OCULUS

on current new york architecture

The New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects

Volume 44, Number 8, April 1983



(Photo: Timothy Hursley/Korab)

Cherry Hill Fountain, is based on the original design, presumably by Calvert Vaux, as restored with new paving patterns by Gerald Allen.

OCULUS

CENTR
The Master Plan to

Volume 44, Number 8, April 1983

Oculus
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Sales of contract forms and publications are an important source of Chapter income, substantially supplementing dues. *Members are urged to purchase from the Chapter.*

A fall-off in sales over the past few months can probably be ascribed in large part to headquarters renovation and the staff's being temporarily moved elsewhere, but everyone is now back together at 457 Madison.

Jeannette Manzo will handle your orders between 1:00 and 4:00 p.m. at the publications counter or by phone, 759-5485. She has a full supply of contract forms. Members can be billed at the reduced member prices on any orders over $10.



In the following interview with landscape architect Bruce Kelly, Oculus *inquires about the Master Plan that is governing the Parks Department's $100-million program to restore the 840-acre Central Park.*

Encompassing such areas of investigation as historical research about the original Park design as well as a computerized tree study that contains data on every tree in the Park, the Master Plan is both an eye-opening model of inquiry and a beacon of hope for the continual improvement of a great treasure in New York City.

Bruce Kelly, a member of the planning team that developed the Master Plan for the Central Park Conservancy, studied landscape architecture at the University of Georgia and historic preservation at Columbia University. There, James Marston Fitch advised him to get involved in Central Park. In 1973 he became the only landscape architect on the team of planners. He now serves as a consultant to the Central Park Administrator.

OCULUS: Who wrote the master plan *Rebuilding Central Park for the 1980s and Beyond?*

BRUCE KELLY: Elizabeth Barlow wrote it in 1979 as a project of the Central Park Conservancy. The Conservancy is a non-profit organization set up to restore Central Park and help the City manage it in the future. One of the board members, who is a great mover and doer, insisted that there be a master plan, and now we are a year into it.

For the first time we are going to get a grip on a landscape in a way that has never been done before—particularly an existing manmade landscape. It's relatively easy to start with a thousand acres that have nothing on them and decide what you are going to do, make a blueprint, and then construct it. But it is difficult to get a handle on what Central Park really is, because it is 125 years old, with a history of more than 400 years, since we are looking at archaeology as well.

L PARK
estore Central Park



The Sheep Meadow, west of the Mall, had been trampled bare by 1980 and was completely regraded, resoiled, irrigated, and resodded by the Design Division of the Parks Department. It is now provided with a management plan for use that will preserve its bucolic character. (Photo: Central Park Conservancy)

Can you give a quick summary of how the plan developed from rehabilitating Central Park in the 1970s to restoring it?

It was simply the difference between 1973 and 1983, and people's perception of historic preservation. In 1973 the Park was designated a historic landmark but people didn't perceive it that way. An enormous amount of credit for the restoration philosophy should go to Dr. Fitch as well as to Elizabeth Barlow and Gordon Davis.

What is the structure of the master plan restoration team in relation to the Parks Department?

The master planning team, a function of the Park Conservancy, consists of dozens of members with Elizabeth Barlow, Administrator of Central Park as head of the team. The actual team that will assimilate all the gathered information and make the plan is: Philip N. Winslow, Marianne Cramer, Judith Heintz, and myself—all landscape architects. The Parks Department has its own set of professionals and experts. The Conservancy has another set. There is a close relationship between the two, but the primary consultants for the master plan restoration are private consultants to the Central Park Conservancy. Marianne Cramer and Judith Heintz, who are full-time staff members of the Conservancy, were formerly landscape architects with the Parks Department. They are now landscape architects for the Central Park Conservancy and are paid by the funding of the Conservancy.

Is the Parks Department obligated to follow anything the Conservancy says or does?

There is a close working relationship between the Parks Department and the Conservancy. The Conservancy has an independent board of directors, of which three members are appointed by the Mayor. It really isn't terribly different from the way the Metropolitan Museum is set up. The Museum, as you know, is owned by the City of New York; the collection is owned by the Board of Directors of the Museum and some of the staff, and I believe is funded by the City of New York.

How did Elizabeth Barlow come to write the plan?

She was a planner who had written a book about Olmsted before she became Central Park Administrator. She came into the Parks Department in 1975 in a tiny capacity. I was working for her at that point, and we simply began with children planting marigolds around rocks, scooping out mud from ditches, and things of that sort. Now she is in charge of this hundred million dollar restoration, so she really worked up from the bottom and knows the ropes. She is a woman of enormous energy and imagination and has done a job that nobody else could have done.

