban designers sought to bring order and logic to existing street patterns

<sup>24</sup> Deed Dated 15 July 1807, on file with the City Engineer.

<sup>25</sup> French.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

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which in many cases had evolved organically during the previous century. In Chicago, Daniel Burnham's proposed street system for downtown (1907) shows a number of traffic islands resulting from diagonal streets intersecting with a geometric street pattern. Olmsted's plan for Buffalo, New York also included a number of traffic islands, such as Gates Circle, as important features of civic design.

Even cities which had been blessed with rational plans from the beginning were updated during the City Beautiful Era. In 1902, the McMillan plan for Washington, D.C. employed traffic islands (Washington, Dupont and Logan Circles) to facilitate traffic flow and to clarify the inherent geometry of street layout provided by L'Enfant's original plan for the city (1792). Similarly, Logan Circle was created in Philadelphia in 1909 on the location of a pre-existing public square. When William Penn laid out Philadelphia in 1682, he provided five public squares within a grid block pattern of streets between the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers. Logan Square was located in the city's northwest quadrant, and along with the other squares, maintained an identity as a public gathering place. In the nineteenth century, a plan was conceived to design a parkway that would link the center city with the newly-developed Fairmount Park (1858). The parkway would begin at city hall, continue northwest through Logan Square and terminate at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.<sup>28</sup> When the official plan was adopted and construction began in 1909, Logan Square was redesigned as a traffic circle, allowing an efficient flow of traffic at this heavily-traveled six-way intersection. More than merely a traffic control device, Logan Circle was an important visual link along the parkway, with an elaborate fountain, pool and statue, monumentally-scaled to fit the grand civic space and designed to compliment the neoclassical architecture which would line the parkway in coming years.

While Syracuse was never laid out according to any such monumental plan, traffic islands nonetheless became important features in civic design, providing visual connections through the city's street system and contributing to an image of civic prosperity and well-being. One of the earliest islands was located at the junction of Jefferson, Montgomery, and Onondaga Streets in the heart of downtown, and is now officially known as *Columbus Monument - St. Mary's Circle*. Now functioning as a public square, this space evolved as a traffic island through most of its history. Originally a triangle, this island in the nineteenth century was at the core of a Victorian residential neighborhood, surrounded by houses, churches, and a school. Around the turn of the century, the houses were quickly replaced by civic buildings such as the Carnegie Library (1905) and Onondaga County Courthouse (1906), and the neighborhood took on a distinctly urban density and character. The triangle was redesigned as a circle, known first as Library Circle, and later as St. Mary's Circle, for the adjacent St. Mary's Church (Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception). In the early twentieth

<sup>28</sup> David B. Brownlee, *The City Beautiful Movement: The Benjamin Franklin Parkway and the Philadelphia Museum of Art* (Philadelphia Museum of Art: Philadelphia, 1989).



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century the circle was planted with grass and flower beds, with trees in the center. In 1934, however, the circle would be redesigned once again, this time receiving the architectural element it had previously lacked, the Christopher Columbus Monument. Designed by local architect Dwight James Baum with a statue made by Italian sculptor Lorenzo Baldi, the new "Columbus Circle" featured a fountain and circular pool basin, and reflected the grand civic character of its setting. The circle ceased to function as a traffic island in 1972, when Montgomery Street on its western edge was closed off and the circle connected to the sidewalk by a new pedestrian plaza.

While the original residential area around Columbus Circle eventually took on a densely urban character, the residential neighborhood surrounding *Leavenworth Circle* has remained largely intact. Located almost a mile from downtown out West Onondaga Street, the circle was built in one of the city's most prestigious residential areas of the late nineteenth century, and marks the junction of Delaware Street, West Onondaga Street, Tallman Street, and Onondaga Avenue. According to newspaper accounts, residents met in June of 1886 to discuss a proposal by E. W. Leavenworth "to erect a fountain at the head of the street." The residents accepted the proposal, and by 1887 had deeded portions of their front yards for the construction of a "circular park ... 80 feet in diameter."<sup>29</sup> Early twentieth century photographs reveal that the traffic island was designed in a formal manner. An ornate fountain was erected at the center of the space, with geometric flower beds and lawn areas around the base, the whole circle surrounded by stone and iron fencing. Known variously over the years as "The Circle" or "Onondaga Circle," the space has been a strong contributor to neighborhood identity. In addition to its functional role in facilitating traffic flow, the circular island has served as an important landmark, and even a place for community events. Horse races and parade processions used Leavenworth Circle as the "turn around point." A resident who remembered the character of Leavenworth Circle stated in 1974, "the Onondaga Circle - Leavenworth Circle water fountain was a refreshing vision that provided an elegant terminus for historic West Onondaga Street."<sup>30</sup> Another resident reflected in a letter to the editor in the *Post-Standard* earlier the same year, stating "that circle was an impressive focal point constructed on the edge of Syracuse." Discussion to change or reduce the size of the circle began in the late 1920s, perhaps due to increased vehicular demands. By the 1970s, the original fountain and stone fencing required major restoration work. The decision was made to remove the fountain, and connect the circle to a bordering city block on the southwest, rerouting traffic and ceasing the space's function as a traffic circle (as happened to Columbus Circle).

The design of early traffic islands in Syracuse was a response to individual site contexts rather than a city-wide unified design approach. Even though they are only a mile

<sup>29</sup> *Syracuse Post-Standard*, 5 July 1930.

<sup>30</sup> *Syracuse Post-Standard*, 12 March 1974.

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apart on Onondaga Street, Columbus and Leavenworth Circles were designed independently, as individual focal points responding to their respective contexts. In downtown Syracuse, the Columbus Monument was conceived of by Baum as an Italian Piazza,<sup>31</sup> with obelisk, fountain, and decorative inlaid stones reminiscent of the urban squares of Europe. The colors of the granite, the height of the monument, and the diameter of the surrounding apron were considered with respect to the space of the circle and to the height, character and color of adjacent buildings. Leavenworth Circle, on the other hand, was residential in scale, with its elaborately delicate ornamental fountain and planting of grass and flowers.

Other designed traffic circles in Syracuse are less well-documented. For spaces such as *Sabine Circle*, *Merry Widow Park* and *Howard Park* on the city's southwest side, it is difficult to determine original landscape features. Others, however, suggest a definite design intent. A 1939 newspaper article described Sabine Circle as space purchased by the City in 1907 to "permit the street cars to swing around the corner."<sup>32</sup> An earlier article in 1938 suggested that the space may have been "deeded to the city November 28, 1908, with a provision in the deed that it be used for street and park purposes only."<sup>33</sup>

The public spaces in Syracuse, taken as a group, reveal the growth of the city from its beginnings as a small trading settlement to a thriving regional center of business, transportation and culture. Syracuse public spaces can be evaluated on the local, state and national level under National Register Criteria A and C in the areas of architecture, community development and planning, and landscape architecture, and are eligible for listing as protected sites under local ordinance regulation.

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<sup>31</sup> Calvin Hennig, *The Outdoor Public Commemorative Monuments of Syracuse, New York: 1885-1950*, (Syracuse University Dissertation, 1983).

<sup>32</sup> *Syracuse Post-Standard*, 22 May 1939.

<sup>33</sup> *Syracuse Post-Standard*, 5 June 1938.

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### III. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

#### Public Squares

- A. Public squares must be a public open space within a settlement designed to accommodate a range of civic functions, including commerce and public gatherings.
- B. Property must exhibit integrity of location, design, materials and feeling as noted in requirements that follow.
- C. Surrounding architecture or adjoining site-specific land-use from the period of significance should be present.
- D. Visual focal points such as monuments, sculptures, flag poles and fountains can be present.
- E. Public squares can be the work of a master landscape architect, planner, or engineer.

#### Public Greens

- A. Property must be designed as an open public gathering open space within an early settlement area.
- B. Property must exhibit integrity of location, design, and feeling as noted in requirements that follow.
- C. Open or shaded grassy areas and shade trees must be present.
- D. Property can include one or more public buildings from the period of significance, such as meetinghouse, school or church.
- E. Walks laid out in a linear, diagonal or curvilinear pattern can be present.
- F. A variety of furnishings and objects, such as benches, lampposts, and monuments can be present.

#### Traffic Islands (1870 - 1920)

- A. Property must be designed to facilitate traffic flow at vehicle intersections and as a visual focal point within an urban circulation system.
- B. Property must exhibit integrity of location, design, materials and feeling as noted in requirements that follow.
- C. Layout must be geometric, with a single central focal point.
- D. Monument, statuary, water fountain, or other central feature functioning as a focal point must be present.
- E. Traffic island can be the work of a master landscape architect, planner or engineer.

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**PROPERTY TYPE: PARKS**

**I. DESCRIPTION**

**Definition:**

A distinct area of natural or man-made public land admired and used for its scenic and/or recreational qualities or for other civic purposes.

**Subtypes and Landscape Features:**

***Pre-Parks Movement Public Square (settlement to 1850):*** A planned public open space (generally less than 10 acres) within a settlement, often with adjacent residential, commercial or civic buildings, designed to accommodate civic functions, commercial activities, and/or passive recreation. (*See full discussion under Property Type: Public Spaces*).

***Pleasure Ground (1850-1900):*** A distinct open space of emphasized scenic, naturalistic design and sufficient scale (generally +50 acres) to provide escape from the surrounding urban environment. Design rooted in clearly articulated social philosophy, i.e. availability of natural beauty ensures mental and physical health of all levels of society and raises urban life to a higher level of civilization. Individual elements are subordinated to overall design. Generally serves a large portion of a community.

**Environment:** Generally located within or immediately adjacent to a densely populated urban area.

**Setting:** Usually defined by a recognizable border area and land use patterns different from the park itself.

**Natural Systems and Features:** Usually varied natural or man-made topography including rolling hills and broad spaces of greensward. Steep hills, ravines, stone outcroppings, etc. may be present and emphasized for scenic qualities.

**Buildings and Structures:** Generally in a rustic or other picturesque style and located to integrate into surrounding naturalistic landscape. Social gathering spaces may feature more classical designs. May include entrance gates, bridges, gazebos and various shelters. Site engineering systems are critically important.

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Vegetation: Usually profuse, massed and layered plantings of native material varying in color and texture. Planted as screens at property boundaries. General absence of individual specimens.

Spatial Organization: Includes both natural and social activity areas. Usually asymmetrical in natural areas with some axial alignment in social gathering spaces. General irregularity of line and mass. Planned contrasts in sense of scale of adjacent spaces. Variety of internal and external views and vistas with spaces laid out to provide a sequential experience.

Circulation: Generally a curvilinear system of roads and paths planned with some reference to natural topography except in gathering spaces which may exhibit more formal, straight roads and walks. Routes for various circulation modes and activities may be separated with overall system integral to spatial organization. Materials may be both natural and man-made.

Water Features: Usually present as prominent design elements. May include fountains, ponds, lakes, cascades, falls and/or streams, either natural or man-made.

Furnishings and Objects: Usually present in great variety including fences, benches, urns, sculptures, etc. often incorporating naturalistic design motifs.

**Reform Park (1900-1930)**: A distinct open area of approximately 10-40 acres designed to implement the Progressive political ideal of influencing moral development through structured recreational activities, often planned by social workers. Generally serves a neighborhood, often a working class district, rather than an entire community.

Environment: Generally located in densely populated urban areas with site selection sometimes determined by population statistics and standard minimum space required for various organized activities.

Setting: Usually defined by a recognizable border area and land use patterns distinctly different from the park itself.

Natural Systems and Features: Predominantly large areas of flat topography to accommodate playing fields. Areas of more varied topography may be present.

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Buildings and Structures: Generally includes a field house or other large central building and a variety of recreation and/or exercise apparatus. Other buildings and structures may include dance halls, pool houses, amphitheaters, zoos, etc.

Vegetation: Usually decorative rather than naturalistic with trees as perimeter plantings and shrubs and flowers as edging for buildings and entrances. Plantings may accentuate linearity of park design. Vegetable and/or other specialized gardens may be present.

Spatial Organization: Generally simple, open, geometric layout, often symmetrical rather than complex spatial sequencing. Often some screening of vistas to surrounding urban environs.

Circulation: Generally linear system of roads and paths, often organized along a formal axis leading from a central building to surrounding playing fields and other facilities. Materials generally man-made.

Water Features: May be present, usually as swimming or wading pools.

Furnishings and Objects: Usually present in great variety including fences, benches, play equipment, light fixtures, signs, etc.

Recreation Park (1930-1965): A distinct open area, generally under 10 acres, designed as a multiple use facility to efficiently provide a variety of recreational opportunities for a small neighborhood community.

Environment: Generally located in densely populated urban areas, sometimes connected with schools or housing developments as part of larger city planning efforts.

Setting: Usually defined by a fence separating park from its context and/or by land use patterns distinctly different from the park itself.

Natural Systems and Features: Predominantly large areas of flat topography accommodating a variety of recreational activities.

Buildings and Structures: Often numerous, varied in function and noteworthy for man-made construction materials, particularly concrete, cinder block, brick and tile.

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Vegetation: Minimal plantings, generally confined to linear perimeter plantings of trees, with understory and flower beds noticeably absent.

Spatial Organization: Generally open informal spaces. General absence of scenic views and vistas or distinctive patterns and sequencing.

Circulation: Generally linear system of roads and paths. Large paved areas to accommodate multiple recreational uses. Often extensive paved areas for parking.

Water Features: May be present, usually as swimming or wading pools or water slides.

Furnishings and Objects: Often includes standardized design elements (benches, fences, curbs). May include prefabricated, brightly-colored play equipment. Chain link fencing common. Often extensive signage occurs as means of organizing park activities.

**Note:** The park typology developed by Galen Cranz in the book, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America*, has been used to describe the property type, Parks (for the years after 1850, the period studied by Cranz) and as a framework for comparing Syracuse parks with national trends in park design.

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**II. SIGNIFICANCE**

Syracuse's ± 900 acre park system traces its origins to the area's settlement period, at the turn of the nineteenth century, when a few acres were set aside as public squares in villages eventually incorporated into the city. Considered the oldest park in the city, *Washington Park* dates from 1799 when the village of Salina was laid out by New York State to encourage growth of a local salt industry based on the brine springs along the southeast shore of Onondaga Lake. Located at the center of a grid, Washington Square began in the tradition of William Penn's 1683 plan for Philadelphia. Southwest of Salina, *St. Mark's Square* stood at the center of Geddes, a second early community devoted to salt manufacture. To the south, in Onondaga Valley, an area settled by farmers and merchants rather than salt boilers, *Onondaga Hollow Village Green* was the focus of community activity. With mixed civic, economic and religious uses, each of these early public squares originally functioned in the tradition of the village green, a design ideal carried to the area by settlers arriving from New England following the Revolution.

While these first squares were intentionally set aside as public open spaces, other early public squares developed on a somewhat ad hoc basis along transportation routes. *Clinton Square*, the first public square in the village of Syracuse, grew up at the intersection of two principal roads through the area, a hub later crossed by the Erie Canal. *Fayette* and *Forman Parks*, both appearing as squares on early village maps, were given their present boundaries in 1839 and 1850 respectively, when Genesee Street, originally bisecting the two spaces, was rerouted to bypass them. Not all transportation-related squares have survived. *Lock Square* which occupied the intersection of Lodi Street and the Canal became the twentieth-century site of a municipal garage.

Other pre-parks movement open spaces eventually became city parks more through the force of circumstances than intent. Many early, small-scale open spaces resulted from the imposition of the grid plan layout of Salina and Syracuse on older roads and turnpikes. The intersection of old and new roads often produced roughly triangular pieces of "leftover" land. Examples include *Demong* (formerly part of Union Square), *Union*, *Ashland* and *Grosso* (formerly Bennett) *Parks* in old Salina and *Billings* (formerly Warren) *Park* at the intersection of Salina and Warren Streets in Syracuse. While these odd parcels were of no particular civic or commercial value when first created, the arrival of the Erie Canal and the railroad, and the resulting local population growth in the 1820s and 1830s, increased the desirability of open space within the community. Generally ignoring the formality of deeding or dedication, property owners often donated bits of land for public use, sometimes to enhance the value of their adjacent residential property. A number of the city's small squares came into public use in this manner. In 1846-47, the village of Syracuse took possession of two parcels, now Billings and Ashland Parks, erected fences and set out trees. In 1851, Miles Bennett proposed



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that the Common Council expend funds to improve the square that he and his neighbors recently had dedicated to public use.<sup>1</sup>

**Leavenworth Park** is another open space acquired by virtue of changed circumstances. In 1854, the state sold salt land south of West Genesee Street, and Elias W. Leavenworth, formerly mayor and then New York Secretary of State, effected its acquisition by the city for public use.<sup>2</sup> Throughout his long public career, Leavenworth was instrumental in encouraging the village and later the city to establish public open space, in accordance to some degree with the park plan he said Judge Forman, considered the father of Syracuse, envisioned for the city. **Armory, Highland and McBride Parks** were established through Leavenworth's efforts during the period 1849-59, when Syracuse, without an overall plan, but with a clear intent to accommodate the needs of a growing community, continued the earlier pattern of setting aside green space as it became available. Surviving with various degrees of integrity and generally unremarkable landscape plans, Syracuse's pre-parks movement green spaces nonetheless document historical events and traditional settlement patterns, freely adjusted to local realities and aspirations, as the city grew to an important transportation, commercial and industrial center in the first half of the nineteenth century. (For complete discussion of pre-parks movement parks/squares, see Property Type: Public Spaces).

Published in 1851, the first Syracuse city directory listed twelve public squares/parks (most of which are noted above). All were of small-scale, local in character and had been acquired in a somewhat haphazard manner devoid of an overall plan. An absence of comprehensive planning for public open space was then the norm in American cities and would not be considered by most communities until later in the nineteenth century, if at all. However the desirability of larger scaled public open spaces, whose acquisition required planning, began to be evident as Americans enthusiastically embraced public gardens (see Property Type: Arboretum) and rural cemeteries (see Property Type: Burial Grounds and Cemeteries) established in the early and mid-nineteenth century.

Mount Auburn (1831), Cambridge, Massachusetts, was the nation's first rural cemetery. Conceived within the context of period romanticism with its principle tenet that nature had a salubrious impact on the mind, Mount Auburn and the cemeteries that followed were designed according to the conventions of English landscape gardening. An overall picturesque effect, achieved through varied topography, irregular land divisions, serpentine roads and sequential views and vistas, offered the public a welcome escape from the perceived problems of increasingly urbanized and industrialized cities. Enjoying the opportunity for outdoor recreation on a new, large scale, the public flocked to rural cemeteries as they were established in cities across the country. The cemeteries' popularity for recreation

<sup>1</sup> "Our Parks," *Syracuse Herald-Journal*, 10 July 1940.

<sup>2</sup> Elias Warner Leavenworth, *A Genealogy of the Leavenworth Family in the United States* (Syracuse: S.G. Hitchcock & Co., 1873), p.247.

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lead directly to the call, spearheaded by Andrew Jackson Downing and William Cullen Bryant in the 1840s, for large public parks nationwide. With parks soon perceived as a necessary and desirable civic amenity, New York's Central Park, the nation's first large pleasure ground, was established in 1858. (see Section E: Statement of Historic Contexts).

The Olmsted and Vaux design for Central Park combined the principles of naturalistic design (detailed above under Description: Pleasure Ground) with social and political goals. The growth of cities and resulting limited access to large outdoor spaces had created problems of overcrowding and of air and water pollution. New York's park was intended as a breathing place, large enough in scale to provide complete escape from the surrounding urban confusion and offering to the citizenry a venue where all classes might come together to enjoy the positive impact of well-designed naturalistic surroundings. In essence, Olmsted conceived of the park as a democratizing force which would encourage social interaction in a bucolic outdoor setting, the pleasure ground. With Central Park, the nation's urban consciousness was raised, and a large park began to be perceived as a necessity for a truly civilized city.

Social and economic disruption caused by the Civil War slowed urban park development during the 1860s. Although work on Baltimore's Druid Hill Park began in 1860 and Philadelphia's Fairmount Park was designed in 1865, wide-spread park development was delayed until the 1870s and 1880s. In upstate New York, significant park planning occurred first in Buffalo with Olmsted and Vaux's 1868-76 plan for the city's northside park system, followed by Olmsted's 1888 plan for the southside parks. In 1888, the Olmsted firm also planned Rochester's park system. Park development in Syracuse during the 1850s and 1860s apparently consisted largely of continued improvement of previously established small open spaces. As in the past, with seemingly little formal organization, the city acquired title to various properties, some, like Bennett Park, the site of earlier city-funded plantings and improvements. Private citizens also contributed to park improvements, notably in Fayette Park where, in the 1860s, C. Hastings, a New York City landscape gardener, was commissioned by area residents to design the grounds in the naturalistic pleasure ground style.

Given that Syracuse was incorporated as a city only in 1848, it is perhaps not surprising that development of a large urban park was delayed until 1886 when Burnet Park was founded, still two years ahead of Rochester's park system. Groundwork for a pleasure ground type park was laid as early as 1849 when the *Onondaga Standard* recommended acquisition of nine acres west of Onondaga Creek with the comment:

Nothing contributes so much to the health, comfort and contentment of the people of a city as parks - we are now without any such necessary luxuries, and the work must be commenced in the infancy of the city.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> "A Park," *Onondaga Standard*, 14 February 1849.

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Although the scale of the recommended purchase was small, the stated social purpose for the proposed park was very much in keeping with the pleasure ground concept that would make its Syracuse appearance later in Burnet Park. Syracuse leaders took a major step toward providing open space for the city when they founded Oakwood Cemetery in 1859. An outstanding example of the rural cemetery ideal, Oakwood was designed by Howard Daniels on an 82 acre site, many times the size of the city's older open spaces. The cemetery was embraced enthusiastically by the community; thousands visited in its first year, enjoying the opportunity for passive recreation which the designed landscape provided. A new streetcar line deposited visitors at the cemetery's main entrance where *Danforth Park* (not extant) was created to provide additional recreational possibilities just outside the cemetery gate. Oakwood's popularity helped to pave the way for later widespread community acceptance of the need for a large urban park. A second property established before the Civil War may have also contributed to local enthusiasm for a park. Between 1850-54, James Haskins completed a private estate in the picturesque style on 100 acres of farmland east of the city. Major Alexander Davis acquired the property in 1873 and, for over two decades, under the direction of David Campbell, an expert horticulturist trained at Skibo Castle in Scotland, continued its development as an elaborate private pleasure ground called Thornden. Although the Davis estate did not become the city's Thornden Park until 1921, after the pleasure ground era, its earlier existence may well have sparked local interest in a public pleasure ground.