What is the computerized tree survey?

At this point only the tree survey is computerized, but we hope to have the whole master plan computerized eventually. For the tree survey, dozens of foresters, horticulturists, and teams of interns walked through the Park measuring every single tree, locating it on a grid map, giving its species and its condition in great detail—such as how many hollows it had, how many crotches, how many cross branches, and the like. From all this information we can make qualitative judgments. We can project how long a tree is going to live, what year it will die.

And therefore when you will have to replace it?

Some of the trees were planted in places that were never intended to have trees. The design integrity of the Park has long since fallen by the wayside, and we are trying to restore it. But that doesn't mean we will cut down a tree that's in the wrong place. We will wait for it to die, even if that is 50 years from now. Then, we won't replace it if it was in the middle of what was supposed to have been a



1

meadow. We want to get back to the general layout, to the original intention, which relates to the topography and the circulation and other aspects.

In what way is Central Park now different from that original scheme?

It is easier to say how it is similar: that is, the topography. The tops of the hills have eroded down to the bottom, and the topography is smoothing out a little, but it basically has the same contours. The circulation system is far more complicated. There are about four times as many paths as there were originally and in some places as many as ten times.

When was all this circulation put in?

It began to change immediately; it has always been in a state of flux. There has never been a moment when Central Park was done: The architecture is wildly different. Most of the buildings in the Park date from the Moses era, but we have lost nearly all of our historic buildings.

How many historic buildings have we lost, and do we know what they looked like?

Dozens. We know nothing about some of them. There was a croquet players house at East 68th Street and a cruciform shape shows on the map. Some of them were ladies rest cottages. There were wonderful Victorian buildings for which there are working drawings, so we are almost certain they were built. But there are no absolute locations for them and we have to guess. Then there are lots of designs that were never constructed.

Vaux, who designed Belvedere Castle, did a dozen entirely different studies for it. And the same is true of the Conservatory that was supposed to have been at the site of the Conservatory Garden. It was a greenhouse with a door on Fifth Avenue through which you would have walked into the Park was never constructed. Around 1900 a huge



2

Conservatory was built at about 105th Street on the site of the present Conservatory, but that came down in the late 1920s, when the present Conservatory Garden was built. There is a lot of architectural material. We are learning all the time.

The shocking thing is how much we don't know about Central Park—how alive its history has been. Gail Guillet and I have gone to great lengths to put that history together by reading the Mayor's papers, all of the newspapers, and so on. Many involved have covered the primary sources, and I have read Frederick Law Olmsted's papers in the Library of Congress.

But Olmsted was really only in Central Park for seven or eight years. Calvert Vaux was there for many years—from 1860 until the turn of the century—and was the real constant force, along with a man called Samuel Parsons. Parsons was a landscape architect, and Vaux the architect. They worked together. But Olmsted is the one we remember despite his very few years. He has been the primary source of written information on the Park and that is why little is known about the rest of Central Park's history.

What did Olmsted go on to do?

He moved to Boston, because he could not deal with the pressures. He was a very sensitive and in some ways fragile man—always having nervous breakdowns and needing vacations. And he was in constant battle with everyone.

Where is all the documentation, where are the stories on Vaux drawn from?

We know very little about Vaux except for the "Vaux Papers" at the Public Library. But there is almost nothing in them. The leading historian on Vaux died a couple of years ago, before he published. One hopes that something will still come of his work, but in the meantime the primary source is what comes out of the Olmsted papers in the Library of Congress. Many of Vaux's letters to Olmsted are there, along with reams of paper that Olmsted wrote.

Where are the drawings?

Most of them are owned by the City of New York and are on loan to Avery Library. That is where we do our research. One is led to think that Vaux was the designer, but it is more complicated than that.

The first design was done largely by a man named Egbert Viele, who was the engineer for the site. He surveyed it and did a plan before the competition and was generally considered to be the person whose design would be used for the Park. Then, through a change of events that are not entirely clear, Olmsted and Vaux were presented Viele's plan and invited to submit a plan of their own. And, for all the world, their plan looked like an improvement on Viele's. In fact Viele sued, and that major lawsuit went through years of negotiation in which both Olmsted and Vaux testified.