As the city grew following the Civil War, the public's need for recreation space was often met by private entrepreneurs. *Walnut Park* was laid out c1872 on the highlands east of the city as part of a real estate development scheme (see Property Type: Residential Subdivisions). Picnicking was possible at the end of the Genesee Street railway where "the necessary adjuncts, band stand, dancing platform, rustic seats, swings, etc. [were] provided"<sup>4</sup> in the ten-acre *East Avenue Park* (not extant). Circuses and horse races were held at *Tallman Park* (not extant). Horse races, ball games, fairs, bicycle races and sham battles were held at the *Syracuse Driving Park* (not extant) built in 1868 east of Westcott Street. An 1864 newspaper editorial suggested the creation of a zoo, while an 1874 column supported establishment of a public conservatory to awaken in the "laborer's family...all the better elements of their nature,"<sup>5</sup> a clear reference to period social engineering via public institutions. These suggestions reflected post-Civil War enthusiasm for new forms of entertainment. Accustomed to urban life, later nineteenth-century Americans felt less need to escape the city. Instead they wanted their cities to offer new amenities which often took the form of conservatories, bandshells and zoos added to existing parks or incorporated in new park plans.

<sup>4</sup> "East Avenue Park" (advertisement), *Syracuse Journal*, 12 June 1879.

<sup>5</sup> "A Public Conservatory," *Syracuse Journal*, 26 March 1874.

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The public benefits of outdoor recreation space apparently were clear to Syracuse leaders who, in 1871, took a first step in systematic park improvements by securing passage of state legislation enabling the city to receive land donations and establishing a nine-man commission to guide the process. The immediate impulse for the legislation was a local plan to secure for park purposes an area of low land bordering Onondaga Creek, some of which eventually was included in Onondaga Park with the remainder having been built up and covered with houses.<sup>6</sup> For undetermined reasons, the new commission made little progress in the years following its creation. Newspaper columns in the 1870s and 1880s were filled with concern over the city's lack of a pleasure ground style park. One writer stated, "... a city that bids fair to have a population of a hundred thousand, in the next thirty or forty year, should have a grand public park..."<sup>7</sup> Another lamented, "Why can we not have a public park?"<sup>8</sup> While some argued for a large park modeled after Central Park, others, believing it was too late to secure large tracts of land, proposed a system of small parks of from five to fifty acres distributed throughout the city.<sup>9</sup> It was noted as well that Syracuse itself, with its long history of extensive tree-planting, was a vast, inhabited park.<sup>10</sup>

Finally in 1886, after fifteen years of discourse, *Burnet Park* was founded on ±100 acres of farmland donated to the city by John B. Burnet. The property was located west of the city along its boundary with the town of Geddes. This position set the pattern for the future large park system which, to a degree, reflected the city's development; most of the city's major parks were established by the early 1900s just outside what was then the city's boundary. The process began with the city's acceptance of the Burnet donation and subsequent annexation of Geddes later in 1886, and it was repeated in the decades ahead with typical American confidence in the certainty of urban growth. With its large size, "slightly elevations, romantic ravines, a cool, refreshing grove, natural routes for roads and drives, and eligible sites for observatories,"<sup>11</sup> the property was ideally suited for creating a pleasure ground in the Central Park tradition where every resident might have access to the benefits of open space. With clear reference to the Olmsted ideal, Burnet anticipated the park would "...educate our people to a love of natural scenery and decorative art ... give health and vigor to their minds [and] prove a blessing to the sick and a solace to the poor."<sup>12</sup> From a less

<sup>6</sup> Undated newspaper clippings in Onondaga Historical Association "Parks" file.

<sup>7</sup> "Shall the City Have a Park? How Shall One be Obtained?," *Syracuse Journal*, 20 December 1880.

<sup>8</sup> Untitled, *Syracuse Journal*, 28 June 1875.

<sup>9</sup> "What Can Be Done to Improve the City?," *Syracuse Journal*, 4 January 1881.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> "The Mayor and Aldermen Today Visit Burnet Farm - Mr. Burnet Points Out the Park's Bounds - Eligibility and Beauty of the Site," Undated newspaper column in Onondaga Historical Association "Parks" file.

<sup>12</sup> *Common Council Proceedings*, September 20, 1886, quoted in Rachele R. Cohen, "Burnet Park: Part of the American Park Movement" (B.A. Thesis, Syracuse University, 1985), p.7.

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altruistic perspective, Burnet, who owned adjacent property, may have anticipated an increase in property values around the park. The park plan, by Alfred R. Edgerton and John Bogart, engineers and landscape architects, incorporated many elements of English landscape gardening and marked the first important merger of national design trends with development of a Syracuse park. Curvilinear roads passed through areas of greensward and dense tree copses, taking advantage along the way of opportunities for views to the city in the distance. Space was reserved as well for tennis, croquet and baseball. In 1889, Thomas Bishop, a local florist who had worked for fourteen years at the famous English estate, Chatsworth,<sup>13</sup> took charge of the ongoing construction project, thus ensuring, apparently, the continued influence of English design principles during the park's early years.

The success of Burnet Park prompted the Common Council to acquire additional property, generally at the city's perimeter, for new parks. *Onondaga Park* (Upper and Lower), established in 1898 on a site incorporating portions of Onondaga Creek and the site of the old Wilkinson Reservoir, was accessible by street car and encouraged growth of today's Strathmore area, then the village of Elmwood. Following the pattern established at Burnet Park, the city annexed the village of Elmwood in 1899. Eventually planned with meandering drives, dense tree groupings, rock gardens and lakes, Onondaga Park offered Syracusans a picturesque escape from the workaday world. Other parks created at the turn-of-the-century, more or less in the pleasure ground idiom, occupied grounds devoted earlier to casual recreation or other purposes. *Lincoln Park* (1898) had been Robinson's Woods, a popular picnicking spot, and *Schiller Park* (1901) was laid out on the site of St. Cecilia Cemetery. *Kirk Park* (1909) was previously the site of a race track (1850), picnic grounds known as Kirk Woods, and various county fairs, circuses, bicycle races and fireworks displays. Established toward the end of the Victorian era, these parks sometimes featured elaborate carpet beds similar to those then in vogue for homegrounds. In the resulting plans artificial gardens coexisted with naturalistic site features typical of earlier park design.

Rather than overall planning for an integrated park system, the determining logic behind the location of these c1900 parks seems to have been the public's traditional patterns of recreation. The local parks of the period reflect the imposition of designed landscapes on a cultural landscape base. Considered together, the city's parks at the turn of the century preserved a shared local experience of recreation, important in-and-of-itself, but perceived by many citizens as an inadequate basis for future park planning. Preferred was a comprehensive plan more in keeping with the City Beautiful ideal of monumental spaces, grand vistas, classical structures and designed streetscapes resulting from public infatuation with the spectacle of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. Consequently in 1905, the city turned to Charles Mulford Robinson (1864-1917), a Rochester journalist-turned-city planner who coined the phrase "City Beautiful" and who, through his many publications, was one of the

<sup>13</sup> "A Stroll in the Park," *Syracuse Standard*, 5 June 1890.

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most influential proponents of the City Beautiful Movement during its period of dominance, 1893-1909. Robinson was asked for his advice on civic improvements that "might make Syracuse a much more beautiful city to look at and a better one to live in."<sup>14</sup> In a series of newspaper articles, Robinson, finding little in the city to praise, suggested improvement of the many small squares and triangles, important for their uniqueness and organic relation to the city's past, along with a grand plan for linking existing and new parks via broad, tree-lined drives. Recognizing the possible difficulties in implementing his ideas, Robinson suggested establishment of a Park Commission and hiring of an expert to design the improvements, rather than relying on the parks superintendent to formulate such extensive plans.<sup>15</sup>

Heeding his advice, the city created a Park Commission in 1906 with the understanding that Syracuse could at last "take up seriously the question of city beautification and the proper management and development of its parks."<sup>16</sup> The Commission immediately hired well-known Kansas City landscape architect, George E. Kessler (1862-1923) to "develop a park and boulevard system in and about the city of Syracuse."<sup>17</sup> In hiring Kessler the Commission continued a tradition of seeking nationally significant consultants that had been established in 1859 with the choice of Howard Daniels as designer for Oakwood Cemetery. The system of open spaces and boulevards which Kessler recently had designed for Kansas City was "in the 1890s and the early twentieth century ... as widely publicized as Central Park had been thirty-five years earlier."<sup>18</sup> In the tradition of Olmsted's linked park system for Boston (1878), H.W.S. Cleveland's plans for the Minneapolis parks and parkways (1883) as well as his own Kansas City work, Kessler's proposal for Syracuse, entitled "Onondaga Creek Parkway Plan" (1907), recommended a parkway along Onondaga Creek connecting Lower Onondaga Park with what is now Kirk Park. Although Kessler's proposal was well-received, it became mired in local politics and was not implemented. A decade later, in 1916-17, the city planned a parkway along Onondaga Creek based largely on Kessler's earlier plan.<sup>19</sup> Finally completed in the 1930s, Onondaga Creek Boulevard, along with Upper and Lower Onondaga Parks and Kirk Park, forms the city's only linked open space system. Despite an intent to create a city-wide system of linked parks and parkways, Syracuse's park development in the early twentieth century maintained an earlier pattern of individual self-contained spaces, encouraging growth in one direction or another, but failing to provide

<sup>14</sup> "Syracuse's Opportunities," *Syracuse Herald*, October 1905.

<sup>15</sup> The articles appeared in the *Syracuse Herald* between October 1905 and Summer 1906.

<sup>16</sup> Unidentified newspaper dated April 24, 1906, from Onondaga Historical Association "Parks" file.

<sup>17</sup> "Authorize Landscape Architect: Council Votes for Park Progress," *Syracuse Herald*, 2 October 1906.

<sup>18</sup> Philip Pregill and Nancy Volkman, *Landscapes in History* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1993), p.447.

<sup>19</sup> Information on Kessler's plans for Syracuse is based on relevant chapters in *Syracuse Historic Landscape Resources Survey* (Syracuse: Syracuse Department of Community Development, 1988).

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continuous green space through all quadrants of the city.

In addition to concern over their city's lack of an integrated park system, turn-of-the-century Syracusans shared the national interest in creating playgrounds as a means of improving the health and character of the urban poor who found themselves living in crowded conditions without access to adequate recreational opportunities. In response to urban growth and the perceived failure of the modern city, reformers during the Progressive Era established playgrounds and other small parks (reform parks) where organized activities would socialize the urban working class to a common core of American values, i.e. self-reliance, hard work, fair play. Where the pleasure ground park offered landscape beauty, fresh air and largely unstructured recreation as a means of curing social ills, the reform park relied on a program of supervised, organized games, sports and other activities to achieve the same end. Concurrent with rising concern for the well-being of urban workers, a national trend toward more active sports and exercise encouraged reform park development and the facilities these parks provided. The public in general no longer found relaxing naturalistic environments sufficient for recreation. Instead they demanded entertainment and variety through planned activity.

The first reform parks were actually playgrounds intended for children. A large sandpile placed in the yard of a Boston mission in 1885 is generally regarded as the earliest playground. It was so popular that the idea quickly spread, soon forcing city governments to install play equipment in existing parks and squares. Charlesbank, an "open-air gymnasium" with play apparatus, pools and a track, was established in Boston in 1889 and had considerable influence on subsequent reform park development. Before 1900, a dozen cities, thanks often to private funding, had playgrounds of various sorts.<sup>20</sup> In 1887, New York City was authorized to use funds to purchase land for playgrounds in congested neighborhoods. Chicago passed similar legislation in 1901. And in 1906, the movement toward active recreation was institutionalized with the establishment of the Playground Association of America.

Athletic facilities installed in older parks often supplemented the new playgrounds. At the turn of the century, cricket and football fields were added to Chicago's Washington Park, two golf courses were laid out in Jackson Park, the site of the 1893 Exposition, and primitive tennis courts were installed in Brooklyn's Prospect Park. In 1904, Olmsted Brothers set a design precedent with their plans for Chicago's South Parks playgrounds. Their outdoor exercise areas, game courts, wading and swimming pools and fieldhouses for indoor recreation, all contained in an open, formal plan, were soon emulated in many cities.

Locally, Syracusans had begun to agitate for playgrounds in the late 1890s. With the hope that "Our city will ... move up to the wholesome progression of the new century,"<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Norman Newton, *Design on the Land* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 623.

<sup>21</sup> *Syracuse Herald*, 24 September 1899.

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citizens advocated for playgrounds as a "crying need." Lamenting, "There are in Syracuse thousands and thousands of children who have no place but the street to play ... and thousands of mothers who are suffering in the summer months for a whiff of free open air, whose only recreation is in hanging out of their windows or mingling in crowds upon their front steps,"<sup>22</sup> columnists predicted a "weakened race" unless playgrounds, accessible to the working classes, were established. During his 1905 visit, Charles M. Robinson, whose influential book, *The Improvement of Towns and Cities* (1901), included a chapter on playgrounds, encouraged their creation in Syracuse. As occurred in other cities, Syracuse women's clubs, under the leadership of Mrs. Frederick R. Hazard, spearheaded a response to the city's stated need; in 1910, *Frazer Playground*, the city's first, was established by the Parks Commission. Outfitted with swings, ropes, ladders, slides and sand, it offered up-to-date opportunities for athletic play. During the 1912 season, 58,000 children used the city's new playgrounds where they were "given healthful exercise and profitable instruction," social ideals at the heart of the playground movement.

Creation of the Syracuse Department of Parks in 1917, as an entity separate from the Department of Public Works, was a further encouragement to small park development. The Parks Department's first annual report documents the pervasive influence of reform park philosophy on Syracuse's park planning process during the Progressive Era. The report noted that landscape beauty, in the pleasure ground tradition, must be "subservient to the widest possible public use." Playgrounds received the greatest attention in the report, their importance clear in the statement:

...next to our public school system the public playground is the most potent force of our modern democracy. On the playground we are endeavoring to teach assimilation rather than precept or preaching, and find that the youth will come to the playground of his own accord and learn the lesson of fair play by association with his fellow players.<sup>23</sup>

Attendance at the playgrounds leapt to 400,000 during the 1918 season with instruction offered in swimming, baseball, track, military drill, dance and indoor crafts. In accordance with the reform park goal of providing activity for all ages, the report noted as well, "The playgrounds are becoming increasingly popular and the older people are beginning to realize that the city authorities are not only trying to provide healthy sports for their children, but also for themselves."<sup>24</sup>

In Syracuse, as elsewhere, efforts were made to locate new playgrounds in all neighborhoods of the city, ideally with some reference to available public transportation.

<sup>22</sup> "Children's Playgrounds," *Syracuse Standard*, 25 February 1898.

<sup>23</sup> *First Annual Report*, by F.M. Westcott, Commissioner, (Syracuse: Department of Parks, 1918), p.3.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.



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*Lewis Park* was established on the city's west side in 1919, exclusively with elements of reform park design. By 1929, the city had 16 playgrounds. As had occurred in larger cities, the popularity locally of playgrounds and the reform park idea also resulted in the insertion of playgrounds and other reform era features into existing parks where park personnel worked to integrate traditional park landscaping with new play equipment and recreation facilities. Burnet Park's romantic landscape was altered by the addition of a golf course, swimming pool and bath house, playing fields, dance pavilion, demonstration garden and a zoo, opened in 1916 on the site of a former circus. Many of Syracuse's larger parks, although established during the pleasure ground era, were developed during the reform era with the result that they exhibited elements of each period. Work on Schiller Park, begun in 1905, combined drives through pastoral scenery with tennis courts, play apparatus, basketball courts, a swimming pool, bath house and track.

In 1921, following a pattern of acquiring parkland at the municipal perimeter in areas of anticipated residential growth, the city purchased Thornden, the former Davis estate (noted above). Considered a "park ready made" at the time of purchase, *Thornden Park* is particularly noteworthy for its pleasure ground landscape modified with reform era amenities. During the 1920s and into the 1930s, when park work provided jobs for the city's unemployed, reform era features including geometric gardens, tennis courts, a playground, swimming pool and bath house and playing fields were inserted into the earlier naturalistic landscape. Perhaps most indicative of changing attitudes toward the park was the conversion of a trout pond, an earlier rustic feature, into an amphitheater designed for civic events. In the case of each of the city's pleasure grounds, changes made during the reform era confirmed the period's increased attention to popular usage of parks for activities designed to "improve" the individual and thus society-at-large. By 1929, the approximate end of the reform park period at the national level, Syracuse's park commissioner, Frank M. Westcott, confidently could praise the city's modern park program. In stating, "With few exceptions, there is a park or playground located in every district of the city"<sup>25</sup> and "The guiding principle ... has been to cater to the many instead of the few with enough variety of activities and necessities so that all may find something of interest,"<sup>26</sup> Westcott encapsulated Syracuse's twenty-year effort to apply reform park ideals to local park development.

In the 1930s the national trend in park administration abandoned earlier idealistic efforts to use parks as a means of social reform. Parks no longer needed a philosophical justification for existence, but instead came to be seen as a necessary and expected feature of everyday urban life. As it was an all-encompassing word excluding no activity or age group, "recreation" instead of "play" described the new park purpose. Facing rising populations and increased demand for recreation spaces, park administrators worked to expand their physical

<sup>25</sup> "Present City Park System Begun in 1917," *Syracuse Post Standard*, unknown date in 1929.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

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systems rather than focus on educational programming. In New York City, during the twenty years from the mid-1930s, park resources increased five times under the direction of Commissioner Robert Moses.<sup>27</sup> During the 1930s and 1940s, much of the expansion in New York and elsewhere was carried out in cooperation with schools and housing programs resulting in parks adjacent to schools and housing projects. In other cases recreation facilities were placed on vacant lots in congested areas of the city where demand was high. While reform era playgrounds were staffed and offered structured activities, during the recreation era, increases in the number of parks outstripped ability to provide staff, and coherent programming was lost. With increased acreage to manage, administrators worked to streamline operations; management procedures and design elements, including benches, fences, curbing and play apparatus, were standardized within the new multiple-use facilities.

Following the national trend as it had in the past, Syracuse's parks program devoted its attention in the 1930s to the creation of small parks connected to schools. The parks commissioner noted, "Both motorists and children form habit patterns making for safety in the school zones."<sup>28</sup> In addition to offering safety, these small parks required "only one supervisor," a reference to the need to spread staff over greater areas. During the 1930s at least 10 school playgrounds were opened ranging in size from 2 to 8 acres.<sup>29</sup> In addition to these neighborhood play spaces, the parks department worked toward establishing a major recreation facility within a mile of every home.<sup>30</sup> In the mid-1930s, *Sunnycrest Park*, with a golf course, athletic fields and tennis courts, was laid out in Eastwood, an area annexed by the city in 1927. *Homer Wheaton Park* was built c1940 in Salt Springs, another rapidly growing area of the city. In response to the need for recreation programs, a Municipal Recreation Commission was created in 1935 as an entity separate from the parks department. It offered a grand variety of programs leading a local columnist to state, "The new generation is on the march, the recreation regiment."<sup>31</sup>

During the Depression, in an effort to combat social upheaval, the federal government became involved in landscape planning and design on a scale unknown in the past. Considerable local park work during the 1930s apparently was carried out with assistance from state and federal government programs. The city was "among the first" to promote work projects as a means of relieving unemployment. State Temporary Emergency Relief Administration (TERA), Works Progress Administration (WPA) programs and others were of great importance both for park construction projects and recreation program staffing. Work

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<sup>27</sup> Galen Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982), p. 103.

<sup>28</sup> "Our Parks," *Syracuse Herald-Journal*, 13 July 1940.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> "Our Parks," *Syracuse Herald-Journal*, 11 July 1940.

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relief construction projects across the country generally were consistent in their rustic naturalistic style. Extant work relief projects in Syracuse include the 1933 stone field house at Thornden Park and most notably the improvements made at *Elmwood Park* following its acquisition in 1927. Elmwood was built on the site of a succession of private amusement grounds admired for their natural scenery. Working with stone and wood, work relief crews constructed a series of rustic stairs, walls, bridges and embankments, consistent in style and workmanship, and still largely intact. With its pleasure ground landscape and New Deal era improvements, Elmwood Park occupies a unique position in local park history.

With a history of development extending back to the settlement era, Syracuse's parks reflect the growth of the city, a process they also helped to shape over time. At the same time the parks, from public square to recreation facility, are local reflections of national trends in the philosophy of park planning and related landscape design over time. A 1940 newspaper account captured their importance with the statement, "All together, from the beginning, these works embody vision, faith and civic spirit of individuals and of the community working in common to make this a better land in which to live."<sup>32</sup> Syracuse parks can be evaluated on the local, state and national level under National Register criteria A and C in the areas of community planning and development, entertainment/recreation and landscape architecture and are eligible for listing as protected sites under local ordinance regulation.

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<sup>32</sup> "Our Parks," *Syracuse Herald-Journal*, 10 July 1940.

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### III. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

#### Pleasure Ground

- A. Property must be a public open space originally intended to provide relief from urban congestion through a design emulating nature.
- B. Property must exhibit integrity of location, design, materials and feeling as noted in requirements that follow.
- C. Planned spatial sequencing related to the period of significance must be exhibited.
- D. Circulation system must be generally curvilinear and integral to spatial organization and related to the period of significance.
- E. Topography must be varied and related to the period of significance.
- F. Plantings must exhibit varied, massed and layered patterns related to the period of significance.
- G. Various water features related to the period of significance can occur.
- H. A variety of buildings, structures and furnishings generally in a rustic or other picturesque style can occur.
- I. Property can be the work of a master landscape architect, landscape gardener or engineer.

#### Reform Park

- A. Property must be a public open space originally designed to afford recreational opportunities to a neighborhood district.
- B. Property must exhibit integrity of location, design, materials and feeling as noted in requirements that follow.
- C. Layout must be generally formal and geometric and related to the period of significance.
- D. Topography must be predominantly flat and the circulation corridor generally linear.
- E. A field house or other large central building related to the period of significance can occur.
- F. A great variety of furnishings and objects can occur.
- G. Property can be the work of a master landscape architect or engineer.

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**Recreation Park**

- A. Property must be a public open space originally designed as a multiple use recreational facility.
- B. Property must exhibit integrity of location, design, materials and feeling as noted in requirements that follow.
- C. Spaces must be generally flat, open and unadorned often including both paved and turfing areas, with a notable absence of complex spatial patterns.
- D. Equipment must occur in a variety intended to accommodate multiple forms of active recreation.
- E. Property can be the work of a master landscape architect or engineer.

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*Property Type: Residential Subdivisions*

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**PROPERTY TYPE: RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISIONS**

**I. DESCRIPTION**

**Definition:**

A distinct area of land developed for residential use (typically less than 200 acres) laid out according to a unified site plan, often in response to constraints of urban living. Generally serves middle to upper income families.

**Landscape Features:**

Environment: Generally located on the edge of populated urban areas. Site selection sometimes determined by settlement patterns, proximity to major transportation corridors, or existing natural features.

Setting: May or may not be defined by any recognizable border or adjacent land use pattern.

Natural Systems and Features: Typically varied natural topography consisting of flat or rolling hills and/or low or elevated areas.

Buildings and Structures: Predominantly residential buildings of various styles, massing and building materials. Introduction of construction requirements and buildings standards eventually may be reflected by a consistency in features. Mechanical and site engineering systems are often present and critical to circulation and spatial organization.

Vegetation: Usually limited to streetscape, entries and other public spaces. Both trees and shrub plantings may be present. Plant materials for individual lots are usually the responsibility of the owner, though indigenous plant material may sometimes be preserved.

Spatial Organization: Typically individual lots of similar size and configuration provide uniform density. Common areas may be included. Streets serve as movement corridors which orient views and provide a sequential experience. External views and vistas may be incorporated into the design.

Circulation: Both vehicular and pedestrian systems are usually present. Organization is hierarchical, employing either grid or curvilinear patterns that may or may not conform to the setting or environment. Materials are usually man-made (concrete, asphalt, brick).

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Water Features: Fountains may be present.

Furnishings and Objects: Typically features a unified streetscape treatment including lights, benches, paving, signs, etc. A distinct entry with gates, signage, etc., may also be present.

## II. SIGNIFICANCE

The development of planned residential subdivisions in America was a direct product of the suburban movement which began in the early nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Considered the highest form of city planning during that period, suburbanization offered economic and social advantages to a growing urban population. Country living outside the city presented an attractive alternative to the increasingly vice-filled urban centers - it was cleaner, healthier and offered an image of prosperity. Early suburbanization was slow, and typically without an overall plan, as homes were built by enterprising individuals on the perimeter of urban areas. However, as the country rapidly industrialized during the course of the nineteenth century, and the growth of urban populations exploded, the acute demand for housing resulted in large-scale planned residential developments in suburban areas. Often such development took the form of a "subdivision," where a large tract of (commonly agricultural) land was purchased and "subdivided" into dozens, or even hundreds, of individual residential lots according to a predetermined site plan. Well-planned subdivisions were highly unified, with a uniform streetscape treatment and strict control over the size, location, and design of homes. With houses usually built in a flurry over a short period of time, architecture usually was highly unified in style, and imbued the development with a distinct sense of place. Common open space in the form of parks or other recreation facilities was sometimes provided, along with a hierarchical street system which integrated the development with the surrounding community while at the same time maintaining exclusive privacy for residents.

In Syracuse, the development of subdivisions reflected patterns of suburbanization seen across the country. As with many northeast cities, Syracuse experienced dramatic economic growth in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The desire to move outside the city, away from the congestion and pollution of industrialism, corresponded with the sentimental interest in nature which swept the nation during the Romantic Period. It is, therefore, not surprising that early residential subdivisions reflected many of the same ideals manifested in

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<sup>1</sup> Philip Pregill and Nancy Volkman, *Landscapes in History: Design and Planning in the Western Tradition*, (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1993), p. 193.

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other large-scale property types such as parks and cemeteries (see Property Types: Parks; Burial Grounds and Cemeteries). In Syracuse, as in other cities, a variety of factors affected the development of subdivisions, including land speculation, economic development, local politics and transportation.

Early suburbs were established in response to specific public needs. The industrial suburb movement, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, provided housing for employees of large companies. The philosophy of Pullman (Illinois) and Niagara Power Company's Echota (Niagara Falls, NY) was based on the business decision that a happy worker was a productive worker. In the Village of Solvay, New York, west of Syracuse, the influence of manufacturing on housing needs became significant when Solvay Process (later Syracuse Works of Allied Chemical Corporation) provided company housing for employees beginning in the 1890s. Other suburbs were more affluent. Resort suburbs developed towards the end of the nineteenth century, such as Oak Bluffs on Martha's Vineyard and New York's Tuxedo Park, catered to upper income families. Many naturalistic or romantic suburbs followed a basic design criteria similar to that employed in the design of rural cemeteries and pleasure ground parks. Large country estates were often divided into separate lots as part of a unified site plan, with flexibility in the lay-out of individual lots. Evergreen Hamlet (Pittsburgh) and Llewellyn Park (West Orange, NJ) typified this new style. Llewellyn Park was a 400 acre site designed in 1853 with 50 residential sites. Within a few years, however, naturalistic community suburbs for the middle to upper-middle income families evolved and expanded in scale and function into what John R. Stilgoe describes as the planned residential community.<sup>2</sup>

The suburbanization of America is rooted in the development of transportation technology. Though suburbs took many different forms, most developments were able to flourish because efficient means of travel made it possible for people to live on the fringes of the city. Prior to the early nineteenth century, walking was the principle form of movement in most American cities. Homes, commercial shops and places of work were of necessity located close together, creating a familiar urban density. With the advent of steam and railroad service in the early part of the century, and electric car service at the end of the century, settlement beyond the urban core could be realized, and suburban housing opportunities for Americans with modest income levels began to appear.

In 1815, New York City's Brooklyn Heights was established when a newly-formed steam ferry service provided transportation across the East River to Manhattan. A similar service to Staten Island in 1836 helped to establish the suburb of New Brighton. New York State's influence in the community suburb movement was originally felt in 1831 when the Legislature granted its first railroad charter to the New York and Harlem Railroad, allowing tracks between the two communities. Residents could live in Harlem and enjoy "a comfortable house on an acre or two of land with a garden, orchard, dairy and other

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<sup>2</sup> John R. Stilgoe, *Borderland: Origins of the American Suburb: 1820-1939*, (Yale Press, 1988).



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conveniences,<sup>3</sup> and over the next fifty years the area developed into an affluent suburb for commuters working in New York. Another important development in transportation came in 1888 with the introduction of the electric streetcar. Average traveling speeds increased by three times, to 15-18 mph, enabling the range of commuting to increase significantly. This change led to new development opportunities for land and real estate companies promoting home ownership.

Frederick Law Olmsted's (1822-1903) design for Riverside, Illinois in 1868 is perhaps the most famous of the naturalistic railroad community suburbs. This 1600 acre site outside of Chicago was owned by the Riverside Improvement Company when it commissioned Olmsted and partner Calvert Vaux (1824 - 1895) "to plan a suburban village."<sup>4</sup> It was Olmsted's view that the community should "have the convenience of the city with the conditions which are the peculiar advantage of the country, such as purity of air, umbrageousness, facilities for quiet out-of-door recreation and distance from the jar, noise, confusion and bustle of commercial thoroughfares."<sup>5</sup> Curvilinear roadways, large open spaces, large lot sizes, minimum building setbacks and complete infrastructure services were incorporated into the romantic-style design. Though Riverside grew very slowly, Olmsted was able to convince company owners of the merits of preserving residential character through implementation of an overall comprehensive plan. The suburban village included a center core for "a railroad depot, hotel, small commercial block, a chapel, and a school."<sup>6</sup> The legacy of Riverside influenced suburban growth and subdivision design for many years to come. In fact, Olmsted himself was involved in 23 suburban developments, beginning in the 1880s and continuing until 1893 with Druid Hills, near Atlanta.

Druid Hills was one of the most notable early examples of a planned suburban development which can be defined as strictly a "residential subdivision." The site was a 1500 acre property between Atlanta and Decatur, Georgia owned by developer Joel Hurt. Olmsted produced a site plan for the development in 1893, but it was not until 1908 that the sale of lots began.<sup>7</sup> Unlike Riverside, Olmsted's three major components for the ideal suburban community were realized at Druid Hills. First, public open space was provided in the form of six separate passive and active parks located throughout the development adjacent to residential lots, serving to enhance views from the homes and create extensions of private lawns and gardens. Second, the architecture of residential houses constructed at one time provided "a basic consistency among buildings reflected in the period revivals of the 1920s

<sup>3</sup> Robert Stern, (ed.), "The Anglo American Suburb", *Architectural Design*, (Vol. 51, 1981).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Pregill and Volkman, p. 479.

<sup>6</sup> Darlene R. Roth, "Frederick Law Olmsted's First and Last Suburbs: Riverside and Druid Hills," *National Association for Olmsted Parks Workbook*, (Vol. 4, 1993).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

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and 1930s ... [a] visual variety which has a distinct sense of time and historic period attached to it." Third, the parkway system was "conceived as both a connector and a pleasure drive" for walking, driving and passing through the development. Olmsted had designed a parkway for Riverside which unfortunately was never built. In Druid Hills, the parkway, called Ponce de Leon Avenue, accommodated both automobiles and electric trolley traffic. Significantly, the trolley was located not in the center of the street, as was the common practice, but off to one side within planted areas. The village center concept of Riverside was not part of Druid Hills. Instead Olmsted designed the site as a "residential centreless suburb," strictly speaking, a residential subdivision.<sup>8</sup>

By the end of the nineteenth century, planned residential developments had become a permanent fixture of the American landscape. Improved health conditions and better housing construction methods mandated improved water and sewage systems. Sites were planned and developed in a unified manner, with the architecture often designed to fit the natural characteristics of the site. Inappropriate development was discouraged by establishing building standards for sidewalks, paved roads, lots sizes and building set back. In some cases, municipalities were established to invoke taxes and provide services. Garden City, New York (1869); Roland Park, Maryland (1891); Shaker Heights, Ohio (1916), and Forest Hills Gardens (1912) in Queens were all planned community suburbs. Lake Forest (1856) near Chicago was designed by landscape architect and planner Jed Hotchkiss as a resort for Lake Forest College, and only later grew into a full-fledged suburb. In other cases, many developments which could be classified as "residential subdivisions", such as the 1885 design of Rochelle Park (New Rochelle, NY) and Prospect Park South (1899) in Brooklyn, were annexed by larger municipalities, a common occurrence during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

In Syracuse, settlement during the first half of the nineteenth century had been located close to downtown, near areas of retail and manufacturing, along the east-west Erie Canal corridor, or along major roads such as James Street. Early residential neighborhoods were close to the urban center and tied to the existing street grid. During the 1840s, fourteen residential "mansions" built by prominent citizens encircled Center Square, present day Fayette Park (see Property Type: Public Spaces & Parks). About the same time, James Street became prime real estate as dozens of elegant residences were built (see Property Type: Residential Gardens). Later, other streets (McBride, Genesee, Onondaga and Salina) also became enclaves for residential housing, as many of the earliest residential structures were lost to commercial expansion of downtown. Downtown houses were also plagued by drainage problems, particularly houses in lower areas. In addition, the arrival of the horsedrawn trolley in the 1860s and electric trolleys in the 1880s allowed residents who either worked downtown or required centralized services the opportunity to live outside the city center. One newspaper

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

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article claimed that "one of the most significant things in the growth of the city has been the changes in street car lines and traffic."<sup>9</sup> By 1913, 222 street cars carried citizens to all parts of the city, a significant increase from 30 in 1880.

The first true residential subdivision in Syracuse was *The Highlands*, developed in 1872 in an eight block area on a hill southwest of downtown. George F. (Judge) Comstock, a prominent attorney and financier who played an important role in the early growth of Syracuse, owned the property. Nottingham and Tucker became sales agents for the development, and produced a 38-page promotional brochure promoting "The Highlands of Syracuse" to prospective buyers. The location was billed as the "ne plus ultra" of "suburban residence sites in this part of the Empire State."<sup>10</sup> It offered many advantages such as a location that was "healthier" and "away from noise."<sup>11</sup> The Highlands provided a connection between the city and the country. It followed the typical grid pattern of the city in layout, yet offered a number of innovative design amenities to support single family residential living. "Public breathing places" in the form of six open space lots provided by "the proprietor" were integrated into the plan. Two of the lots became parks, Monument and Carroll, which were designed as carriage intersections providing travelers an opportunity to pass through a formal landscape setting. Another park, Walnut Park, consisted of four adjacent lots located between Harrison and University Place.<sup>12</sup> Other benefits highly touted by Nottingham & Tucker included the wonderful views overlooking the city and Onondaga Lake, excellent drainage of a "single trunk sewer, close proximity to street car lines; shade trees and sidewalks; and nearness to retail stores, churches and schools." The subdivision also benefitted from its close proximity to the new Syracuse University campus, founded in 1871 on adjacent land also owned by Judge Comstock. Developers had a clear objective of landscape uniformity. Promotional materials recommended "no fences on individual lots," and individuals who purchased lots in The Highlands were required to have an architectural plan prior to building their homes. The importance of maintaining property values as an enticement also was evident by an early advertisement in the Syracuse Directory, stating it was the "policy of the owner to maintain that [building value] standard." Even street material was considered, with wood being preferred over cobble stone (it is unknown whether this was ever implemented). In 1983, the subdivision, now known as the Walnut Park Historic District, was recognized and listed on the National Register as "an outstanding example of a cohesive late nineteenth -

<sup>9</sup> *Syracuse Herald*, 14 February 1915.

<sup>10</sup> Nottingham & Tucker, *The Highlands* (Syracuse, New York, 1872).

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> A 1941 newspaper article reported that Monument and Carroll Parks were never built, despite the fact that both were listed on many early city maps. Theodore W. Clarke, son of City Engineer H. Wadsworth Clarke was quoted saying, "for nearly 20 years, the city neglected to care for Walnut Park, and it became unsightly. This angered the judge so he wanted no more parks and the new map of the Highlands did not show the other two parks."

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early twentieth century planned residential neighborhood in Syracuse."<sup>13</sup>

Other planned residential subdivisions soon followed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as land speculators capitalized on the city's growth and economic prosperity. In 1896, Maurice Graves began to develop for residences a 105-acre tract east of Syracuse University known as *University Heights*. As with The Highlands, the close proximity to transportation and the benefits of "healthier" air attracted residents. One newspaper commented, "from the warm, suffocating atmosphere in the business portion of the city, to the cool, invigorating breezes on the heights, is a delightful and refreshing change."<sup>14</sup> The subdivision was laid out by engineer William Ryan Hill, who continued the grid block pattern of streets established by the city. The development began along University Place, proceeding south to Popular Ave. (Stratford St.) and east from Comstock Ave. to Sumner Ave. The convenience of the electric trolley for residents can be observed on a 1902 map, which shows the Syracuse Rapid Transit running through the middle of the subdivision down Euclid Ave. Graves promoted the development as having all the amenities of modern living, including "streets [being] opened, their roadbeds graded, sidewalks laid, trees looked after, sewerage attended to, city water pipes extended." Many University professors chose to live in the Heights, and this became a promotional item that legitimized the "strength of the person" living in the neighborhood. In 1902, Graves sold 90 acres for \$150,000 to the University Heights Land Company. The new company, controlled by W.F. Rafferty, divided the site into 400 lots, ranging in size from 44 x 136 ft. to 75 x 200 ft. Delays in promised sewage lines held up sales until 1915 when the subdivision became "practically sold out."

The ability of University Heights to secure sewers in 1911 proved to be profitable to a new adjoining residential site, *Berkeley Park*. This naturally-sloping 41-acre site south of Stratford Street was owned by the Berkeley Park Land Company, whose president, Clarence S. Congdon, worked with Rafferty for five years to procure the sewer line.<sup>15</sup> Congdon took advantage of the natural topography, wishing "to adapt the streets to the contour of the plot." A promotional brochure published c1915 advertised large lots (between 50 - 200 foot frontage) and lot depths to "encourage wide lawns." The main entrance provided an 80 ft. wide roadway divided by a "central parkway in which a variety of shrubbery led to the hill top which is the summit of the park." Vegetation was an important amenity, as approximately 200 large trees (8-10"d) were brought from East Syracuse and planted throughout the development.

While the university area was becoming a haven for residential development, other portions of the city also became home to residential subdivisions. In the northeast part of

<sup>13</sup> Walnut Park Historic District, *National Register of Historic Place Nomination Form*, (U.S. Dept. of Interior, National Park Service, 1983).

<sup>14</sup> *The Courier*, 18 April 1896.

<sup>15</sup> *Syracuse Herald*, 14 February 1915.

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Syracuse near James Street, 80 acres of the *Sedgwick Farm* would soon become one of the city's most prestigious residential areas. Purchased in 1858 by Charles B. Sedgwick, an attorney, businessman and politician, the site was used as a working farm for more than 40 years. It was not until 18 years after his death, and that of his second wife Deborah in 1901, that residential development of the site was initiated. The five surviving daughters from this marriage were each given a portion of the farm. The Sedgwick Farm Land Co. was later formed when additional portions of the farm were given to offspring of the five daughters. Family heirs were given stock by the land company in exchange for the remaining portions of the property. To manage the development of the surplus sections, five directors were named. Sedgwick Farm was developed as a single family residential subdivision. One source of information supplied by the Syracuse Department of Community Development indicated that the land company consulted with "several landscape architects and engineers before any attempts to develop the estate were made."<sup>16</sup> As with Berkeley Park, a curvilinear street pattern was incorporated to make better use of the rolling topography that overlooked the city. The entry drive off James Street employed a planted median strip of trees, serving also as a parkway into the development. Lot sizes were larger (60-70 x 200 ft) than the typical 44 x 115 plot found in other parts of the city. Soon it became the location for many of Syracuse's most influential civic and business leaders. By 1915, much of the southern half of the site was developed. Noted local architects, such as Paul Hueber and Ward Wellington Ward, were hired to design homes in eclectic and arts and crafts styles. The Sedgwick Farm Club was constructed to provide residents with tennis courts and "other amusements," a facility similar to one provided by Olmsted for Druid Hills. In 1976 the subdivision became part of a local protected district. In the application filed by the Sedgwick Farms Neighborhood Association, applicants stated that the site "exemplifies an early and successful experiment in environmental design which continues as a model today. The architectural compatibility of the structures within the district is heightened by the irregular street pattern."<sup>17</sup>

As residential growth continued through the nineteenth and into the twentieth century, the city's perimeter expanded outward to encompass several nearby communities. Between 1886 and 1900, four villages (Geddes, Danforth, Brighton and Elmwood) were annexed by the city of Syracuse. In some cases, early subdivisions created outside the city would come to lie within city borders. *Eastwood Heights*, located in present day Eastwood, was established as a subdivision in the 1890s, with most of the land owned and controlled by the Central City Land & Improvement Co. The area grew into the Village of Eastwood and was annexed by the Syracuse in 1926.

Beginning in the 1920s, the increased presence of the automobile made it possible for residential developments to spread away from the streetcar corridors. In doing so, the

<sup>16</sup> City of Syracuse, "The Sedgwick-Highland-James Street District," *Protected Site Application*, 1976.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

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character and scale of new residential developments changed. No longer did homes need to be located near places of work and commerce, or along mass transit routes. The increased mobility permitted by the automobile allowed people to live in areas heretofore considered unfeasible for residential development. Such untouched sites allowed developers to devise and implement ambitious plans, giving landscape architects, engineers and planners the opportunity "to apply spatial, functional and aesthetic concepts as a total package ... and coordinate the site planning with architectural design."<sup>18</sup>

The growth in number of developers and real estate companies during the second decade of the twentieth century reflected the increased number of subdivisions built during that time. The era of the automobile, perhaps influenced locally by the H.H. Franklin Motor Car Company, introduced Syracusans to convenient travel independent of the street car lines. Industry and manufacturing companies multiplied, requiring increased housing for employees. As the city continued to expand, public parks became highly-sought amenities which sometimes spurred residential development (see Property Type: Parks). One such instance was in the city's southwest side where the new *Strathmore* subdivision "bordering on beautiful Onondaga Park" was planned. Strathmore "By the Park" offered home owners an "exclusive residential district." A 1919 promotional brochure produced by Clark & Potter, sales agents, stated that "no factory, stable, barn, public garage, store, business place, apartment house nor dwelling for more than one family shall be erected in Strathmore." Besides the benefit of the adjacent Onondaga Park, the location offered a bucolic setting unsullied by the foulness of urban air. Promotional material boasted, "the elevation of Strathmore makes it one of the healthiest locations in Syracuse. It is high and dry and the distance from the smoke and grime of railroads and factories, and the fact that the prevailing winds are from the south and northwest make it the cleanest home neighborhood in the city." The sales agents had purchased the former Stolp farm in 1916 but World War I delayed plans for development until three years later. A total of 206 lots costing between \$700 and \$3500 were laid out by engineer G.E. Higgins utilizing a combined curvilinear and grid block street pattern. Notable local architects (such as Merton Granger, Ward Wellington Ward, and Dwight James Baum) were hired to design houses, which were required to have design approval prior to construction. A 100-foot wide parkway, similar in concept to ones at Berkeley Park and Sedgwick Farm, was integral to the site layout. Within ten years, almost all of the lots laid out in the original Strathmore plan had been sold. Clark & Potter went on to become Clark Real Estate, and by 1960 was thought to be the oldest real estate firm operating in Syracuse.<sup>19</sup>

A *Syracuse Herald* newspaper article in 1928 discussed the good judgment one developer had in realizing the city "was bound to grow and spread out into what was formerly

<sup>18</sup> Pregill and Volkman, p. 485.

<sup>19</sup> Onondaga County Public Library, vertical files on real estate companies (Department of Local History).

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the suburbs." In addition to the 12-story Hills Building located in downtown Syracuse, Hills and Company developed many subdivisions in the city since its founding in 1910, including *Genesee Manor*, *Genesee Park*, *Sunnyside Park*, *Bellevue Hills*, *Nottingham Park* and "several other subdivisions." Perhaps one of its most noteworthy subdivisions was *Bradford Hills* (c1928). The developers "studied hundreds of subdivisions in various parts of the country" before selecting this 90-acre site in the present Meadowbrook area in the southeastern part of the city. The subdivision was "designed and developed for those who appreciate beauty and the desirability of living in a carefully restricted section which is rapidly becoming the new James Street."

Throughout the early part of the twentieth century, every corner of Syracuse was impacted by residential subdivisions. *Scottholm* (c1916), *City View Homestead* (c1915), and many others became common points of reference for city residents. *Court Street Heights* (c1910) and *Court Street Terrace* (c1916) were smaller and more modest developments close to manufacturing centers.

Residential development in Syracuse, as elsewhere, slowed during the economic depression of the 1930s. When it picked up again, in the late 1940s after the Second World War, residential growth for the middle- and upper-class took place largely outside city boundaries in suburban communities such as Dewitt, Fayetteville, and Liverpool, which would quickly grow into thriving municipalities in their own right. Within the city, attention turned to publicly-funded residential development projects. The Syracuse Housing Authority was created in 1935 to provide housing for low-income families. When the Wagner-Steagall Act of 1937 was passed by Congress, Syracuse and four other cities were the first in the country to apply and receive federal assistance loans,<sup>20</sup> and by 1940, *Pioneer Homes* became the first public housing project completed in New York State.<sup>21</sup>

Syracuse has enjoyed a rich history of residential subdivision development since the late nineteenth century. Its roots can be traced to the expansion of transportation corridors, location of manufacturing centers and the desire for a country atmosphere outside the center core. Residential subdivisions in Syracuse can be evaluated on the local, state and national level under National Register Criteria A and C in the areas of architecture, engineering and community planning and development, and are eligible for listing as protected sites under local ordinance regulation.