If you read the testimony, Olmsted was clearly the theoretician. He

1. The Maine Monument at the Columbus Circle corner of the Park, has been restored completely under the direction of Joseph Bresnan—rebuilding the weakened structure of the base and regilding the statuary. (Photo: Central Park Conservancy)

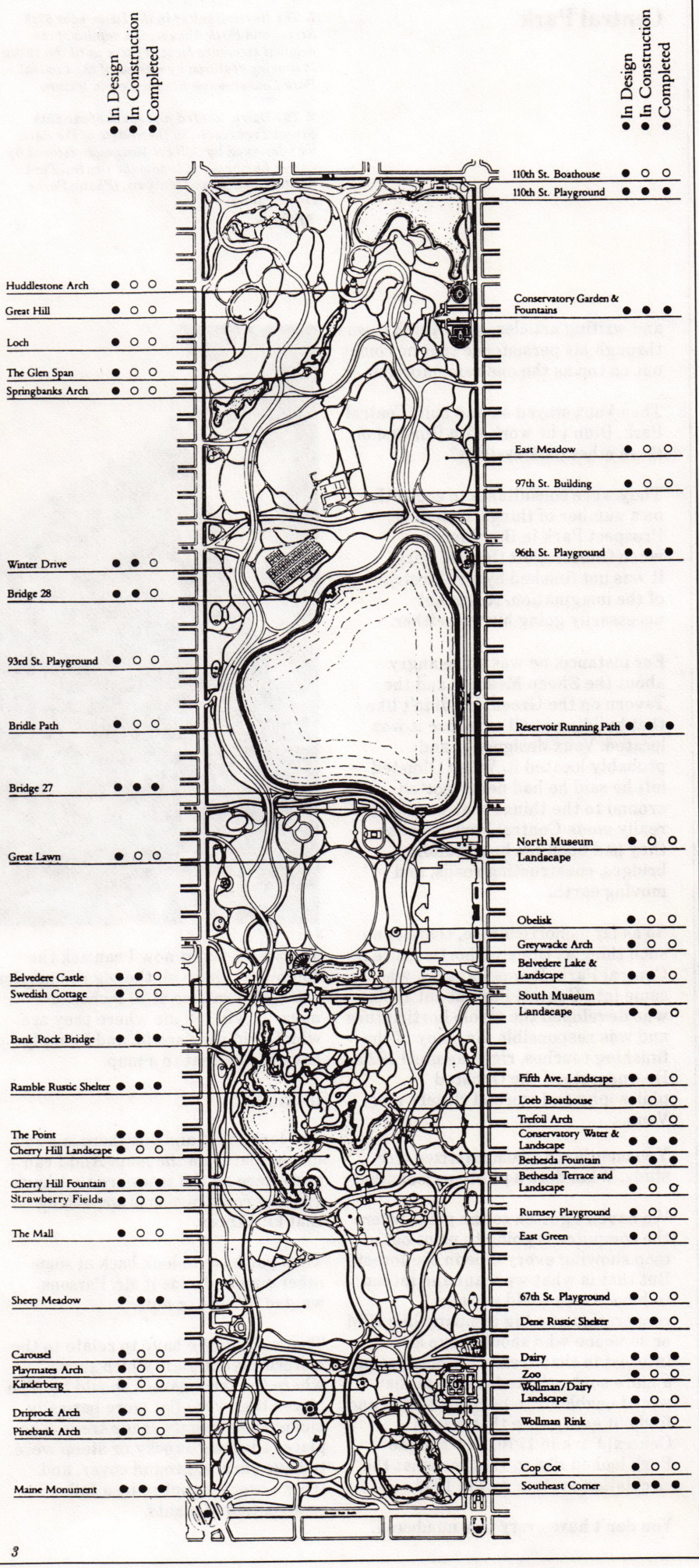
8. Belevedere Castle, an architectural folly at the 79th Street Transverse by Calvert Vaux, has been restored by James Lamantia to house an environmental education center as well as the meteorological observatory, from which we get our weather reports. (Photo: Brian Rose)

3. The Plan of Central Park shows projects in design, in construction, and those that have been completed.

viewed the Park as a place where poor people could go to restore their feelings—as an absolute contrast to the City, where horticulture was everything and architecture was to be diminished. When Vaux testified, he spoke much more clearly as a designer. He said they were trying to lead people into the Park by placing the Ramble, the Bethesda Fountain, and all the most interesting and sexy parts away from the outside edges. They had this long skinny shape to deal with so they had to round the reservoir. His testimony all makes great sense from a design standpoint. You can tell more about their personalities in that transcript than anywhere else.