<sup>20</sup> 1994 telephone interview with Fred Murphy, Commissioner of the Syracuse Housing Authority.

<sup>21</sup> *Syracuse Herald-Journal*, 22 November 1939.

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### III. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

#### Residential Subdivision

- A. Subdivision must be designed as a planned development for residential use.
- B. Property must have integrity of location, design, materials and feeling as noted in requirements as follows.
- C. Lay-out of the subdivision must provide private residential lots and public communal spaces.
- D. A connecting vehicular and pedestrian system must be present allowing easy access to individual residential building lots.
- E. Residential buildings should possess a consistency in terms of massing, construction standards and building materials.
- F. Unified streetscape plans for sidewalks, trees, streetlights, etc. and planned infrastructure for water, sewage and electricity should be evident.
- G. Subdivision may be the work of a master landscape architect, planner or engineer.



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Property Type: Institutional Campuses

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**PROPERTY TYPE: INSTITUTIONAL CAMPUSES**

**I. DESCRIPTION**

**Definition:**

A collection of buildings and exterior spaces forming an educational, religious or civic institution.

**Subtypes and Landscape Features:**

**Colonial Campus (c1640-1790):** Early institutions (primarily colleges) consisting of a small number of separate buildings loosely arranged around a private open space or adjacent to a public green or commons.

Environment: Varied.

Setting: Commonly within a settlement, though sometimes isolated in rural areas.

Natural Systems: n/a

Buildings & Structures: Usually single multipurpose building. Generally two- and three-story buildings very large for their time, vernacular in design primarily with Georgian influences, and frequently constructed of wood, with brick appearing in later designs.

Vegetation: Generally more the result of clearing than of planting. Shade trees around or within a clipped lawn; often some indigenous trees left for shade after clearing of campus land. Flowers and pruned shrubs found usually in formal arrangements to reinforce basic geometry of the site; topiary used occasionally. Orchards and kitchen gardens also found.

Spatial Organization: Buildings arranged in a loose geometric fashion, commonly placed around three sides of an open space, or sometimes in a linear row. Buildings oriented outward toward the community rather than inward (as in English model).

Circulation: Simple system providing for movement between buildings and connection to existing streets within the immediate setting.

Water Features: n/a

Furnishings & Objects: May occur, though none have been identified as necessarily being associated with this subtype.

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**Early American Campus (c1790-1820):** Campus built or expanded around the turn of the 19th century, consisting of a half-dozen or more buildings, often organized around a central mall.

Environment: Varied.

Setting: Varied.

Natural Systems: n/a

Buildings & Structures: Larger and more monumental than earlier campus buildings, and frequently designed by professional architects. New buildings usually constructed for a specific purpose (i.e., library, dormitory, lecture hall, etc.).

Spatial organization: Generally organized about a single axis. Buildings placed symmetrically around a central mall or quadrangle, which is typically open at one end with a focal point at the other end. Open spaces more well-defined than in colonial campuses, but nevertheless maintaining an outward emphasis.

Vegetation: Shade trees and clipped lawns predominate, though kitchen gardens and flowers also used.

Circulation: Simple system of drives and walks supporting axial layout.

Water features: n/a

Furnishings & objects: Benches, lighting, and fencing may occur.

**Mid-Nineteenth Century Campus (c1820-1860):** Campus consciously laid out according to classical design principles of symmetry and axiality, often employing Greek Revival style architecture. Often laid out according to a large-scale master plan, especially for newly constructed colleges.

Environment: Frequently rural, with dramatic views to nature.

Setting: Sometimes in proximity to lakes or other natural features, but just as often flat urban sites.

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Natural Systems: Natural topography and native vegetation sometimes incorporated into campus designs.

Buildings & Structures: Predominantly Greek Revival style, large and monumental, with pedimented porticoes or colonnades; or Gothic Revival. Astronomical observatories first introduced.

Spatial Organization: Predominantly based on axial symmetry. Earlier asymmetry often "corrected" by siting of new buildings and roads. Buildings set farther apart, to enhance appreciation of each as an individual entity.

Vegetation: Generally clipped lawn and shade trees, with a greater emphasis on "natural" scenery, both in views and in planting schemes.

Circulation: Simple system of geometric, axial drives and walks.

Water Features: n/a

Furnishings & Objects: Benches, lighting, and sculpture may occur, usually incorporating classical design motifs.

Park-like Campus (c1860-1890): Campus laid out in the Romantic landscape tradition, with an emphasis on picturesque views and natural scenery.

Environment: Varied.

Setting: Varied. Both rural and urban.

Natural Systems: Campuses embrace the natural landscape, working with existing topography and water features and taking advantage of picturesque views.

Buildings & Structures: Less monumental, with a trend toward smaller utilitarian buildings. A wide range of styles employed. Gymnasias common as a building type for educational institutions.

Spatial Organization: Asymmetrical arrangement of buildings in a park-like setting, with the emphasis on picturesque views rather than geometric clarity. Open spaces vary in size and character, usually with curving rather than straight edges. Organized recreation fields introduced in educational institutions.

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Vegetation: Plantings intended for naturalistic effect. Shade trees planted in masses or as randomly-spaced specimens. Clipped lawn persists, but with free-form configurations rather than in rectilinear panels. Massed shrub plantings enframe or screen views, and are allowed to exhibit natural character. Vines very common, resulting in the ubiquitous "ivy-covered building."

Circulation: Complex system of meandering drives and walks follows topography and orients the user to planned views and vistas.

Water Features: Lakes, ponds, and streams incorporated into campus layout, to enhance picturesque quality.

Furnishings & Objects: Benches, lighting, monuments and sculpture may occur.

**Beaux Arts Campus (c1893-1920):** Campus laid out according to Beaux Arts principles of axiality, monumentality, and hierarchy, as manifested by the Columbian Exposition of 1893. Usually the result of a deliberate master planning effort.

Environment: Varied.

Setting: Most often urban, with the campus contained within or bordering city neighborhoods; campus boundaries often coincide with existing pattern of city blocks. Also found in rural settings.

Natural Systems: n/a

Buildings & Structures: Generally very grand and monumental, expressing a wide range of Renaissance, Gothic, and Neoclassical styles. Building uses increasingly specialized, and include large stadia for athletic events at college campuses. Emphasis on focal points, with belltowers a common feature.

Spatial Organization: Strong axial symmetry. Campus arranged around a central axis rather than a central quadrangle, creating a structural organization which could be expanded indefinitely. Grand main entrance often on line with dominant central focal point along the primary axis or "mall". Secondary axes (either perpendicular or diagonal) connect subsidiary groupings of buildings and smaller open spaces.

Vegetation: Plants intended as architectonic design elements, used to define borders to spatial areas. Tree allees and clipped lawn predominate, appearing in formal, linear

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arrangements to reinforce spatial geometry. Shrubs heavily pruned, and typically appear as hedgerows.

Circulation: Hierarchical structure of broad axial boulevards, lesser roads as cross-axes, and pedestrian paths parallel, at right angles, or diagonal to main axes. Circulation routes employed to establish symmetry, with overall system integral to spatial organization.

Water Features: Ornamental fountains may occur.

Furnishings & Objects: Benches, lighting, monuments and sculpture may occur.

**Monastic Campus (c1910-1930)**: Campus laid out with a number of tightly-enclosed quadrangles, based on the precedent of English colleges.

Environment: Varied.

Setting: Varied. Principles of the monastic quadrangle applied to both urban and rural campuses.

Natural Systems: Often rugged and picturesque sites, with irregular topography.

Buildings & Structures: Architectural styles tend toward Gothic and Tudor Revivals, but can include other traditional styles as well, including Colonial Revival. Buildings increasingly specialized, with residential dormitories common.

Spatial Organization: Overall layout sometimes axial or symmetrical but more often asymmetrical, with one or more towers, rather than axes, used as visual focal points. Buildings arranged in tightly enclosed courtyards or quadrangles.

Vegetation: Native vegetation and mass plantings around the perimeter and on steep slopes. Formal plantings of trees, shrubs, and/or herbaceous plants sometimes in quadrangles.

Circulation: Primarily geometric walks, with arcades often incorporated into buildings to allow outdoor passage into quadrangles.

Water Features: Not known to have been associated with this subtype.

Furnishings & Objects: Benches, lighting, monuments and sculpture may occur.

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**Modern Campus (ca. 1930-1980):** Dense and complex campus urban in scale, characterized by irregular spatial layout based on pedestrian and vehicle movement systems.

**Environment:** Varied.

**Setting:** Frequently urban, but often suburban or rural.

**Natural Systems:** Natural topography and ecology often preserved; sometimes - particularly urban campuses - rigidly insulated man-made environments.

**Buildings & Structures:** Contemporary architectural styles, including various interpretations of the International Style. Buildings on a single campus often of diverse heights, shapes, and relationships to each other, with high-rise buildings common.

**Spatial Organization:** Great diversity. Circulation the primary determinant of campus form, producing linear arrangements of buildings along roads and parking lots, as well as a ring-road model which accommodates vehicles at outskirts of campus and keeps vehicles out of central campus core.

**Vegetation:** Function valued over aesthetics. Trees and shrubs used primarily to define spatial areas, guide circulation, and moderate microclimate. Planting subordinate to circulation systems and the architectural composition of buildings. Outdoor spaces commonly paved, and exclude vegetation altogether, although lawns persist.

**Circulation:** Extensive system involving large amounts of land devoted to parking and internal campus roadways, typically circling the perimeter of the campus core, but sometimes penetrating the core itself. Pedestrian circulation accommodated along a central campus spine.

**Water Features:** n/a

**Furnishings & Objects:** Present in great number, and can include benches, lighting, kiosks, trash receptacles, bollards, sculptures, monuments and bicycle racks.

**Note:** The campus typology developed by Paul V. Turner in the book, *Campus: An American Planning Tradition*, has been used to describe the property type, Campus, and as a framework for comparing Syracuse campuses with national trends in campus design.

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## II. SIGNIFICANCE

Campuses are comprised of two primary components - architecture and exterior spaces. While buildings may be the dominant physical feature on a campus, it is the spatial arrangement of the buildings and the design of the spaces between them which defines a property as a campus. The word itself actually refers to open space. "Campus" is from the latin for "field", often used to describe flat areas used for army encampments. The first known use of the word to describe the grounds of an American educational institution was at Princeton in the 1770s; prior to that schools referred to their open space as "the Yard" or simply "the grounds."

Although the word "campus" is most closely associated with educational institutions, colleges and universities are not the only types of institutions which have campus landscapes. Hospitals, sanitariums, orphanages, rest homes, religious institutions, government centers, and corporate business centers also sometimes operate complex programs which require a well-designed layout of disparate physical facilities, accommodating such needs as circulation and parking, residential housing, outdoor recreation, building space, and maintenance. It is the college, however, that most perfectly embodies the spirit of the American campus, and that has inspired most innovations in campus planning.<sup>1</sup>

American campuses have always had their own identity. From the time of the first colonial colleges in the 17th century, American campuses have evolved according to American ideals, largely without foreign influence, and have developed as a distinctly American landscape type. However, like most other types of landscapes, the American campus has its design roots in European, and particularly English, traditions. The first "campuses" were early colonial colleges founded by English immigrants who were familiar with cloistered layouts of Oxford and Cambridge. Education at these English schools was meant to be a monastic experience, with students and teachers living and studying together in small, tightly regulated colleges, secluded from the outside world. Spatial layout was based on the medieval cloister, with buildings linked together to enclose small rectilinear courtyards, shunning the world outside.

From the very beginning, campuses of American educational institutions were distinct from those of their cloistered English predecessors. While the early concept of a rectilinear open space was integral to American campus development, the cloister model would for the most part be rejected in favor of openness, where the college - both in philosophy and in physical form - was an integral part of the larger community. The dominant ideal of higher education in America focused on the college as a village, either unto itself or as integrated

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<sup>1</sup> Philip Pregill and Nancy Volkman, *Landscapes in History*, (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1993), p. 454.

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into part of a larger community. Buildings were separated, rather than linked together as at English colleges, and faced outward toward the community. Instead of a monastic quadrangle, colonial American colleges arranged their buildings loosely around a common open space or village green.

Founded in the late 1630s, Harvard College was the earliest surviving American college<sup>2</sup>, and set many precedents in campus planning which would become integral to the American model. The college began as a single large building, as would many other colleges in the colonial period. As other buildings were added, they framed a three-sided open space, open on one side to the village of Cambridge. Both because of the ample land available and the everpresent threat of fire, these early wood-frame buildings at Harvard and later colleges would be located apart from one another rather than linked together. This three-sided open space more closely resembled English domestic sites than colleges, and may have been inspired by the "forecourt" of the English country house, typically a large grass panel with an entry drive leading to the main house, and flanked by wings or subordinate buildings. Although the organization of American campuses would eventually take on many forms, the three-sided model would prove to be one of the most enduring.

William & Mary College was another colonial college tightly woven into the fabric of the local community. In the late 1600s, this college in Williamsburg, Virginia intended to build an enclosed quadrangle similar to Oxford, England, but later ignored this plan for one that embraced the village. Here too the model of the three-sided open space was adopted. The college developed an axial plan, with buildings flanking a central mall which was a terminus to the central axis of the village (Williamsburg). Campus historian Paul Turner calls this, "The most striking example... up to this time of collegiate planning as an integral component of grand urban design."<sup>3</sup> A different American precedent was established at Yale College in New Haven, CT. Here as well this urban campus was tightly woven into the fabric of the community. At Yale the early college buildings were laid out in a linear fashion facing the town green. The Yale "row" was repeated at many other schools, including Dartmouth, Brown, and Amherst.

Higher education continued to grow in America in the Federal Period, from nine colleges by the time of the American Revolution, to twenty by 1790, to at least 45 by the 1820's. As the nation began to acquire a stronger identity American colleges did as well. The predisposition toward order and geometry in the landscape shown in early campus layouts became more formal in later examples. Campus planning in this period is aptly summed up by Turner:

<sup>2</sup> Paul V. Turner, *Campus: An American Planning Tradition* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984), p. 34.

<sup>3</sup> Turner, p. 34.



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After the revolution, the design of college campuses and buildings increasingly was given over to architects - either true professionals, such as Benjamin Henry Latrobe, or talented amateurs such as Thomas Jefferson. The designs produced naturally had a more sophisticated and unified character than the colonial plans, as well as an architectural grandeur that was an appropriate expression of the ambitious educational goals of the new American nation.<sup>4</sup>

Debate continued over the ideal setting for new colleges - rural or urban - and over the amount of supervision a college should provide its students. The result was a diversity of campus form, with many colleges perpetuating colonial models and others experimenting with new innovations. The first evidence of a "mall" on an American campus is attributed to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill circa 1800. Here the concept of the three-sided open space was formalized. Two rows of buildings were constructed facing each other across a central open space, with one end open for future expansion. This model was soon adopted by South Carolina College (University of South Carolina), which began to implement a "horseshoe" plan in 1805. Perhaps the most well-known example of an American college developed along this scheme was the University of Virginia (1817). Here Thomas Jefferson's plan embodied the spirit of the American college as an "academical village," with students and teachers living together in a close-knit community. A central terraced lawn was enclosed by buildings on three sides. Five two-story buildings were placed on each long side, intended to be used as lecture rooms below and faculty quarters above. Connecting these pavilions were one-story dormitories, the whole ensemble linked by a colonnade. At the north end was the domed rotunda (the college library) serving as the focal point and terminus to the axis.

In Syracuse, a true college would not be founded until 1870, but the first academic campus appeared much earlier. Founded in 1815, the Onondaga Academy was located on a small three-acre site in Onondaga Hollow, adjacent to the Onondaga Valley Presbyterian Church. Later named *Academy Green*, the grounds were developed in a simple manner very much in the tradition of colonial and early American campuses. Typical of colonial campuses, the Academy itself was a single multipurpose building, with classrooms downstairs and dormitory rooms above. The grounds consisted of a rectilinear green space of lawn and shade trees between the Academy and church. The two buildings were connected by a straight path through an allee of sugar maples, thought to have been planted in the 1850s. Though simple, this tree allee represents a clear emphasis on order and formality, typical of campus design in the federal period.<sup>5</sup>

The most sophisticated campus design of its time was Union College in Schenectady, NY. Here an 1813 master plan by Joseph-Jacques Ramee created a formal grouping of

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>5</sup> The Academy burned the ground in 1919, but the grounds remain virtually intact. *Academy Green* is now owned by the city and maintained by the Department of Parks and Recreation.

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buildings arranged to form a large courtyard open on one side, with a domed edifice in the center. Connecting the buildings is an arcade which forms a semicircle at one end. Striking about the Union College plan is the treatment given to the campus perimeter. Here the formal core gives way rolling lawns, curving drives, and scattered massings of trees - in fact a romantic park (see Property Type: Parks). This represents one of the earliest influences of the English landscape school on campus planning in America.

Such application of naturalistic principles of landscape design were not seen widely on campuses until several decades later. Before turning to the romantic, designers of American campuses would embrace the classic, in the form of the Greek Revival. Between 1820 and the Civil War the number of colleges in America grew to nearly 800.<sup>6</sup> The role of higher education expanded to include specialized technical and agricultural schools, but the majority of colleges persisted with a rigid curriculum founded in the classics. It is no surprise, then, that classical architecture of the Greek Revival came to dominate American campuses as it dominated all of American architecture in the early part of the nineteenth century. During the 1830s and 1840s symmetry and order governed the overall planning of schools more than ever before, and the porticoed Greek temple became a ubiquitous part of the campus image. New colleges (Girard College in Philadelphia, PA, et al) were designed as monuments to classical symmetry, and existing colleges (Princeton; University of Pennsylvania, et al) sometimes erected buildings chiefly to correct earlier asymmetry. Also characteristic during this period were campus buildings placed a greater distance from each other, increasing the amount of open space to heighten the image of each building as an individual temple.

The Classical Revival of the early nineteenth century proved to be the climax of the "Age of Reason." By the middle of the century, public attitudes had shifted away from the rational and geometric in favor of the emotional and picturesque. Nature in the Romantic Period was no longer to be feared or controlled, but to be appreciated for its sublime beauty (see Statement of Historic Contexts). This change in attitude had many consequences for campus design, affecting the setting, architecture, and response to the natural landscape exhibited by American campuses.

Corresponding to the rise of rational thinking in previous decades was the increasing urbanization of America, with all its attendant social problems. By the time influences of the Romantic Period were surfacing, many college administrators had arrived at the opinion that moral character was best molded in a rural setting, away from the vices of the cities. Nature was sublime, and was held up not only as an aesthetic ideal, but also as the progenitor of social virtue. Many colleges during this period, including the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, were located in picturesque settings, or at a vantage point that afforded picturesque views. By the 1830s the Gothic Revival was becoming a popular romantic style for residential architecture. Rather than turning toward the ancient Greek for inspiration, some

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 89.

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colleges embraced the Gothic Revival as a perfect style for campus architecture - for its symbolic as well as its picturesque qualities. Initially it was church-affiliated colleges which adopted the style because of its favorable pious religious connotations. Soon, however, even secular institutions had turned to the gothic, wishing to project an image of age and respectability. Though American colleges were eager to associate themselves with the monastic imagery that the gothic style inspired, they did not emulate the cloister plan that medieval monasteries and English colleges were known for. Instead, campuses continued to follow traditional American precedents for spatial layout.

Widespread application of romantic landscape ideals to campus design began in the 1860s, and was as much the result of new federal policy as it was of aesthetic attitudes. Though colleges continued to proliferate in America during the nineteenth century, they were largely the bastion of the elite minority. Most schools remained private institutions, and many were religiously affiliated. It was not until the 1860s that higher education came into the reach of the masses. The Morrill Act of 1862 provided for land-grant colleges in every state, and sparked an educational revolution that brought higher education into the public sphere. Though they manifested themselves in different ways, the land grant colleges shared certain basic goals, "including the promotion of practical education, the right of education for all social classes, and the freedom of students to choose their course of study."<sup>7</sup>

For these new democratic colleges founded in practical education such as agriculture and mechanic arts, the traditional campus was too pretentious, with classical-inspired Greek Temples or imposing gothic edifices with towering spires. They needed a new model for physical form symbolic of their egalitarian character. This form was articulated more clearly than any other by Frederick Law Olmsted, one of the seminal figures in American landscape architecture (see Statement of Historic Contexts). For Olmsted, the college was best sited not in the wilderness, isolated from reality, nor in an urban center. The ideal location was the suburbs, where the college could be properly integrated with both the community and with nature. The campus model that Olmsted popularized was the naturalistic park, a style which proved equally adaptable to college campuses as it was to public pleasure grounds (see Property Type: Parks).

This was a substantial break from traditional American campus planning, which had grown progressively more formal. These new park-like campuses were deliberately informal, with winding walks and drives, shady lawns, and irregularly-shaped open spaces. Architecture became less formal as well, and the informal landscape was a fitting setting for the utilitarian buildings of the agricultural college. A practical benefit was the flexibility this style allowed for future expansion, compared with the limitations imposed by formal systems. Olmsted wrote, "I may observe that in the large Eastern colleges the original design of arranging all the buildings... in a symmetrical way has in every case proved impracticable and

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 140.

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been given up."<sup>8</sup> Olmsted himself consulted on dozens of colleges from California to Maine, and his design principles were adopted by many other designers. Dozens of new colleges, including Michigan State, Iowa State, and Kansas State were designed in the park-like style. Many older colleges employed this style in redesigning or expanding their existing campuses, including Hamilton College and Cornell University in New York State. Another development in college campus planning during this period was the growth of athletics and organized recreation. Campuses now began to provide gymnasias, playing fields, running tracks, and swimming pools among their ever-increasing range of facilities.

Locally, the city of Syracuse experienced a profound period of growth during the middle and late nineteenth century, expanding from a small settlement to a major regional transportation hub and commercial center. As the population expanded, so did the range and quality of social services and cultural opportunities, and the city became home to a great diversity of public, religious, and educational institutions. Many of these institutions developed broad programs that required complex facilities. Influenced by the ideals of the Romantic Movement, these large institutions developed campus landscapes which consciously addressed outdoor spaces as integral to programming and public image. Most notable of these, in terms of scale, longevity, and impact on city growth and development, is *Syracuse University*. The university was founded in 1870, and from the time of the first building erected in 1873 experienced a sustained growth which today has resulted in a sprawling main campus boasting more than sixty major buildings.<sup>9</sup>

While other colleges at the time were purposely locating in rural areas, away from the distractions and vices of the city, Syracuse University was from its inception intended as an urban institution. The genesis of the university was Genesee College, which had been founded in 1849 in Lima, a small town in western New York. According to one historian, the trustees realized that "the institution could be of more service and of wider usefulness in a great and populous urban center."<sup>10</sup> Desiring an urban setting for their college, the trustees decided to move the school to Syracuse in 1870.

Instruction at Syracuse University began before there was any campus at all. The first classes met in September of 1871 on the top floor of the Myers Block, a commercial building on Salina Street in downtown Syracuse.<sup>11</sup> By this time the cornerstone had already been laid for the University's first building, the Hall of Languages. The site selected for the campus was a 50-acre farm tract on a large hill just south and west of downtown which was purchased from George F. Comstock. The site afforded fine views of the city and Onondaga

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 142.

<sup>9</sup> Fifteen buildings on campus have received historic designation as part of the Syracuse University/Comstock Tract National Register Historic District.

<sup>10</sup> Franklin Chase, *Syracuse and its Environs* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1924), p. 731.

<sup>11</sup> The Myers Block is no longer extant.

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Lake below, and soon became known in the local vernacular (as it is to the present day) simply as "the hill." The Hall of Languages was designed by locally notable architect Horatio Nelson White in the Second Empire style popular at the time, and was completed in 1873. For fourteen years it would serve as the university's only building, due in part to the economic depression that followed the Panic of 1873.<sup>12</sup> Founded during the heyday of the park-like campus, the university exhibits the ideals of naturalistic design only in its picturesque situation on the brow of a hill overlooking the city. The campus itself was never designed according to romantic landscape principles.

Like many other college campuses, the grounds of Syracuse University evolved organically rather than according to an established plan, expansion guided more by expediency than by any coherent design aesthetic. Many plans would be drawn up over the years, each showing a more deliberate attention to formal geometry. None of these plans were executed in its entirety, campus growth instead occurring largely in an ad hoc fashion.

The campus as it is known today began to take shape under the leadership of Chancellor Sims (1881-1893), who undertook an ambitious building program that saw four buildings added between 1887 and 1892. Crouse College (1889) and the Administration Building (1889) were located parallel to the Hall of Languages along the ridge of the hill, and Holden Observatory (1887) and the Women's Gymnasium (1892) were set behind. During this time most of the site was unimproved. In the 1870s the land around the Hall of Languages was a hayfield, the revenue from which helped defray the costs of the building.<sup>13</sup> Early buildings were connected to each other by wooden walks, and roads led, much as they do today, from Crouse Avenue and Walnut Place to the Hall of Languages. As for landscaping, the campus "had been graded in a fashion, trees had been planted, and an attempt had been made to landscape the areas around several of the buildings. But most of it remained as when deeded by Mr. Comstock to the University in 1870."<sup>14</sup> It was either Chancellor Sims<sup>15</sup> or the school's first chairman of the board of trustees Rev. Jesse Peck<sup>16</sup> who is credited with the first campus plan, drawn up in the 1880s. This plan showing seven buildings was not followed.

It was during this period that other institutions nationally began to grow sufficiently in complexity to require their own campus landscapes. Specialized health care facilities such as veterans hospitals and sanitariums were built in great number in the decades following the Civil War. As permanent care facilities, these institutions needed to accommodate long-term

<sup>12</sup> Evamaria Hardin, *Syracuse Landmarks* (Syracuse: Onondaga Historical Association and Syracuse University Press, 1993), p. 227.

<sup>13</sup> W.F. Galpin, *Syracuse University* (3 vols.), (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1952), p. 236.

<sup>14</sup> Galpin, p. 236.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Hardin, p. 227.

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social and recreational needs. Furthermore, social reformers believed that urban stress was a prime cause of mental and physical illness. A pleasant outdoor environment was seen as an essential component of healthful living, and many hospitals had grounds designed in the romantic tradition, with looping drives and paths, woodlands, designed gardens, ponds, and scenic views and vistas.

Syracuse in the late nineteenth century had several such institutions which had developed campus landscapes. The most notable of these was the *New York State Asylum for Idiots* (later the Syracuse State Institute for Feeble Minded Children). Located on the site of the present Syracuse State School adjacent to Burnet Park on the city's west side, the State Institute began as a single three-story Italian Villa style building in 1854, and over the next several decades expanded to include an assortment of buildings on a landscaped campus. The original building was enlarged several times, and other buildings constructed included a music hall, laundry, infirmary, boys ward, girls ward, superintendent's building, greenhouse and a variety of service and maintenance buildings. The grounds were beautifully landscaped in the romantic tradition, with curving drives, shady lawn, and picturesque plantings of shade and ornamental trees and flowering shrubs. A rustic fieldstone wall marked the perimeter of the campus along Wilbur Street, with the main entrance at Seymour and Wilbur marked by the superintendent's building.<sup>17</sup> Other nineteenth century public institutions in Syracuse include the *Onondaga County Orphan Asylum* and the *Elmwood Children's Center*, neither of which boasted grounds as extensive as the aforementioned State Institute.

Another local institution with a campus property was the *Convent of the Sisters of the Third Franciscan Order* (St. Anthony's), on Court and Grant Streets on the city's north side. The Order was established in Syracuse in 1860, and purchased the Court Street property in 1864. The Sisters at first occupied the existing cobblestone farm building, using a first floor room as their chapel. A proper chapel was constructed in 1879 adjacent to the house. In 1896, a new motherhouse, designed by noted local architect Archimedes Russell, was constructed on the site of the original cobblestone building. To preserve the chapel, the motherhouse was designed in a U-shape with the chapel located between two rear wings. As the city expanded in the 20th century, the privacy of the convent grounds became threatened. To recapture the cloistral atmosphere, a stone wall was constructed around the grounds in 1914. Other buildings were added as the convent expanded, including a Novitiate building (1956), Convent School (1960), and Library (1962). The attractive grounds were landscaped with shade trees, conifers, flowering shrubs and herbaceous plants, and included a grotto known as the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. This landscape is historically significant at the local level as the only true religious campus in the city and for its role in the growth

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<sup>17</sup> The institute was demolished in the late 1960s to make way for a new Syracuse State School designed by the Syracuse architects Sargent, Webster, Crenshaw and Folley, constructed in 1970. All that remains of the original campus is a portion of the stone wall along Wilbur Street.

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and development of religion and religious institutions in Syracuse and Central New York.

By the late nineteenth century educational institutions in America had grown increasingly complicated. Taking cues from English and German prototypes, American colleges began to transform themselves into modern universities, accommodating a myriad of academic departments, providing a growing range of facilities, and serving a diverse student body which now routinely included women. There was a growing recognition of the need for comprehensive long-term master plans to bring order to such a complex program. Like nearly every other component of the American landscape, the renaissance in campus design found inspiration at the Columbian Exposition in 1893. The Beaux Arts movement was well-suited to express the character of the complicated, modern academic and social institution. The monumental organization characteristic of the Beaux Arts facilitated orderly planning on a grand scale, and was capable of including many disparate parts in a unified pattern.

Economic prosperity in this period allowed benefactors to leave colleges with endowments of unprecedented size, and the Beaux Arts style was the perfect expression for such monumental gestures of philanthropy. The clearest expression of Beaux Arts principles in campus planning may have been at Columbia University in New York, designed by Charles McKim of McKim, Mead & White. Here the central focal point is the monumental domed library, which faces a grand courtyard flanking the street. The library is at the intersection of the main axis and the primary cross axis, with subordinate axes on either side.

The flexibility of axial planning allowed American campus designers to produce endless variations on the Beaux Arts theme. One common variation was an updated version of the Jeffersonian model, with buildings grouped around a longitudinal open space. This inherently axial scheme was successfully updated with Beaux Arts vocabulary by employing cross axes to create a hierarchy of spaces. Many existing campuses built around such central open spaces could be expanded in this manner, preserving campus unity while increasing the diversity of facilities. Architecture was not limited to the Beaux Arts style, even within a Beaux Arts-influenced plan. Universities chose from a wide variety of popular architectural styles, including Renaissance, Colonial Revival, and the ever-enduring Collegiate Gothic.

Syracuse University would experience its most prolific period of growth during this time, under its next chancellor, James Roscoe Day (1894-1922). Twelve new buildings were added between 1898 and 1909, necessitating the first true effort at campus planning. New buildings were added ad hoc up until the turn of the century, without reference to an overall scheme. The line established by the front facade of the Hall of Languages was the only coherent organizing principle of campus layout. The Administration Building, Crouse College, and Lyman Smith Building (1902) share a common north line with the Hall of Languages, and have been referred to as "Old Row." Other campus buildings, such as the Observatory, Women's Gym, and Steele Hall (1898) seem "to have been tossed to their

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respective sites almost at random."<sup>18</sup>

As colleges nationwide adopted sophisticated and elegant campus plans, there became a growing recognition at Syracuse University of the need for a coherent master plan. The issue was first addressed in 1904 by the editors of *The Onondagan*, the University yearbook. The editors invited alumni of the university's architecture program to participate in "A Competitive Contest for a Plan for the Buildings and Grounds of Syracuse University," instructing participants that "it is imperative that, before future buildings are erected, some definite plan shall be devised which shall govern future erections. Some scheme must be worked out so that every new edifice shall have its niche beforehand to form finally a completed whole."<sup>19</sup> The winning plan was Beaux Arts-inspired, with one main axis and several subordinate axes. Buildings were organized around a central mall, with a large auditorium the focal point of the north-south axis, intended as "the pulsating heart of the whole University."<sup>20</sup> Four academic quadrangles were proposed for the east and west edges of the campus, with an athletic oval to the far south edge roughly where the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry campus sits today.

This 1904 plan was never followed, but it apparently spurred interest in campus planning, and in 1905 the University began inquiries with regards to obtaining the professional services of a landscape architect to have a formal plan drawn up. Finally in 1906 a proposal was submitted by two university architecture professors, Frederick Revels and Earl Hallenbeck. The Revels-Hallenbeck plan retained the idea of a north-south axis, a domed auditorium, and several quadrangles, while revising the configuration of the buildings. Like all other campus plans, the Revels-Hallenbeck scheme never materialized in whole, though it did influence the location of the next set of buildings constructed in a flurry in 1907, namely the Carnegie Library, Men's Gymnasium, Bowne Hall, Lyman Hall, Sims Hall, and Archbold Stadium.<sup>21</sup>

With the addition of seven buildings in 1907-8, the campus nearly doubled in size, and the framework for the present campus structure was laid. Perhaps unintentionally, the campus had become organized around a central open space roughly where the old "Oval" had been, with the "Old Row" buildings marking its northern edge, Bowne Hall, the Men's Gym, and Carnegie Library marking its southern edge, and Machinery Hall defining its eastern boundary. Where campus plans had proposed a north-south axis, in reality the campus was growing along an east-west line. Though its basic form was suggested as early as the 1890s when the "Old Row" buildings were erected, it wasn't until 1930 with the construction of Hendricks Chapel that "The Quad" became formalized.

<sup>18</sup> Galpin, p. 242.

<sup>19</sup> *The Onondagan*, 1905, p. 21.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>21</sup> Galpin, p. 247.



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Also during this period, a new college campus was established adjacent to Syracuse University. *The State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry* (ESF) was founded in 1910 as the New York State College of Forestry at Syracuse University, with the first classes held in 1912 in Syracuse University's Lyman Hall. The ESF campus had its inception when Syracuse University deeded 12 acres on the northern edge of Oakwood Cemetery to New York State. The college's first building, Bray Hall, was completed in 1917. The original plan for the college called for the sloping site to be formed into a terraced lawn, with buildings flanking three sides and the fourth side open. On the center terrace was planned an obelisk set within a wide circular space. This plan appears to have derived from a mix of Early American and Beaux Arts influences. The plan is strongly axial and symmetrical, with a broad central "boulevard" and parallel walkways on each side. However, the plan lacks the monumentality and hierarchical structure which characterize true Beaux Arts planning. The simple axial layout is more reminiscent of Jefferson's University of Virginia, with buildings surrounding three sides of a central mall. The proposal of the obelisk - not a common campus feature - suggests that the ESF plan may have been influenced as much by the McMillan Commission redesign of the mall in Washington, D.C. (1900) as by other precedents in campus planning. After construction of Bray Hall, no other buildings would be added until the 1930s, and this early campus plan would never be fully executed.

Syracuse University was far from alone among American colleges in experiencing rapid growth during this period. As universities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries grew more vast, the traditional ideal of the American college as a close-knit community of scholars tended to become obscured. Many educators longed for a return to the rudiments of classical education, and for colleges to reassume their role of fostering social values and moral character. Where American schools had always rejected the cloistered atmosphere of the English collegiate system, many now began to recall this monastic model of small colleges within a larger university. The monastic quadrangle, tightly enclosed by buildings on all sides, began to make its first true appearance on American campuses. This secluded arrangement was thought to most fully embody of the principles of the residential college, a means to achieve a sense of community within large, complex university environments.

Although the English model of the quadrangle had never played an important role in American college planning before this time, its appearance was foreshadowed decades earlier. An 1872 master plan for Trinity College in Hartford, CT called for an axial arrangement of four enclosed quadrangles, somewhat reminiscent of Oxford University. This ambitious plan was outside the means of the college to execute, but influenced later campus plans at Stanford University (1888) and the University of Chicago (1893), both of which were built around enclosed quadrangles. Later monastic campuses would be influenced by the Beaux Arts movement, with axial, symmetrical spatial layouts unlike the irregular and organic English models. The marriage of the English collegiate and the Beaux Arts proved fortuitous. Comments Turner, "the Beaux Arts system allowed the fullest expression of the principles of

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the American University: grand in scale, clearly organized, and open to the world outside. The Gothic quadrangles, on the other hand, reflected the reaffirmation of collegiate ideals of intimacy and introspection."<sup>22</sup> Noteworthy examples of monastic campus plans include the University of Pennsylvania (1895), Princeton University (1906-1911), U.S. Military Academy at West Point, NY (1900-1910), and the University of Pittsburgh (1925). This was also a period of growing college enrollments, and schools were faced - some for the first time - with the prospect of having to provide substantial dormitory space for students. For many colleges, the monastic quadrangle was the perfect form for residential expansion. Some of the country's most prestigious colleges added residential quadrangles in the early decades of the century, including Princeton, Yale and Harvard.

The monastic model never surfaced at in Syracuse. At Syracuse University, individual buildings continued to be added as needed, seemingly without regard to any of the many master plans generated. In 1910 the University engaged the services of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., who provided plans for campus development the following year.<sup>23</sup> Like previous plans, Olmsted's was not implemented, but certain aspects, such as his proposals for entrances to the college at University Place, Walnut Place, and University Avenue, and Irving Avenue, seem to have been followed.

The next major growth period for the University was inaugurated in 1930 with the construction of Hendricks Chapel. Designed by John Russel Pope and Dwight James Baum, the domed chapel was originally intended by the architects to be the focal point between two quadrangles,<sup>24</sup> serving the role which the proposed auditorium filled in earlier campus design schemes. While the second quadrangle envisioned by Pope and Baum in their master plan never developed, the first quadrangle became the organizing force for subsequent campus development, and is known today simply as "The Quad." As designed in 1930, the quad was defined by Carnegie Library, Bowne Hall, and Archbold Gym forming southern edge, the Hall of Languages marking the northern edge, Machinery Hall forming the eastern edge and Hendricks Chapel forming the western edge. Pathways divided the quad into four (almost) equal segments, each segment crossed by two diagonal walkways. The placement of the chapel is a deliberate effort to provide order and geometry to what was previously an informal open space, and is perhaps the most clear example in campus history of planning guided by rational design principles. Today's quad is about half its original size. Buildings have encroached from three sides - only the edge marked by the chapel remains as it was designed - and the path layout has been altered to accommodate the added buildings.

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<sup>22</sup> Turner, p. 245.

<sup>23</sup> Plans are housed at the National Park Service, Frederick Law Olmsted National Historic Site, 99 Warren Street, Brookline, Massachusetts 02146.

<sup>24</sup> Hardin, p. 233.

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SUNY-CESF also expanded during the 1930's. The second building constructed on campus was the Pulp and Paper Laboratory, which in 1932 was built behind Bray Hall. The following year saw Marshall Hall located on a terrace below Bray Hall, in a manner closely following the original 1917 plan. The next campus building, Baker Lab (1957) was built in line with Marshall Hall, but of a much larger scale than envisioned back in 1917. By this time it was clear that the ESF was to receive no obelisks or axial roads and paths. The lower terrace had become athletic fields adjacent to Syracuse University's Archbold Stadium, and the next higher terrace was utilized as a parking lot.

After World War II enrollments at American colleges skyrocketed. By the 1960s there were roughly two thousand institutions of higher education in the United States, and most of them were in the process of expanding. With increasingly diverse academic programs and an increasingly heterogeneous student-body, many colleges took on the scale and complexity of actual cities. Traditional master planning became almost obsolete, as time and time again it proved too rigid to accommodate rapidly expanding and changing programs. The modern movement in architecture, resisted at first by campus traditionalists, proved effective in offering the flexibility to adapt to uncertain future needs. Modernism allowed designers the freedom to accommodate complex programs, with its preference for asymmetry and non-rectilinear geometry and its emphasis on movement systems and functionalism as guiding principles of design.

With the growing size, density, and complexity of campuses, efficient circulation became a high priority for campus designers. The proliferation of automobiles after World War II had an impact on every part of the American landscape, and institutional campuses were no exception. For the first time, campuses had to accommodate heavy volumes of vehicle traffic, and the movement of cars often became the driving force behind campus design - especially at the growing number of commuter colleges. This sometimes resulted in a linear arrangement of buildings along a road and parking lots, and in other instances produced a ring road plan in which vehicles were kept outside of the central campus area. Modern architects also paid closer attention to pedestrian movement, rejecting classical spatial arrangements driven primarily by aesthetic proportions in favor of organic arrangements driven by function. Many newer colleges were designed around a central (but non-axial) pedestrian "spine" leading to principle facilities, and others experimented with elevated pedestrian corridors maximizing the use of available space.

Especially for urban campuses, efficient use of space became a priority. With little opportunity to expand outward, campuses expanded upwards, and high-rise buildings became common. In fact, so attached to the high-rise did modernists become that it became a common feature even on rural campuses where space was not lacking. Buildings not only grew higher, they grew larger - partially because of programming needs and partially because of advancing technology made larger spans more practical. Campus planners abandoned the ideal of architectural unity. Each building, then, could become a work of art in itself. The

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result was often compositions of buildings of diverse heights, shapes, and relationships to one another, with irregular spaces in between.

At Syracuse University, steady growth in the decades following World War II forced the school to confront the complexities of campus planning in the modern era. In 1962, a university Master Plan study was completed that attempted to rationalize the expansion of the previous 50 years and provide a coherent plan for anticipated future growth. Prepared by local landscape architect Noreda Rotunno, the plan called for the university to claim all the area north to Adams Street and east to Comstock Avenue, closing off city streets and establishing a series of academic quadrangles. Given the complexity of the changes proposed and the sheer vastness of the expansion envisioned, this is easily the most ambitious and far-sighted campus plan ever done for the university. Several new buildings were sited in accordance with this plan, including the Physics building, Newhouse School, and Schine Student Center, but, like so many previous plans, this 1962 plan never was realized to any significant extent.

SUNY-CESF also confronted expansion in the 1960s, though on a much smaller scale than Syracuse University. Though the original campus plan had been discarded, the architectural mass that it provided in the siting of Bray and Marshall Halls proved to be a strong enough force to influence future campus expansion. When two new buildings were added in 1968, the quadrangle implied by Bray and Marshall was finally enclosed, with Illick Hall facing Marshall and Moon Library facing Bray. A site plan by the office of noted landscape architect Dan Kiley unified the new "quad." Kiley provided pathways around the perimeter of the green space along with a small outdoor plaza along the west edge. Any residual hints of axiality were erased. The central steps to the front of Bray Hall were removed, and double rows of trees were planted on two flanking sides of the quad.

Taken as a group, the extant campus landscapes in Syracuse represent a vernacular expression of broad national trends in landscape design. The city's campus landscapes can be evaluated on a local level under National Register criteria A and C in the areas of Landscape Architecture, Education, and Social History, and are eligible for listing as protected sites under local ordinance regulation.

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### III. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

#### Colonial Campus

- A. Campus must consist of an informal arrangement of buildings surrounding an open space.
- B. Property must have integrity of location, design, and feeling.
- C. One or more multipurpose buildings dating from the property's period of significance must be present.
- D. Open space must consist primarily of lawn, shade trees, and shrubs, with simple functional walkways.

#### Early American Campus

- A. Campus must consist of buildings arranged in an orderly fashion around an open space.
- B. Property must exhibit integrity of location, design and feeling.
- C. Two or more buildings from the property's period of significance must be present.
- D. Open space can be rectilinear, with pathways and trees reinforcing a simple spatial geometry.
- E. Property can be the work of a master architect or landscape architect.

#### Mid Nineteenth Century Campus

- A. Campus must exhibit a strongly symmetrical and/or axial layout.
- B. Property must exhibit integrity of location, design, materials and feeling.
- C. Campus buildings must exhibit a high degree of architectural unity, with several buildings sharing the same or similar design style.
- D. Circulation system must reinforce axial geometry of the site.
- E. Vegetation consists primarily of shade and conifer trees in a clipped lawn.
- F. Property can be the work of a master architect or landscape architect.

#### Park-like Campus

- A. Campus must be laid out with an emphasis on picturesque views and natural scenery.
- B. Property must exhibit integrity of location, design, materials and feeling.
- C. Buildings must be arranged asymmetrically with irregular-shaped open spaces between.
- D. Plantings must be informal, and include massed groups along with traditional campus vegetation of widely spaced trees set in a clipped lawn.
- E. Curvilinear drives and walks can be present which follow contours of the land and orient the user to planned views.
- F. Property can be the work of a master architect or landscape architect.

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**Beaux Arts Campus**

- A. Campus layout must exhibit monumentality, axuality, and hierarchy.
- B. Property must exhibit integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship and feeling.
- C. Buildings must have specialized purposes, with grand and monumental architecture.
- D. System of drives and walks must be integral to spatial organization of the property.
- E. Vegetation employed as architectonic design elements can be present.
- F. Property can be the work of a master architect or landscape architect.

**Monastic Campus**

- A. Buildings must be linked together to tightly enclose a single or series of quadrangular open space(s).
- B. Property must exhibit integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship and feeling.
- C. Property can be the work of a master architect or landscape architect.