But back to Viele. Not long ago I was looking at a book called *Important New Yorkers in the Year 1900,* in which there was a picture of Viele identified as "the designer of Central Park." So the actual designer has been a matter of debate for years. Probably it was Olmsted's ego and his great need for recognition that he has been credited as the designer. He was clearly neurotic about proving himself, a second son who felt he was not loved. He was sent away from home. The older son died, and he had a guilt complex about that. He had a lot of conflicts in his life and was constantly worrying about his reputation. He would write to Vaux about his reputation and Vaux would write back "quit worrying." In one letter Vaux calls Olmsted "a little Napoleon the second."

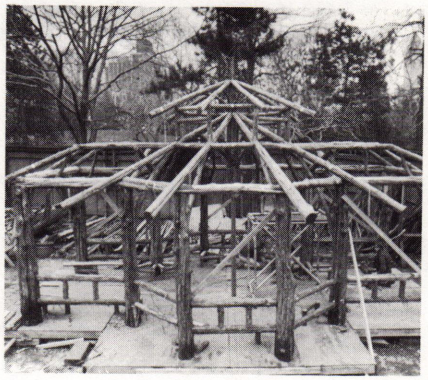
But even as a very old man, when he was extremely distinguished and working on the Biltmore estate in North Carolina, and thought he was ready to die, he wrote his son saying, "We must keep the reputation of the firm and my reputation going. And in case something should happen these are the things you must remember to emphasize: Central Park, the park system of Boston, the park system of Buffalo, the subdivision of Riverside in Chicago, and Biltmore." There it was—the specific things that he wanted to keep his legacy alive. He made an enormous effort lecturing



Central Park

1. The Rustic Shelter in the Dene, near 67th Street and Fifth Avenue, is a replica of the original structure located there until the 1930s. It is being restored by interns of the Central Park Conservancy. (Photo: Calvin Wilson)

2. The Dairy, located just south of the 65th Street Transverse, in the middle of the Park, was designed by Calvert Vaux and restored by James Lamantia. It is now the Central Park Visitors Center and Museum. (Photo: Parks Department)



and writing articles, and I think it was through his persistence that he comes out on top as the one remembered.

Then Vaux stayed on and built Central Park. Didn't he work with Olmsted on those other park systems?

They were consultants to each other on a number of things, including Prospect Park in Brooklyn, but when Olmsted left Central Park, it was not finished by any stretch of the imagination. It was not necessarily going his way either.

For instance, he was quite angry about the Sheep Meadow and the Tavern on the Green. He didn't like that building at all or where it was located. Vaux designed it and probably located it. When Olmsted left he said he had never gotten around to the things that would have really *made* Central Park because they had been too busy building bridges, constructing roads, and moving earth.

So as far as horticulture, there is no such thing as Olmsted horticulture in Central Park. It was Parsons, who came into Central Park about 1880, who developed the whole horticulture and was responsible for many of the finishing touches, right up until 1920. He understood the Olmsted philosophy and worked closely with Vaux.

You mentioned a computerized tree study. What does a print-out look like?

We haven't gotten to the point where the computer is going to print out a map showing every tree in the forest. But that is what we want and intend to have. If we could get the cooperation of a big company like IBM or someone who should have an interest in that area, we would set up a more sophisticated program that would enable us to punch a button and find out every tree that was in Central Park in 1970, or what the Park looked like in 1911, or what the circulation system was in 1902.

You don't have every tree numbered?



2

Yes we do. Right now I can ask the computer where all the big red maples are with a caliper of 20 inches or more. It will tell me where they are, which grid they are in, and I simply have to key that to a map.

It says E4?

So I look in E4 and yes there is a red maple that is on the map. And I can ask where all the trees are that have girdling roots, which is something that kills trees.

Then you have to look back at some other map to decide if Mr. Parsons wanted it there or not.

That's right. We have to relate to the historic layout plan, which shows where the tree masses should be. The places that were flat were basically meant to have only shade trees. The places that were rocky or steep were to have shrubs, ground cover, and trees—were meant to be a full composition of plants.

If Olmsted didn't do any of the planting, what had he written or drawn that tells you what you are restoring back to? Are you restoring to Olmsted's view or Parson's view or some other period?

We can look at the maps that were produced every year and get a feeling of where the spaces were. You can see exactly what shape the Sheep Meadow had, and there are statistics saying it was X number of acres. So we can get some idea how much it has closed in.