**Modern Campus**

- A. Campus layout must be asymmetrical, built to efficiently accommodate pedestrian and vehicle circulation systems.
- B. Property must exhibit integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship and feeling.
- C. Property must feature buildings of diverse heights, shapes, and relationships to each other.
- D. Property can be the work of a master architect or landscape architect.

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Property Type: Arboreta

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**PROPERTY TYPE: ARBORETA**

**I. DESCRIPTION**

**Definition:**

A type of botanical garden in which trees and other woody plants are grown for scientific or educational purposes and for aesthetic enjoyment.

**Landscape Features:**

Environment: Varied.

Setting: Often the perimeter of an urban area or an educational institution campus.

Natural Systems and Features: Generally exhibits climatic conditions typical of local region. Recreation of environmental conditions appropriate for specific specimens may occur.

Buildings and Structures: Generally limited in number. May include offices, greenhouses, entry gates, etc.

Vegetation: Usually intensive plantings of diverse collections of trees and shrubs both in groupings and as specimen plants.

Spatial Organization: Usually based on scientific arrangement of trees and shrubs with related specimens grown together. May be irregular and naturalistic or geometric and formal. Internal and external views and vistas may occur.

Circulation: Often curvilinear system of roads and paths allowing for clear and pleasurable viewing of specimen plantings. Materials may be both natural and man-made.

Water Features: If present, generally ponds, streams and/or wetlands appearing naturalistic in form.

Furnishings and Objects: Identification of plants via scientific labels, guide maps, signs or other interpretive material. Passive recreational equipment (benches) usually present.

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## II. SIGNIFICANCE

Because of the relative scarcity of early examples, the arboretum is best considered in the context of botanical garden development. As a type of botanical garden, American arboreta trace their roots ultimately to ancient Egypt and China where the collecting and growing of plants for a specific purpose first was recorded. The Greeks and Aztecs also are known to have created botanic gardens; the concept of scientific collections of plants actually may have been suggested to Europeans by the extensive gardens of Montezuma.<sup>1</sup> Botanical gardens in the modern Western tradition of collecting and displaying plants for scientific and educational purposes began with the medicinal gardens of medieval monasteries and continued with gardens established at universities as the study of medicine became formalized. The earliest of the university botanical gardens was established at Pisa in 1543. With colonial expansion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, botanical gardens were developed increasingly for the cataloging and evaluation of plants from newly-discovered lands. Also at work in the planning of scientific gardens in Europe and later in America was the human will to impose order on the chaos of untamed nature. In 1735, Carolus Linnaeus's created the binomial system of scientific plant identification. Because the system was based on visual observation of living plants in a garden, it provided an impetus for the continued development of botanical gardens. By 1760, twenty important botanical gardens had been established in Europe.<sup>2</sup>

Early American botanical gardens followed the tradition of contemporary European gardens, often testing natives from other regions and growing exotics introduced by the colonists. The earliest American plant collections, like their European counterparts, were cultivated for medicinal purposes. The medicinal garden established in 1610 by Dr. Lawrence Bohun, Physician General of Virginia is thought to have been the first in the colonies.<sup>3</sup> Development of an American botanical garden tradition continued with the work of John Bartram, considered the first colonist to establish a garden (1728) for the cultivation of native plants, as well as exotics, and the first to travel for their discovery and acquisition. In addition to a terraced, enclosed space built along the Schuylkill River outside Philadelphia, Bartram's garden included a 200-300 acre area devoted to the botanist's noteworthy efforts to create appropriate habitats for the plants he had collected in the wild, an activity continued at many of today's arboreta and botanical gardens. In this large, naturalistically planted area, Bartram's garden was a precursor of nineteenth-century American botanical gardens designed

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<sup>1</sup> Webster Crowley, Vernon Heywood and Gary W. Watson, "North American Botanic Gardens," in *Offprints From Horticultural Reviews*, vol. 15, ed. Jules Janick (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1993), p.3.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.4.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*



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on naturalistic principles of the Romantic period as opposed to the medieval, geometric layouts of early medicinal gardens. Bartram's activities were particularly noteworthy as most cultivation during the eighteenth century was confined to agriculture rather than horticulture.

Following Bartram's lead, several other gardens were developed that exemplified the latest advances in botanical science and taste in landscape design. While the pursuit of knowledge had been the *raison d'être* of the earliest botanical gardens in Europe and America, later gardens exhibited a co-mingling of environmental scientific thought with picturesque landscape aesthetics. Among the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century private estates involved in the study and exchange of plants and in artistic garden design were the Woodlands, Belmont, Lemon Hill and Belfield, all located in the Philadelphia area. The owners of these estates were part of a network of botanists and gardeners up and down the East Coast who exchanged plant information, vastly augmented in 1803 by the Louisiana Purchase which made available hundreds of new plants from the mid-continent.

Other members of the network included Thomas Jefferson, who recommended a botanical garden for the University of Virginia and, in New York State, Dr. David Hosack, who was among the first to introduce the concept of a public botanical garden. His Elgin Botanic Garden, established in 1801 on twenty acres at Fifth Avenue and Forty-seventh Street in New York City, now the site of Rockefeller Center, displayed 2200 species and was praised for its scientific projects along with its beautifully landscaped grounds.<sup>4</sup> In 1810, the Elgin Garden became the Botanic Garden of the State of New York, under the control of the College of Physicians and Surgeons, now part of Columbia University. In 1929 Columbia leased the land to Rockefeller Center where today, planting beds and descending terraces maintain the original use of the site.

During the early National period, several universities, including Harvard, Yale and Princeton, established botanic gardens which furthered the tradition of scientific and educational activities carried out in an aesthetic setting. Dr. Hosack made an additional contribution to the evolution of botanical gardens with the establishment of a vast estate at Hyde Park on the Hudson (now the Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site). With extensive flower gardens, shrubberies, conservatories and an orchard, the property was well-known in its day and contributed to contemporary interest in scientific gardening combined with aesthetic design, an important principle in ongoing botanical garden development. Hyde Park was planned in 1828-1829 by Andre Parmentier, a Belgian who opened a nursery in Brooklyn, near today's Prospect Park, in 1825. Parmentier was an early example of the European horticulturists who arrived in America armed with knowledge of the Repton and Loudon tradition of irregular, naturalistic, deliberately asymmetrical planting applied to estate and botanical garden design abroad. Parmentier's nursery was among the first, if not the first, to combine a commercial nursery with grounds laid out ornamentally with some 400 species of

<sup>4</sup> Carlton B. Lees, "The Golden Age of Horticulture," *Historic Preservation* (Oct.-Dec. 1972): 33.

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ornamental trees and shrubs, in a scenic picturesque style, while also displaying scientific arrangement of plants. Parmentier applied the same principles to his plan for Hyde Park which was greatly admired by Andrew Jackson Downing, and together with the nursery, may have provided inspiration for Downing's largely unexecuted plan for an arboretum on The Mall in Washington, D.C. (c1850). Hosack's estate may have given Downing his first model in naturalistic landscaping and at the least, Parmentier's work may have influenced the plan of the Downing family nursery in Newburgh laid out by the 1830s as a picturesque display garden and arboretum.

In upstate New York, the Parmentier/Downing aesthetic appeared at the Mount Hope Gardens and Nursery, Rochester, established in 1840 by George Ellwanger and Patrick Barry and developed over time along both picturesque and scientific principles. In Syracuse, the Syracuse Nurseries, located at West Genesee and North Geddes Streets (see Section E: Statement of Historic Contexts), was established in 1830 and included large areas devoted to horticulture. Although the design of the nursery grounds is largely unknown today, certainly the nursery contributed to the local development of an extensive interest in horticulture later exhibited at Oakwood Cemetery and the Pass Arboretum.

While many early botanical gardens were confined to private estates, Hosack's Elgin Garden and the commercial nurseries that followed offered the public an opportunity to enjoy the scientific, educational and aesthetic experience these gardens could provide. The dedication to the public that characterized ongoing development of botanical gardens manifested an early nineteenth-century belief in the importance of environment in perfecting human beings. Popular with the growing middle class, botanical gardens joined early museums of art and natural history as institutional responses to the perceived need to create a perfected environment, of naturalistic design, which in turn would produce a superior person. One of the most important examples of an early botanical garden dedicated to public use was actually a cemetery. Mount Auburn Cemetery, the nation's first rural cemetery, was founded in Cambridge in 1831 by the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, in part as an arboretum. Although the Horticultural Society's involvement in the project was short-lived, the cemetery, with its botanical garden overlay, established a precedent of naturalistically landscaped grounds, open to the public, which would lead directly to the public park movement of the later nineteenth century (see Property Type: Parks).

Although scarce in number and usually included within larger botanical gardens, there were isolated early examples of independent arboreta. In the Philadelphia area, Pierce Arboretum established in 1800 is now Longwood Gardens, and Painter's Arboretum (1830) has become the Tyler Arboretum. In 1850, H. Hollis Hunnewell established an evergreen arboretum in Wellesley, Massachusetts. Well-known in its time, it survives today as a private arboretum. In general, development of the large-scale arboreta and botanical gardens known today began in the decade following the Civil War when there was a rapid increase in the rate of botanic garden establishment as Americans found themselves with the time and space to devote to extensive gardens.

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While the educational and scientific activities of this second wave of botanical gardens has been documented, the aesthetic basis for the layout of their grounds has been less studied. The early botanical gardens noted above are, to a greater or lesser degree, analyzed from an aesthetic perspective in the standard landscape history texts, Norman Newton, *Design on the Land* and Pregill and Volkman, *Landscapes in History*. Later development of the property type is mentioned only in passing with minimal reference to design principles. Although it generally may be the case that botanical gardens and arboreta were planned according to the landscape design canon of their day, full documentation of the point is not readily available and is beyond the scope of this project. Furthermore, it is in their documented collections, research and educational activities that many botanical gardens differ from public parks, and the precise nature of the documented collection can certainly affect property design. For example systematic beds displaying taxonomic or evolutionary relationships may vary in design need from those based on plant geography or ecological relationships with the result that an intent other than aesthetics determines to some degree the garden or arboretum plan. With all this said, it is worth examining the Arnold Arboretum as a case for period aesthetics exhibited in botanical garden design. Established in 1872 in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, the Arnold Arboretum was planned by Frederick Law Olmsted in collaboration with the arboretum's director, Charles Sprague Sargent. Because Sargent had been a frequent visitor to the Hunnewell estate with its famous arboretum and to Wodenethe, a Hudson River estate planned by Downing, he brought to the task of planning the Arnold Arboretum a working knowledge of picturesque design principles. At the Arnold Arboretum, Olmsted and Sargent served the institution's didactic purpose by distributing the tree collections according to family and genus while achieving a naturalistic effect fitted to the property's topography and existing stands of trees. The Arnold Arboretum certainly displayed its period's enthusiasm for the natural landscape, but, as noted above, reference to parallel developments at other botanical gardens is difficult due to an absence of broad-based information on the topic.

Public ownership of botanical gardens steadily increased in the twentieth century. At the same time, the scientific programs of earlier gardens became less important, while horticultural and educational activities were emphasized. Care and study of local flora also became more important than they had been in the past.<sup>5</sup> Within this context, the *Pass Arboretum* was established in 1925 as a gift to the City of Syracuse for the purpose of demonstrating to the public the variety of trees and shrubs adapted to the local region and their possible planting arrangements. In establishing an arboretum in Syracuse, the Pass family drew on a strong local tradition of interest in arboriculture extending back to the tree nursery established by early settler, Joshua Forman, and continued in the extensive tree planting carried out on the city's commercial and residential streets through much of the nineteenth century. In addition, Syracuse's Oakwood Cemetery (1859) was developed as a

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<sup>5</sup> Crowley, Heywood and Watson, p.6.

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quasi-arboretum, and in 1864 the local citizenry considered establishing a zoological and botanical garden. In the later nineteenth century, Thornden, the Alexander Davis estate east of the city, was developed as a picturesque landscape with arboretum-like areas devoted to specimen trees of many kinds. In 1931-32, following Thornden's acquisition as a park (see Property Type: Parks), the city planted a pinetum. Throughout much of the period, the Syracuse Nursery, noted above, provided inspiration for Syracusans' horticultural pursuits and an important local source for plants. On a regional level, Highland Botanical Park, a government-owned entity in Rochester had been established in 1888 and, along with Thornden and Oakwood, provided a precedent for the Syracuse undertaking.

Originally laid out with a curvilinear circulation system, a pond and various picturesque design elements, the Pass Arboretum demonstrated the emphasis on aesthetic enjoyment found at most arboreta. Although certain original features have been lost, the Pass Arboretum, with approximately three-quarters of remaining plant material dating from the institution's founding, maintains to a degree the tradition of scientifically related plants aesthetically arranged so as to make observation pleasurable. As such it demonstrates local level interest in the scientific and educational aspects of horticulture that have been a part of our national landscape history since the seventeenth century.

Syracuse's arboreta can be evaluated on a local level under National Register Criteria A and C in the area of landscape architecture, and are eligible for listing as protected sites under local ordinance regulation.

### III. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

- A. Property must have been designed for scientific and/or educational purposes.
- B. Property must exhibit integrity of location, design, materials and feeling as noted in requirements that follow.
- C. Plantings, whether native or exotic, must respond to the natural climate.
- D. Plantings must exhibit scientific arrangement.
- E. Original design and spatial arrangements, regardless of style, must be retained.
- F. Property can be the work of a master landscape architect or landscape gardener.

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Property Type: Residential Gardens

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**PROPERTY TYPE: RESIDENTIAL GARDENS**

**I. DESCRIPTION**

**Definition:**

Grounds attached to a private home and designed for the use of the residents.

**Subtypes and Landscape Features:**

**Colonial and Early American Garden (1600s-1840):** Garden planned primarily for utility. Plants chosen for food production and other household uses; layout for ease of maintenance and access.

**Environment:** Varied.

**Setting:** Usually a small compact plot to the rear, side, or front of a house, though sometimes (later) encompassing a large rural property.

**Natural Systems and Features:** Flat or gently sloping sites typical; topography altered little if at all.

**Buildings and Structures:** Main house most often simple in design, but more elaborate professionally-designed houses may exist. Outbuildings for utilitarian purposes only, and may include sheds, barns, stables, walls, wells and well houses.

**Vegetation:** Emphasis on plants with practical uses, including fruits, vegetables, herbs, medicinal plants, and flowers. Both native North American and imported plants may be used.

**Spatial Organization:** Ordered and geometric, primarily for ease of maintenance. Small well-defined planting beds. Enclosure strongly defined by fence, wall, or hedge. Larger properties sometimes divided into gardens of different types (e.g., orchard, kitchen garden, stable yard, etc.).

**Circulation:** Straight or curved walks laid out for utility. Formal entry road, usually on axis with the house, a feature of later gardens of this type.

**Water Features:** Wells and drinking troughs may be present.

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Furnishings and Objects: Fences often present at the garden's perimeter or within the garden. Arbors and timber framing for raised planting beds.

Pleasure Ground Garden (c1840-1870): Garden planned to emphasize the aesthetic qualities inherent in the natural landscape. Primary goal to create picturesque views of natural scenery or a man-made scene created to imitate nature.

Environment: Varied.

Setting: Most often rural or suburban, although also occurring in low- and medium-density urban residential neighborhoods.

Natural Systems and Features: Natural topography, vegetation, and water features often incorporated into design.

Buildings and Structures: Rustic and/or picturesque architectural styles such as Gothic Revival and Italian Villa. May include outbuildings such as stables, barns, and greenhouses, often designed in the same architectural style as the house. Also may include structures such as bridges and stairs, usually rustic in style.

Vegetation: Mass plantings designed to mimic nature. Plants left to grow naturally, not heavily pruned. Deciduous and coniferous trees carefully placed for background or to frame views. Specimen trees used as focal points. Shrubs also planted in masses, and thickets preferred over fences as borders to roads or fields. Herbaceous plantings used commonly in irregular beds or to border walks near the house. Rolling lawn or "greensward" very common.

Spatial Organization: Asymmetrical, with general irregularity of line and mass. Spaces laid out to provide a sequential experience, with planned contrasts in sense of scale of adjacent spaces. Variety of internal and external views and vistas.

Circulation: Elaborate curving drives and paths follow topography and orient the user to particular views.

Water Features: Often present as streams, lakes, waterfalls, and other natural water features. Sometimes "improved" to achieve a specific artistic effect; sometimes man-made.

Furnishings and Objects: Generally limited in number. May include urns, sundials, trellises, and rustic-style benches.

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**Eclectic Garden (c1870-1900):** Garden derived from any of a wide range of influences, with naturalistic ideal on one end of spectrum, and Rationalist ideals inherited from French and Italian garden traditions on the other. Emphasis is on ornamentation (sometimes excessively) at the expense of spatial structure and stylistic unity.

**Environment:** Varied.

**Setting:** Immediate surroundings of a house; intended to be a platform on which to display the architecture. Varied from small urban lots to larger suburban parcels, and often rural properties.

**Natural Systems and Features:** Natural systems subdued and controlled whenever possible. Sloping topography usually terraced. Views more typically directed at focal points in the garden than to natural scenery in the distance.

**Buildings and Structures:** Houses designed in a wide variety of eclectic styles, including Italianate, Queen Anne, Shingle, and Second Empire. May include a wide variety of gazebos, summer houses, conservatories, pergolas, trellises, and greenhouses. Steps and paved or grass terraces may also be present.

**Vegetation:** Used as individual specimens, rather than naturalistic groups. Shrubs neatly trimmed, and used as specimens as well as clipped hedges. Well-trimmed lawn essential, and carpet bedding and topiary common. Vines commonly planted to climb up porch railings or other built features. Mixed herbaceous borders a common feature.

**Spatial Organization:** Spatial areas loosely defined; garden consisting largely of "objects" set out in the lawn. Simple geometry, including symmetry, sometimes employed, but elements of the pleasure ground style often retained, such as irregular spaces and curving borders. Sloping sites sometimes terraced. Views from the house to the garden (and vice versa) very important.

**Circulation:** Walkways straight and formal, usually directed to focal points, or curving. Steps make the transition from different terrace levels.

**Water Features:** Fountains of all types common.

**Furnishings and Objects:** Mass-produced ornamental objects an essential defining feature. May include statuary, urns, bird houses and bird baths, trellises, and benches, commonly in a rustic style. Walls and fences sometimes used to demarcate spatial areas.

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**Country Place Era Garden (c1880-1930):** Large-scale garden professionally designed for the rural homes of upper income families. Reflected a search for a unified and self-assured design style, in the wake of the architectural eclecticism of the late 19th century. A strong geometry and clear spatial structure prevailed, producing homes well-integrated with their gardens.

**Environment:** Rural countryside, usually with dramatic views to natural scenery.

**Setting:** Large estates, with buildings designed by professional architects.

**Natural Systems and Features:** Views to wild nature important. Rugged topography, native vegetation, and natural water features often in view, but not allowed near the house.

**Buildings and Structures:** Main house usually large in scale and neoclassical in style. Pergolas and summer houses common features, and walls important design elements defining terraces and spatial areas.

**Vegetation:** Planting restrained, with plants displayed more often as individual specimens or orderly collections than informal groups or masses. Formal tree allees and carefully clipped hedges typical near the house, with plantings becoming more informal farther from the house.

**Spatial Organization:** Formal, geometric, and strongly architectonic in form and volume. A formal arrival court typically enclosed with a wall or clipped hedge, and a series of garden rooms (i.e., bowling green, rose garden, etc.) organized within a clear spatial structure. Sloping sites terraced. Further from the house space less geometric and more undulating, and may include lawns, fields, and woodlands. Separate from formal gardens, but still tied to the basic geometry of the site, may be the farmstead with stables, greenhouses, and kitchen gardens.

**Circulation:** Clear and simple circulation lines reinforce the spatial geometry. Away from the house curving drives and walks provide access to the extremities of the property and sometimes include woodland paths.

**Water Features:** Fountains and reflecting pools typical. Swimming pools sometimes present.



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Furnishings and Objects: Urns, vases, and benches along with formal steps and balustrades finely detailed and classically proportioned, and typically constructed of stone or brick.

English Cottage Garden (c1890-1930): Garden intended to evoke the image of the simple vernacular English peasant's garden, occurring as a reaction against the mass-produced artificiality of the late nineteenth century. Generally small in scale, and dominated by mixed herbaceous borders and informal plant massings.

Environment: Most commonly urban or suburban residential neighborhoods.

Setting: Usually small residential lots.

Natural Systems and Features: n/a

Buildings and Structures: Often Tudor Revival style houses, representative of the English Cottage style of design.

Vegetation: Perennial flowers in mixed borders dominate. Also may include ground covers, flowering shrubs, vegetables and fruit trees. Traditional, old-fashioned plants preferred to new hybrids. Lawn area kept to a minimum necessary for outdoor activities.

Spatial Organization: Informal. Defined by mixed herbaceous borders, usually with curving edges. Typically small-scale and private, with strong enclosure provided by fence, hedge, or low wall.

Circulation: Pathways, usually organic in shape, connect spatial areas. Materials vary, and include bricks, cinders, and wood chips.

Water Features: Small pools common, fountains less so.

Furnishings and Objects: May include benches, low walls and fences, trellises and pergolas, always of simple and sturdy design.

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**Modern Garden (c1940- ):** Garden designed with the overriding objective of creating flexible outdoor space to be used for a wide variety of activities. Maintenance requirements kept low. Layout usually asymmetrical, reflecting a simple, clear geometry of form and line.

**Environment:** Most commonly urban or suburban residential neighborhoods.

**Setting:** Typically small sites of an acre or less, in urban or suburban residential neighborhoods.

**Natural Systems and Features:** Often incorporates natural topography, existing native vegetation, and scenic vistas.

**Buildings and Structures:** Main house typically small and modest, designed in contemporary twentieth century styles. Detached car garage in the rear yard common, usually doubling as a storage shed. Swimming pools common for the first time, sometimes accompanied by bathhouses. Summer houses persist. Wood decks and paved patios in a variety of materials are ubiquitous, and low walls of brick or stone are sometimes used to define spatial areas or accommodate grade changes.

**Vegetation:** Clear distinction between front and rear yards. Front for public viewing, consisting of mowed lawn, specimen trees, and foundation planting of ornamental shrubs and flowers. Rear yard for activity, with trees planted for shade or massed for a privacy screen. Shrubs are used in hedges to define property boundaries, and also for screening, while herbaceous plants are used in borders and close to the house.

**Spatial Organization:** Outdoor spaces functionally integrated, and organized asymmetrically. Borders can be straight or curved, but lines and forms evidence a clear and simple geometry.

**Circulation:** Walkways few and simple, due in part to small lot sizes and the presence of broad "walkable areas," including mowed lawn and paved patios. Paved driveways are ubiquitous, and can be circular or straight.

**Water Features:** Swimming pools the dominant water feature, and in professionally designed gardens are often custom-designed as artistic/sculptural elements. Fountains and pools sometimes present, but are not a defining feature.

**Furnishings and Objects:** Statuary used sparingly. Chairs, tables, and children's play equipment common. Fences very common, both for privacy screening and as a design detail.

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## II. SIGNIFICANCE

The history of gardens in Syracuse closely follows the evolution of broad national styles and trends in garden design, and is representative of the typical garden experience in America. Here as elsewhere residential gardens have been and continue to be an important expression of popular tastes. The most personal of all landscape types, the garden is the place where individuals have the most direct and immediate control of the landscape. More so than institutional or public landscapes, private gardens often reflect the vagaries of design fashion, and often can be the first indicators of broad shifts in prevailing aesthetic tastes.

The tradition of gardening in America reaches back to the time of initial European settlement. Gardens were of first importance to early immigrants, who immediately needed to be self-sufficient in order to survive the hardships of the unfettered American wilderness. Though the practical concerns of the household were the overriding consideration, colonial gardens were not primitive in any sense. Both in the diversity of plants and in layout, they showed a sense of order and reason strongly rooted in European garden traditions wholly familiar to early settlers. Early accounts show that settlers incorporated into their gardens many native American plants in addition to traditional European imports. Corn, oats, and squash were all North American plants the settlers learned to cultivate; strawberries, cherries, currants, pears, apples, mulberries, quince, plums, grapes, blueberries, and a great variety of herbs and medicinal plants all were found here and grown as well. Yet colonial gardens were not only concerned with food. Garden historian Ann Leighton comments that the garden was counted on to provide the colonial housewife with "all she would need for flavorings and seasonings and garnishes, for insect repellents and deodorants, for changing the air in rooms and keeping out moths and rodents and snakes, for dyeing and fueling, for concocting syrups and cordials and waters, for making plasters and salves and coated pills, for treating wounds and aiding in childbirths and in laying out the dead. Finally, she must find there her native plants, remedies or no... and of course all of these plants... were capable of bursting into fragrant bloom to make gardens gay and pleasant spots."<sup>1</sup> Layout was guided by the practical concerns of maintenance. Small, well-defined planting areas were separated by straight geometric walks, with the whole garden enclosed by a fence or hedge. Planting was often in raised timber-framed beds for ease of upkeep. Especially when colonial settlements became established, European traditions were evident, and gardens showed "an overriding purpose of comfort beyond mere survival."<sup>2</sup> Careful descriptions of early 17th century gardens are provided by John Josselyn, who gives detailed accounts of the "gardens such as are common

<sup>1</sup> Ann Leighton, *Early American Gardens* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1970), p. 164-5.

<sup>2</sup> Geoffrey Jellicoe et al., *The Oxford Companion to Gardens* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 1986, p. 572.

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with us in England."<sup>3</sup>

As the nation became more self-assured, more attention was paid to garden aesthetics. Design in America was still very much influenced by European taste, which during the 18th century was consumed by classicism. The influence of classical design was seen not only in architecture (Georgian, Federal, and Greek Revival styles) but also in landscape design. Symmetrical and axial organization and classically-inspired details were all found to varying degrees in early American gardens. However, America never developed the strong tradition of formal cultivated gardens that dominated in Europe. From the beginning, because of the realities of economic survival, climate, and rugged natural topography, American gardens had their own style. One text notes, "Where landscape planning in England depended on judicious planting, in the New World it relied on skillful cutting."<sup>4</sup> Even as the scale of gardens expanded to include drives and walks, orchards, shrubbery, sweeping expanses of lawn and views cut out to expose the native countryside, design was guided more by planting convenience than by an articulated aesthetic ideal. Significant estates exhibiting these characteristics include Mount Vernon and Monticello in Virginia, and Gore Place in Massachusetts. Closer to Syracuse, significant estates of the period were common in the Hudson Valley, where spectacular natural scenery and proximity to New York City made the perfect setting for residential landscape development. Clermont and Montgomery Place were other distinguished properties whose designs may well have been known in Central New York.

In Syracuse, documentation of local gardens of the Early American period is slight. The Syracuse area was not settled to any large extent until the 1780s, when Revolutionary War Land Grants opened up land south of present-day Syracuse. The oldest remaining houses in Syracuse date from the Federal Period of the early 1800s. Like settlers elsewhere in the nation, early Syracusans, in all likelihood, could not afford the time for anything other than utilitarian gardens. Local gardens at this time were simple, devoted chiefly to food production (e.g., kitchen garden, orchards) and household functions, with ornamental grounds limited to shade trees in a trimmed lawn. Gardening and horticulture in early Syracuse was boosted in the 1830s by the establishment of the Syracuse Nurseries, which provided a wide range of plants and seeds to the fledgling community.

High-style architecture did not reach the city to any large degree until the 1840s, when the wealth being generated by the Erie Canal was manifested in fine Greek Revival homes along James Street and elsewhere. Gardens of these residences seem to have followed the typical Early American model. Within the city, lots were typically several acres in size - enough for a sizable front lawn, curving drive, carriage house and service facilities, kitchen garden, and side yard planted with shade trees.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 574.

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The *Leavenworth Mansion* (607 James Street, formerly #97, #501) was one of the earliest gardens recorded in Syracuse.<sup>5</sup> Built in 1842, this was one of the first of James Street's fine residences, and was perhaps the finest example of Greek Revival residential architecture in the city. The gardens were laid out when the house was built, and judging by early written accounts, seem to have been based on Early American precedents emphasizing order and utility, as well as comfort. The garden consisted of a series of terraces molded into the steep site. An 1899 newspaper article<sup>6</sup> notes, "The house occupies a central position and the broad terraces descend gently to the street in front and rise back of the house to the crest of the hill... Smooth gravel walks wind gracefully among the flower beds and stone steps lead from terrace to terrace." Flowers predominated, beds containing "almost every variety of old fashioned flower." While no kitchen garden is mentioned, the garden's utility was assured by its orchards, where "cherries, plums, pears, peaches, grapes and currants all have their place." A winding gravel path led from the upper garden past the stables to an extensive side lawn planted with shade and ornamental trees such as horse chestnut, redbud and yellowwood and described as "not the least attractive feature of the garden."<sup>7</sup>

While the gardens of early America exhibited a refined sense of aesthetics along with the necessary concern for utility, they were more the result of intuitive planning than the application of formal design principles. The first American to articulate a coherent theory of landscape design was Andrew Jackson Downing (1815-1852), a landscape designer who interpreted the ideals of the "English School" of landscape gardening to an American audience.<sup>8</sup> Downing rejected the formalism of classical design, instead embracing the beauty inherent in the natural qualities of the landscape. Downing was strongly influenced by English landscape gardeners like Repton and Loudon who had earlier espoused similar ideas, but Downing's philosophy was also very much a product of his time and place. Reacting against the rationality of the Enlightenment, the Romantic movement captured the imagination of nineteenth century America with its emphasis on emotion over reason, and spontaneity over formality. The natural landscape symbolized this romantic philosophy, and wild nature became a metaphor which permeated all creative endeavors. Hudson River School artists like Thomas Cole and Asher Durand painted the idealized natural landscape; Emerson, Thoreau, and James Fenimore Cooper wrote about it. Architecture too, embodied the romantic spirit, with the asymmetrical styles of the Gothic Revival and Italian Villa developed by architects such as James Renwick and A. J. Davis. The book, *Gardens of the Gilded Age*, summarizes the design principles of the period:

<sup>5</sup> The house, and gardens with it, was demolished in July 1950.

<sup>6</sup> "Old Fashioned Garden in the Heart of Syracuse," *Syracuse Post-Standard*, 11 August 1899.

<sup>7</sup> The house, and gardens with it, was demolished in July 1950.

<sup>8</sup> See *Statement of Historic Contexts* for further discussion of Downing and the Romantic Period.

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In the landscape garden imaginary sight lines, rather than geometry, provided the organization. Curving walks replaced those that were straight and direct. Trees and shrubs in natural-looking groups supplanted formal allees, and flower beds, once enclosed near the residence, were scattered at the margins of broad, smooth lawns.... From then on, the goal of landscape gardening was to improve the inherent capabilities of the site itself, rather than to impose an artificial order upon it.<sup>9</sup>

Downing presented two versions of the romantic landscape, corresponding to two styles of residential architecture. For the Italian Villa there was "the Beautiful," where nature was simplified and idealized, using "outlines whose curves are flowing and gradual... with no sharp angles or abrupt turns." This was contrasted with the "Picturesque" setting for the gothic cottage, where nature was portrayed realistically, with "outlines of a certain spirited irregularity, surfaces comparatively abrupt and broken, and growth of somewhat wild and bold character."

Downing's works were widely read and highly influential. For the first time, the philosophy of landscape design had been put in straightforward terms which could be easily understood and followed. The romantic style was ideally suited to the rugged and wild American landscape, and allowed a freedom of expression that the strict geometry of classical design did not. Anyone could try their hand at landscape gardening in the romantic tradition, and through this the landscape became a shared experience. Comments Christine Doell, "more nineteenth century Americans may have come to understand the meaning of romanticism through the landscape garden than through either literature or art, for not everyone wrote or painted, but many expressed their individuality in the design of their own homegrounds."<sup>10</sup> Professional landscape designers were also influenced by Downing, and were responsible for popularizing the Romantic tradition. Frederick Law Olmsted applied romantic principles to public landscapes, and created the prototypical 19th century park. Designers like John Notman, Howard Daniels (the designer of Syracuse's Oakwood Cemetery), Robert Morris Copeland and Horace Cleveland also followed in this tradition, designing parks, cemeteries, as well as residential gardens in the romantic style.

In Syracuse, the most well-known romantic landscape belonged to perhaps the city's most well-known romantic-era residence, the *Renwick-Yates Castle*, a castellated gothic mansion designed in 1854 by famed architect James Renwick. The house was situated on "Syracuse Hill," on a site now occupied by the SUNY Health Science Center. Though presently engulfed by modern development, this steep hill south of downtown Syracuse was at the time remote from the burgeoning city and new residential neighborhoods to the north. The view was spectacular, overlooking the Onondaga Creek valley with the city to the north

<sup>9</sup> Christine Klim Doell, *Gardens of the Gilded Age: 19th Century Gardens and Homegrounds of New York State* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press), 1986, p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

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and Onondaga Lake on the horizon. This rugged and picturesque setting was ideal for Renwick's gothic style architecture, which "never appears completely at home except in wild and romantic scenery."<sup>11</sup> The fifteen acre grounds were an eclectic mix of rustic and refined features, initially laid out in the natural style advocated by Downing, but with formal gestures added in later years. Requisite rustic features abounded. Chief among these was the rustic bridge which carried visitors across a ravine on the way to the house. An early account of the garden describes "... rustic arches and seats, gilded lamps, reflecting globes of quicksilver mounted upon pedestals, and a wealth of the choicest flowers and fruit, and rarest plants and exotics..."<sup>12</sup> The grounds also features several gothic style outbuildings, including a chapel, summer house, and greenhouse. The rugged ravine ultimately gave way to an Italian Renaissance-inspired garden in the 1870s. The hillsides were terraced and given formal plantings, and formal stone stairways led to a gravel walk below with classical statuary and vases providing focal points.<sup>13</sup>

Another large-scale romantic landscape was *Thornden*, a private estate on the city's east side which over a fifty-year period and under two owners was transformed from farmland into a premiere local pleasure ground. The framework for the romantic landscape was created by James Haskins, who purchased the land in 1850. Haskins constructed the first house on the property, installed a curving entry drive, and even built a trout pond. A recluse in his later years, Haskins devoted himself to gardening, developing extensive greenhouses and planting hundreds of trees. After Haskins' death in 1873, the estate was purchased by Major Alexander Davis. Though born in America, Davis throughout this life maintained a strong affection for his English heritage, and he spent twenty-five years transforming the estate into a romantic country landscape in the tradition of the English landscape school. It was Davis who named the property Thornden, and he adorned it with all the trappings of an English country estate, including a Tudor-style addition to the house and the quintessential English manorial amenity, the walled hunting park. Layout of the grounds fell to gardener David Campbell, a horticulturalist trained in Scotland. At Thornden topography was a primary determinant of site layout. Drives and plantings followed the undulations of the land, creating picturesque views and a sequential experience characteristic of pleasure ground landscapes. Overall, the orientation of the landscape was inward, with a sense of exclusive privacy created by perimeter fence, a thorn hedge, and dense groves of trees.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>13</sup> The property was purchased by Syracuse University in 1905, and served several functions until it ultimately was demolished in 1954. All that remains of the grounds is a portion of stone wall along Irving Avenue.

<sup>14</sup> Thornden was purchased by the city for use as a public park in 1921.

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Most residential sites in Syracuse were too small, and not well-enough endowed with picturesque natural scenery, to receive the full "Downingsque" treatment given larger sites such as Thornden. A more modest example of the romantic style in residential landscapes was the *Sedgwick Cottage* at 742 James St. (previously #114, #612). Designed in 1846 for Congressman Charles Sedgwick, the house was a fine example of acclaimed architect A. J. Davis' "gothic cottage" style of architecture. Here is evidence of the informal style of residential landscaping advocated by Davis and Downing (though there is no evidence of Downing's involvement). A dense canopy of mature shade trees create a forested setting well in keeping with the picturesque ideal. In the rear, a canopied terrace at ground level integrated the house with the garden. Vines - an essential component of the Downing landscape - grew freely up porch columns. Photos show informal herbaceous borders framing gravel paths, and surrounding a small patch of clipped lawn.<sup>15</sup>

Up to the middle of the 19th century ornamental gardens both in Syracuse and nationally were generally the domain of the upper class. But the period following the Civil War was a time of profound change in America. Business and commerce boomed, railroads and the telegraph linked the country, and the technology of mass production placed a staggering array of products into the hands of millions. In the space of a generation the country urbanized, and cities became the incubators for both great cultural achievements and terrible social ills. In the process a huge new social stratum was created, tied to the city by professional and cultural opportunity, but with the desire and means to live outside the increasingly polluted and vice-filled city centers - the suburban middle class. Everywhere new residential developments expanded city boundaries. The home was the center of life during the period, both as the sanctuary of conservative family values, and as a symbol of wealth and taste. Commercial farming made kitchen gardens unnecessary for the middle class, and the residential landscape consequently came to be valued for its ornamental and recreational value. Gardens became status symbols, indicators of wealth in land ownership and of leisure time to spend enjoying the garden. Gardens were also a means to display one's personal taste. Homeowners were proud to design their own grounds, and gardening was considered a virtuous pursuit, especially for the housewife.

Gardens of the period were as eclectic as the architecture. With wealth born of the machine age, Victorians delighted in anything new and innovative. Fashions changed swiftly, and borrowed freely from historical styles. Design, like the national spirit, was exuberant, bold, and self-confident. Beauty was equated with detail, and Victorians covered every surface with richly textured patterns. In all types of design it was the embellishments, rather than an overall unity of design, which took precedence.

Gardens of the late 19th century characteristically lacked an organized spatial layout, and sometimes consisted merely of objects set out in the lawn. The clipped lawn became a

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<sup>15</sup> The house, which was recorded by the Historic American Buildings Survey, was razed in 1962.



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universal feature, and in fact was sometimes the only unifying element in the garden. Mass-produced artifacts were extraordinarily popular, and included statuary (sometimes classical but often of woodland animals or gnomes) fountains, urns, vases, birdbaths, and benches. Structures such as summer houses, gazebos, greenhouses, conservatories, and trellises were popular as well. Plants, too, were treated as artifacts to be displayed. While familiar elements of romantic design persisted (e.g., informal plantings, curving lines), garden design no longer attempted to mimic nature. Instead, gardens symbolized control of nature. Taste moved away from naturalistic groupings and picturesque vistas to elaborate floral displays and eclectic combinations of specimen trees. Exotics were very popular, and the demand fueled a thriving and sophisticated nursery industry. Topiary was common, as were clipped hedges, parterres, and carpet bedding. Perhaps the ultimate symbol of the period's garden aesthetic - and its lasting legacy - was the mowed lawn. The introduction of the mass-produced lawn mower in the 1870s made the manicured lawn accessible to everyone, and turf became *de rigueur*.

As with most other cities in the northeast, Syracuse experienced dramatic growth in the decades following the Civil War. Residential neighborhoods for wealthy and modest income families sprang up on all sides of the city. Throughout the nineteenth century James Street would be one of the city's most fashionable addresses, and the location for some of the city's finest gardens. Photographs from the period show an unbroken string of neatly trimmed front lawns, with mature shade trees lining the street and other shade and ornamental trees dotting the front and side yards. Typical examples were the *Everson Residence* at 754 James St. (formerly #614 & #116) and the *McCarthy Residence* next door (#756, 616, 118). Both houses were built in the 1850s, the Everson home in the Italianate style and the McCarthy house in the Gothic Revival. The front yards, however, are furnished according to the tastes of the 1870s - with an assortment of mass-produced ornamental statuary. A straight walk led to the front door of the McCarthy House, flanked by a pair of iron deer and a pair of iron urns. Classical-style sculptures were set out in the middle of the lawn along with an arrangement of chairs. Foundation plantings and shrubbery were conspicuously absent. At the Everson House, the rear yard was utilitarian, with vegetables, bulbs, and other herbaceous plants grown in neatly trimmed planting beds. Victorian taste prevailed even here, however, in the form of a grape arbor, wood-frame gazebo, bird bath, and sun dial embellishing the yard. A bit farther up the street, the *D. P. Wood Residence* (198 James Street) shows a similar treatment, with clipped front lawn, numerous lawn ornaments, exotic-looking plants arranged in circular beds in the lawn, and vines climbing porch posts. What appears to be a conservatory can be seen in the side yard in one photograph.

Even rural houses demonstrated eclectic taste in their gardens. An 1882 photograph of the *P.P. Midler Garden*, located on James Street near the present location of Midler Ave., shows an elaborate design of parterres and carpet bedding, with a complicated network of narrow pathways.

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Closer to downtown, the *Milton Price Residence* on S. Salina St. was a Second Empire style house located at the site of the present Dey Brothers Store which received a formal landscape treatment representative of the era. An 1878 photo shows a formal side garden overflowing with Victorian ornament. Mass-produced statuary such as the "baby deer" and "boy with umbrella" and the classical style fountain found here were all common to middle-class gardens of the period.<sup>16</sup>

As wealth accumulated in the last part of the 19th century, the demand for large-scale residential properties increased, and along with this came a search by the status-conscious elite for a more refined and sophisticated design expression. The stylized naturalism of the Romantic period which had persisted through the late nineteenth century was put aside in favor of geometric formality of the Renaissance. The garden of the Renaissance-era Italian Villa was held up as the ideal - the proper symbol of social, political, and economic predominance. The appeal of formality in design can also be traced to the Columbian Exposition of 1893, with its site plan emphasizing axiality and architectonic spaces. The Beaux Arts formality expressed at the Exposition signaled not only a shift in design taste but also symbolized the rise of the professionally-trained architect as designer of outdoor spaces. Until this time architects and other designers were largely self-trained, and usually confined their work to the design of buildings, leaving the landscape to the hands of nurserymen, landscape gardeners, or (most often) homeowners. By the end of the century, however, American architects were obtaining sophisticated educations at the finest European architecture schools, and were returning home with well-formulated ideas of form, proportion, and spatial structure. At the same time, the growth of the wealthy class at the end of the 19th century created a demand for large architect-designed homes with spacious grounds. This, along with the rise of landscape architecture as a legitimate design profession in its own right, created an atmosphere where professional designers in large numbers were applying principles of formal classical design to the residential landscape. This revival of classicism in garden design is known as the "Country Place Era."<sup>17</sup> Where the middle class had settled in the suburbs, the upper class moved even further away from the increasingly complex and more threatening urban centers, building large rural estates. The Country Place Era evolved over a period of nearly fifty years, until the crash of 1929 effectively ended such large-scale residential construction.

Country estates of this period manifested a high level of integration between indoor and outdoor spaces, with the house and grounds usually designed to be built together as a single unit. Gardens consisted of a series of outdoor rooms, architectonic in form and volume, reinforcing the mass and geometry of the house. Spatial arrangement was typically

<sup>16</sup> The residences and gardens of Everson, McCarthy, Wood, Midler, and Price are no longer extant.

<sup>17</sup> For further discussion of the Country Place Era in landscape design, see *Section E: Statement of Historic Contexts*.

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along a primary axis extended from the house, with one or more cross axes at right angles. Sight lines were essential to spatial structure, from the house to the garden, and outward to the native countryside beyond. Grade changes were addressed with terracing, with elegant formal stairways and classically detailed walls characteristic features. These detailed architectural features in the garden were another way of integrating the house with its site. Garden spaces became less formal as they moved further from the house, melting into broad lawns and orchards, and ultimately merging with the wild beyond. Overriding everything was a simple clarity of spatial structure and circulation and an attention to proportion, scale and detail reflective of the style's roots in the Italian Renaissance.

It was during this period that landscape architecture developed an identity as a profession, as professional landscape architecture offices and university-trained landscape designers lent their talents to the creation of country estates. The Olmsted Brothers firm was known most widely for their design of such residential gardens, with others such as James Greenleaf, Bryant Fleming, Charles Platt, Warren Manning and Beatrix Farrand also gaining regional or national reputations.

In New York State, Country Place Era estates are found most commonly in the Hudson Valley, Long Island, and in Western New York. Examples include Ormston (near Glen Cove, Long Island), designed by the Olmsted Brothers; Killeworth (also near Glen Cove), designed by James Greenleaf; and the Thorne Residence (Bay Shore, L.I.), designed by Vitale & Geiffert. In upstate New York, many Country Place Era estates were built in and around Rochester, including the Sloan House, by the Olmsted Brothers, and several by local landscape architect Alling DeForest (George Eastman House - 1904, Warner Castle - 1930). Also active in the Rochester area near the end of the period was landscape architect Fletcher Steele, whose early designs were highly classical (Allen Residence, Lisburne Grange, et al.). Even closer to Syracuse, Sonnenberg Gardens in Canandaigua is an excellent example of a Country Place estate. Constructed over many years beginning in 1902, the landscape was designed by the firm of Ernest Bowditch, a Boston landscape architect. The grounds consist of a series of gardens, each with a different cultural or artistic theme. The formal Italian Garden is closest to the house, and is strongly geometric and symmetrical. Other gardens include the Japanese Garden, the Rose Garden, Secret Garden, Old Fashioned Garden, Pansy Garden, Blue and White Garden, and Rock Garden.

As Syracuse matured as a city at the turn of the century, local tastes followed the national trend toward neoclassicism. While the city itself lacked the rural setting characteristic of true "Country Place" estates, some notable gardens were constructed here in the neoclassical tradition. In Syracuse as elsewhere landscape design was being taken more seriously as a profession. Where no landscape architects or "landscape gardeners" are listed in the City Directory for 1910, the 1927 Directory shows six individuals under the heading

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"landscape architects and gardeners."<sup>18</sup> Nationally known landscape architects worked on projects in Syracuse as well. Records show that the Olmsteds were consulted on at least fourteen sites in the Syracuse area, several of which were large residential properties.<sup>19</sup> These included the Hazard Estate (1893) and Pierce Residence in Solvay, and the Chase Residence in Dewitt.

Another notable landscape architect who came to Syracuse was Boston's Ernest Bowditch, designer of Canadaigua's Sonnenberg Gardens, who designed gardens for the *Barnes-Hiscock Residence* at 930 James Street (formerly #808, and #160) based in part on neoclassical principles. This was one of the most extensive and well-documented gardens in Syracuse. The home of the Corinthian Club since 1948, the house was originally built in 1854 in the Italian Villa style. It was reconstructed in the Georgian Revival mode in 1890, and it is thought that the gardens were constructed shortly thereafter. Described at the time as an "English Garden," it indeed reflected the influence of English gardeners, such as Gertrude Jekyll, with its informal planting arrangements. The overall garden structure, however, was formal. The grounds were heavily manicured, with neatly edged walks, clipped lawn, and impressive herbaceous border plantings. The gardens were designed as a sequence of rooms, each with a different theme and character, defined by hedges or low walls and all connected by a geometric path layout. The water garden exemplified the formal/informal dichotomy which characterized the garden. Here the structure is formal - a rectangular terrace enclosed by a lattice fence and containing a linear arrangement of three pools. The planting, however, is informal, with naturalistic groupings of alpine plants and ornamental grasses. Also on the grounds were a rock garden, rose garden enclosed by a classical pergola, and a formal garden flanked by low stone walls. Both rustic and classically-inspired furnishings are used. Flowers predominate, as throughout the garden mixed herbaceous borders line the pathways. Though the house remains standing today, the gardens were removed to make room for parking; all that remains is a wood-frame gazebo and a portion of stone wall supporting the upper terrace near the house. Other Syracuse gardens in the neoclassical style were the *Nottingham Residence* at 701 Walnut Street (house built 1901) and the *Wilkinson Residence* (house built 1903) next door at 703 Walnut Street.

While the high-style ideals of the Country Place Era were represented in some Syracuse properties, the city's residential gardens of the early 20th century were more typically expressive of middle-class values than of the extravagance that marked the "country places." Residential expansion in Syracuse continued steadily through the 1920s, as new subdivisions on the city's edges provided the upwardly-mobile with the opportunity for home ownership (see Property Type: Residential Subdivisions). New homes constructed in

<sup>18</sup> Arthur Eckert, Antonio Guancia, Edgar Herzog, John Lyman, George Millbyer, Frank Schedzle, Sibley & Carpenter.

<sup>19</sup> Information provided by the F. L. Olmsted National Historic Site, Brookline, MA.

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Syracuse during this period reflected a nationwide aesthetic leaning toward the rustic architectural styles of the Arts and Crafts Movement, such as the Tudor Revival and Bungalow styles. The Arts and Crafts Movement began in England in the last half of the 19th century as a reaction against the materialism and mass produced ornament of the Machine Age. The movement extolled the virtues of the common man, finding beauty in the simple vernacular design of everyday objects and emphasizing craftsmanship and honesty of materials. The ideals of the Arts and Crafts Movement would be expressed in all fields of design including architecture, fine arts, furniture, and landscape design. The traditional English cottage was hailed as an architectural prototype, and the English "cottage garden" would become its ideal landscape companion.

The cottage garden had no use for formal structure and geometry. These were vernacular gardens, with an informal arrangement and intimate, human scale. The primary element was vegetation, and spatial areas were usually defined by planting beds. Traditional, old-fashioned plants were preferred to the imported exotics popular in Victorian times. The mixed perennial border was a standard feature. These mixed flower beds would provide continuous bloom throughout the season, and were laid out around the borders of small properties, lining the edges of pathways, or against the foundation of the house. Vegetable gardens were also common, as were vines, fruit trees and flowering shrubs. Clipped lawn was confined to a small area, if kept at all, with ground covers preferred. Garden furnishings and structures of simple, sturdy design were desirable, and these included benches, low walls and fences, trellises and pergolas.

Syracuse and Central New York became fertile ground for the growth of Arts and Crafts ideals in America. Furniture designer Gustav Stickley, ceramicist Adelaide Robineau, stained glass maker Henry Keck, and architect Ward Wellington Ward were some of the local designers who gained regional and even national reputation for designs expressive of Arts and Crafts principles. Many Craftsman-inspired homes were built in Syracuse between 1910-1930, and a great many of these (as well as other types of homes) sported versions of the cottage garden. Documented examples include the *Rolland Marvin Residence* at 257 Robineau Rd., the *Robineau Home* at 204 Robineau Road, and the *Morris Chase Residence* at 308 Summit Ave. All these homes featured informal planting arrangements of perennials and ground covers, with coniferous shrubs and trees in the background. Areas of clipped lawn are small, with undulating planting beds comprising most of the garden.

After the second World War, the new lifestyle of suburban America resulted in significant changes in the ways people lived and used their properties. The democratization of the automobile led to a change in the density of residential neighborhoods. Suburbs no longer needed to be in close proximity to city centers, but could be located miles away. The automobile also made traveling easy and affordable to everyone, and people began to spend more of their leisure time away from home. With suburban family life more active than ever, gardens needed to become less labor-intensive, providing functional space for daily activities.

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Functionalism became the main objective, with garden spaces designed to fit intended use, rather than a pre-conceived aesthetic system. To modernist thinking the principle role of the landscape was to support human activity, rather than create settings for buildings and structures. Inspired in part by modern art, the modernist movement in design embraced an aesthetic built on simple lines, clear geometry, and asymmetrical forms. According to one landscape historian, "modernism specifically reconsidered the small residential site as a work of art in which functions directed development but allowed expression of visual principles."<sup>20</sup> Modern gardens provide for flexibility of use, with spaces integrated in form, not merely by sight-lines, as with some earlier styles. Organization is typically asymmetrical, with aesthetic considerations often secondary to function.

The majority of residential gardens in Syracuse today would be described as modern, and dozens if not hundreds of representative examples of this subtype can be found in all corners of the city, especially in the Sedgwick, Strathmore, and Westcott Street areas. Residential Gardens in Syracuse can be evaluated on a local level under National Register Criteria A and C in the area of landscape architecture, and are eligible for listing as protected sites under local ordinance regulation.

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<sup>20</sup> Philip Pregill and Nancy Volkman, *Landscapes in History: Design and Planning in the Western Tradition* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1993), p. 690.

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### III. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

#### Colonial / Early American Garden

- A. Property must be primarily utilitarian in design, intended to serve the functional needs of the household.
- B. Property must have integrity of location, design, and feeling as noted in requirements that follow.
- C. Property must be laid out with an orderly and geometric arrangement of planting beds and functional work areas.
- D. A clear physical relationship between the functional spaces of the house and garden must be evident.
- E. Remaining historic vegetation must consist primarily of plants useful for household purposes. Where little or no historic vegetation remains, site must have archeological potential to determine historic plants.
- F. Walks and drives should be simple and direct, reinforcing spatial geometry of the garden and providing easy access to all planting beds and work areas.
- G. Formal features such as planned entry drives and tree allees can occur, especially in later examples.

#### Pleasure Ground Garden

- A. Property must be designed to enhance the inherent beauty of the natural landscape by creating a sequence of natural or designed spaces and picturesque views/vistas.
- B. Property must have integrity of location, design, materials, and feeling as noted in requirements that follow.
- C. Walks and drives must be curvilinear, following contours of the land, and provide a sequential experience of the landscape.
- D. Mass plantings or specimen plantings designed to mimic nature must be present, and can serve as focal points or to frame a view/vista.
- E. Topography can be rolling and irregular, framing views and directing circulation.
- F. Rustic and/or picturesque style buildings and structures (such as bridges and walls) can be present.
- G. Rustic-styled site furnishings such as benches and trellises can be present.
- H. Naturalistic water features such as lakes, streams, ponds, and waterfalls can be present.
- I. Property can be the work of a master architect or landscape architect.

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**Eclectic Garden**

- A. Property must be designed with an emphasis on detailed ornamentation and ostentatious display.
- B. Property must have integrity of location, design, materials, and feeling as noted in requirements that follow.
- C. Planting scheme must reflect the prevalent theme of control of nature. Clipped hedges, clipped lawn, topiary, carpet bedding, specimen planting, exotic plants and parterres are all typical of gardens of this period.
- D. Garden furnishings, structures and/or objects must be present, and can include summer houses, conservatories, benches, urns, statuary or any type of mass-produced garden ornament.
- E. Fountains can be present.

**Country Place-Era Garden**

- A. Property must be large in scale, with a classical-inspired garden well-integrated in form and mass with the architecture of the house.
- B. Property must have integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, and feeling as noted in requirements that follow.
- C. Property must be architectonic in layout, with a geometric arrangement of well-defined garden rooms. Rooms are rectilinear in form, and arranged along a dominant spatial axis.
- D. Design detailing as evidenced by walls, balustrades, furnishings, urns and vases, and sculpture must be present.
- E. Intended views and vistas, both within the garden and to the distance, may be intact or recoverable.
- F. Specimen plants or plant groupings important to garden structure, such as allees or clipped hedges, can be present.
- G. Property can be the work of a master architect or landscape architect.

**English Cottage Garden**

- A. Property must emphasize vernacular forms and natural materials.
- B. Property must have integrity of location, design, materials, and feeling as noted in requirements that follow.
- C. Vegetation must include mixed herbaceous borders, and feature traditional plant materials as opposed to rare or exotic species.
- D. Garden spaces should be small in scale and offer strong enclosure by fences, walls, or hedgerows.
- E. Simply-designed furnishings can be present.



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**Modern Garden**

- A. Property must be designed primarily as functional outdoor space accommodating a flexible program of human activity, including work and active and passive recreation.
- B. Property must have integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, and feeling as noted in requirements that follow.
- C. Outdoor spaces must be functionally integrated, with the rear yard designed as the primary activity area.
- D. Deck and/or paved patio may be present as an integral component of garden's spatial organization.
- E. Layout can be asymmetrical, with a simple and clear geometry of line and form.

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**Section H: Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods***Introduction*

This nomination is the latest product in a long-term effort by the city of Syracuse to identify and document its historic landscape resources. Where previous surveys focused primarily on public landscapes, this nomination addresses a broader scope of designed landscapes, including private properties such as residential gardens and institutional campuses. It develops the historic themes and contexts essential to the understanding of the local physical landscape, as well as establishing a framework in which individual properties can be evaluated in terms of objective criteria of significance and integrity. This nomination is intended as a template for the registration of additional properties both in Syracuse and elsewhere.

*Previous Surveys*

Identification of properties for this National Register Nomination was based on a two-phase project which studied local publicly owned landscapes to determine those of historic significance. Phase One, conducted in 1986-7, was a reconnaissance-level survey to inventory all publicly owned landscapes in the city and identify those which would be studied in depth in phase two. Work of Phase One was conducted by students in landscape architecture at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry. In this phase a windshield survey was made of all publicly owned landscapes in Syracuse. Landscapes were identified and mapped, excluding those which had been radically altered or which had been created during the last 50 years. For historic landscapes, existing conditions were documented and archival research was conducted, and preliminary determinations of significance were made based on changes in physical features, use, and relationship to surroundings.

Based on the reconnaissance-level survey, twelve sites were determined as potentially eligible for historic landmark status, and these were inventoried as part of the Syracuse Historic Landscape Resources Survey completed in 1989 by the Walmsley Company. These twelve sites were thoroughly documented and researched, and recommendations were made for designation potential. This Intensive-Level Survey also established historic contexts for these landscapes in terms of national design movements, social context, and local urban development. Though intentionally narrow in focus, concentrating only on public landscapes, the Walmsley survey was instrumental in establishing a firm foundation of documentation of local historic landscapes.

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*Identification and Evaluation of Property Types*

This Multiple Property Documentation Form is intended to provide a foundation for the identification and evaluation of historic designed landscapes in Syracuse, New York. In order to adequately define the context of "Historic Designed Landscapes in Syracuse," property types extant in the city were identified and evaluated in accordance with National Register Bulletin 16B: *How to Complete the National Register Multiple Property Nomination Form* and Bulletin 18: *How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes*. Property types addressed in this study include all those for which at least one known representative example at least 50 years of age currently exists in the city. Property types for which no 50-year old example exists in the city were not addressed. Property types identified here 7

Using as a guideline the list of Historic Designed Landscape Types found in Bulletin 18, seven property type classifications were identified. To define property types, both narrative and cartographic evidence was consulted. Historic maps provided a comprehensive record of designed open spaces from all periods of city history; and written accounts provided information about the historic use and character of these properties. In addition, a windshield survey was conducted to verify the existence and current condition of many designed open spaces in the city. It is important to note that the purpose of this survey was not to provide a record of every designed historic landscape in the city, but rather to locate extant examples of the identified property types.

Each property type identified was then evaluated independently to establish a specific set of characteristic features and registration requirements. The intent was to build an abstract "model" of each property type against which individual properties could be measured. This is presented in Section F of the *Multiple Property Documentation Form*. Property type evaluations presented in this study consist of the following components: definition and characteristic features, statement of significance, and registration requirements.

Definition of Property Type Classifications

Definitions for property type classifications were based on design intent, function, and characteristic features. The definition is not intended to provide a detailed description of the property, but rather to communicate the essential characteristics (whether functional or physical) necessary to identify a property as a representative of one type rather than another. Definitions developed for this study were based largely on existing precedents established by standard texts on landscape history and previous scholarly writings on landscape types. Many of the property types identified were further classified into subtypes, which distinguish between properties of the same type which may have slightly different functions or represent the aesthetic bias of distinct time periods.

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Identification of Characteristic Features

Property types are described in terms of characteristic features - those physical features which must be present for a particular landscape to be a good representative of its type. Landscape character is discussed in terms of nine physical features, based on a list developed by faculty and graduate students in landscape architecture at the SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry<sup>1</sup>. Determination of characteristic features for each property type was made through researching standard texts on landscape history and other relevant publications (see Section I: Major Bibliographic References).

Statement of Significance

A narrative statement of significance establishes historic themes and contexts which serve as a basis for evaluation of individual properties. Significance is discussed at the national, regional, and local levels. This narrative describes the cultural circumstances which gave rise to the property type, relates the development of the type in American history, and shows how and why typical expressions of the type changed and evolved over time. It also describes the extent to which broad national trends are reflected in local and regional examples.

Registration Requirements

For each property type and subtype, specific criteria were developed for evaluating eligibility for nomination. Registration requirements are not specific to any site but rather are generic, providing an objective set of criteria against which any property of a certain type can be measured. Registration requirements identify characteristic features which must be present for a property to exhibit historic integrity, as well as those which contribute to a property's ability to convey significance.

In addition to specific criteria established for each type, it is understood that all historic properties must meet certain basic criteria to be considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. These are:

1. Property must be at least 50 years old.
2. Property must have definable boundaries.
3. Property must meet one or more of the four National Register Criteria for Evaluation.
4. Property must exhibit integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, as stated in NR Bulletin 15, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*.

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<sup>1</sup> George Curry, et al. *Landscape Features: Character-defining Features for Documentation of Cultural Landscapes*. SUNY-CESF. Unpublished manuscript, 1993. (See Appendix A).

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These criteria are assumed for all property types, and are not listed among the registration requirements for each type. However, with the recognition that integrity requirements may vary between property types, a requirement is provided for each property type and subtype which notes those qualities of integrity which are most necessary or most likely to be found. Similarly, while it is recognized that all property types could be the work of a master designer, this criterion is listed as a registration requirement only for those property types for which specific examples are most likely to have been designed by a master.

*Evaluation of Individual Sites*

Evaluation of individual properties is conducted in the following manner, in accordance with methods spelled out in *Bulletin 18: How to Evaluate and Nominate Designed Historic Landscapes*:

1. *Archival Research.* Research is conducted to document site history. Information is obtained concerning the physical form and function of the site as well as significant associations with important people, events and trends in local history. Specific information includes dates of initial design and construction, and of subsequent alterations; names of owners, designers, and administrators, and other important figures associated with the property; identification of construction techniques and plant materials used; existing and previous uses of the property; original and current boundaries. Maps and photographs are consulted as well as written material, to determine original design intent of the property. This research effort results in a narrative history of the site in written form. Sources for archival material may include the Onondaga Historical Association, Onondaga County Public Library, Syracuse University Libraries, Syracuse City Departments of Parks & Recreation and Engineering, and previous surveys on local resources on file with the city and New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.
2. *Site Visits.* Thorough field surveys are conducted to determine existing conditions. Surveys identify site features as well as function, design intent, artistic value, and interrelationship of the site to its surroundings. Site features are documented using the same categories developed for the discussion of characteristic features for each property type (see above). Site visits also verify the veracity of existing site plans. Important site features and views are photographed with b/w 35mm film.
3. *Assessment of Significance.* Significance of each property is evaluated in relation to themes and contexts established in Section E of the Multiple Property Nomination Form. Based on information collected, a determination of applicable National Register Criteria is made.

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4. *Assessment of Integrity.* Existing conditions are compared with historic conditions to determine the amount of physical change experienced by the property through its history and to determine the historic features remaining on site. Based on registration requirements developed for each property type in Section F, integrity of each site is evaluated. For properties nominated for the National Register, contributing and non-contributing features were tabulated in four categories - Buildings, Sites, Structures, and Objects - as specified in NR Bulletin 16A.

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# Landscape Features

Character-defining features  
for documentation of cultural landscapes

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The following list of character-defining landscape features was developed in an effort to create a system for documenting cultural landscapes. This list was developed, and the features defined, by Professor George W. Curry and Research Assistants Regina M. Bellavia and David Uschold of the Faculty of Landscape Architecture at the State University of New York, College of Environmental Science and Forestry.<sup>1</sup> The list of landscape features is as follows:

**Environment** – the general external influences affecting the historic landscape, the off-site larger physical and visual context which contains or encompasses the historic landscape.

**Natural** – the natural physical form and features of the surrounding environment that has or does directly affect the historic landscape (major landforms, ridges/valleys, vegetation, water bodies, wetlands, etc.).

**Social/Cultural** – the general human overlay on the physical form of the surrounding environment that has or does directly affect the historic landscape (general land use, zoning, legal restrictions, transportation, utilities, population, political jurisdiction—state, county, city, village, town, etc.).

**Setting** – the most immediate physical and visual context for the historic landscape (property limits, adjacent property, land use, etc.).

**Natural Systems and Features** – the natural aspects of the landscape often, during the process of manipulating the landscape, have a direct effect on the resultant form. Different from the natural context of the "Environment" section, "Natural Systems & Features" pertains to aspects of the historic landscape that are on the site or directly adjacent to it. The following natural aspects may be relevant to the historic landscape:

**Physiography** – the large scale physical forms and patterns of the historic landscape (hill, plateau, ravine, drumlin, etc.).

**Topography** – the inextractable framework of the historic landscape; the three dimensional configuration of the earth surface characterized by features (ground slope, configuration of contours, visual forms, etc.) and orientation (elevation, solar aspect, etc.) of the historic landscape.

**Geology** – the history and physical nature of the surficial characteristics of the historic landscape (soils, rocks, structure, etc.).

**Hydrology** – the cycles and distribution of surface and subsurface water of the historic landscape (aquifers, drainage patterns, water bodies, water tables, etc.).

**Ecology** – the relationships of living organisms and their environment in the historic landscape (plant associations, wildlife habitat, etc.).

**Climate** – the prevailing weather conditions of the historic landscape (precipitation, sun, temperature, wind, etc.).

**Buildings and Structures** – the elements built primarily for sheltering any form of human activity are buildings (houses, barns, garages, stables, etc.) and the functional elements constructed for purposes other than sheltering human activity are structures (bridges, windmills, gazebos, silos, dams, etc.). Included in this category are mechanical and engineering systems.

**Mechanical Systems** – the features and materials which combine to provide utility service to the historic landscape (power lines, hydrants, culverts, etc.).

**Site Engineering Systems** – the systems and individual features which provide a physically stabilizing factor to all or a portion of the historic landscape (retaining walls, dikes, foundations, etc.).

**Vegetation** – the individual and associated deciduous or evergreen trees, shrubs, vines, ground covers and herbaceous materials, whether indigenous or introduced. A major component of a constantly changing historic landscape (specimen tree, hedge, forest, orchard, bosquet, vegetable garden, agricultural field, perennial bed, etc.).

**Spatial Organization** – the structure or order of the historic landscape; the three dimensional organization of physical and visual associations. The organization of elements creating the base, vertical and overhead plane define and create spaces. The functional and visual relationship between these spaces is integral to the character of the historic landscape (open space, enclosed space, corridor space, etc.). Views and vistas are included in this category as an element of the spatial organization of the historic landscape.

**Views and Vistas** – the features that create or allow a view (natural, uncontrolled) or a vista (a controlled, designed feature). The views or vistas may be to or from the historic landscape (panoramic view, borrowed view or vista, on-site view or vista, etc.).

**Circulation** – the spaces, features and applied material finishes which constitute the movement systems of the historic landscape (paths, walks, plazas, squares, roads, parking facilities, etc.).

**Water Features** – the built features and elements which utilize water to create thematic or aesthetic elements within the historic landscape (fountains, pools, ponds, lakes, cascades, canals, streams, etc.).

**Furnishings and Objects** – the elements which provide detail and diversity while addressing functional needs and aesthetic concerns in the historic landscape (fences, benches, urns, flagpoles, sculptures, markers, monuments, signs, etc.).



**Endnotes**

<sup>1</sup> The categories were developed by Professor George W. Curry, Regina M. Bellavia, and David Uschold, Research Assistants, Faculty of Landscape Architecture, State University of New York, College of Environmental Science and Forestry, after careful analysis and discussion of existing reference materials regarding the documentation of landscape features. They have been developed in an attempt to create a list of landscape features to document the character-defining features of various types of landscapes, specifically for use in cultural landscape reports. The materials analyzed to create the list of landscape features were:

Christine Capella Peters, "The Physical Treatment of Cultural and Historic Resources: Guidelines for Rehabilitating Designed Historic Landscapes" (Master's thesis, SUNY CESF, 1990), 59.

U.S. Department of Interior. *Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) Draft User Manual For Field Testing In FY 1992*. The draft was prepared by the Park Historic Architecture Division, National Park Service, Department of Interior, Washington, DC, 1992.

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