Olmsted produced very specific information. He believed there should be three different kinds of area in Central Park. First, the border all the way around should be heavily planted, as thick and luxuriant as possible to keep out the noises, smells, and views of the city. Second, he said that wherever the ground was level should be meadow land, pastoral in the romantic style. Some places had trees,

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Spring Seminar Series

The New York Chapter/AIA and *Metropolis Magazine* jointly sponsor a series of public lectures at the Urban Center, 457 Madison Avenue, 6 p.m. Lectures will be introduced by Arthur Rosenblatt, Vice-President of the Metropolitan Museum of Art and President of the New York Chapter/AIA. Checks for the series should be sent to the New York Chapter/AIA, 457 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10022. Tickets will be available at the door. Members Free. Non-members $5.00

April 21
Chien Chung Pei, Project Architect of the Fragrant Hill Hotel in Beijing, China, will make a slide presentation of this recent I.M. Pei & Partners project.

April 28
Tician Papachristou, Partner in MBA (formerly Marcel Breuer & Associates), will present a commentary on "The Demise of the Modern Movement."

May 5
"The Architecture of the Printed Page," moderated by Sharon Lee Ryder, with Ken Kendrick and Marilyn Bethany of the New York *Times Magazine*, Massimo Vignelli, Mildred Schmertz of *Architectural Record*, and Lewis Gropp and Ruth Ansel of *House and Garden*.

May 12
"Building Facade Maintenance vs. Ornament Stripping: Does Local Law 10 Work?" A panel discussion.

June 9
A discussion of "Schools of Architecture" represented by Cesar Pelli, Dean, Yale University; James S. Polshek, Dean, Columbia University; John Hejduk, Dean, The Cooper Union; and Paul Heyer, Dean, Pratt Institute.

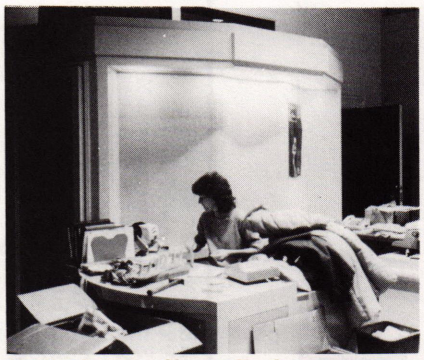
Names and News

We regret the death of **Marianna Olmstead Lewis**, former executive editor of the Foundation Center and wife of NYC/AIA's executive director. We know that all members join us in extending our sympathy to George .... NYC/AIA members who have been advanced to the American Institute of Architects' College of Fellows for their "notable contributions to the profession" are: **Joseph A. Burgun, David Castro-Blanco, Laurie M. Maurer, Richard Roth Jr., C. Ray Smith,** and **Henry Wright** .... **Richard Meier** is one of 13 new members elected to the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters .... **The Landmarks Preservation Commission** voted in February to issue a Notice to Proceed to the owners of the former Mt. Neboh Synagogue, 130 West 79 Street, which clears the way for demolition of the landmark structure .... At ICF's reception for La Tendenza architect **Mario Botta** last month, many congratulations (along with expressions of regret that his name had been spelled wrong on the invitation) were received by decorator **Mario Buatta** .... **Beyer Blinder Belle** are architects for a 16-story building with living/working accommodations for artists planned for the site of the former Alphonsus Church at 308 West Broadway .... **Romaldo Giurgola** and **M. Paul Friedberg** are among those to be awarded Honorary Degrees from Ball State University at the College of Architecture and Planning's Dedication Symposium and Convocation .... **M. Paul Friedberg** was also the recipient of the first annual New York City Art Commission Playground Award for his design of the playground in Central Park .... **Carnegie Mellon University** hosted a special exhibition last month of the Selected Works 1928-1960 of the late **Jo Mielziner** from the collection of **Jules Fisher** .... **Alvin Holm,** president of the Philadelphia Chapter of Classical America, will lead a tour "Classical America Visits Classical Italy" (June 11-25) cosponsored by the National Academy of Design .... *Michael Graves: Building and Projects 1966-1981* has been published by Rizzoli .... **Joan Petersen** and **David M. McAlpin** have been made associates of **Butler Rogers Baskett,** and **Leslie Armstrong** has joined the firm as an associate .... **Liviu Dimitriu** has joined Florence Perchuk & Associates .... **The Illuminating Engineering Society** of North America has published its newest recommended lighting practice for *Office Lighting* .... **Henry Smith-Miller & Associates** has announced the formation of a studio at 305 Canal Street .... **Tony Schuman,** who teaches at the School of Architecture, N.J.I.T. will lead a two-week professional research tour of the Soviet Union for architects, planners, and architectural historians (June 13-27) being organized by Friendship Travel, Inc. through the cooperation of the Union of Architects of the Soviet Union .... *The Future Isn't What It Used To Be* is the theme of the **33rd International Design Conference in Aspen** (June 12-17) .... **James F. Balsley** and **Leevi Kill** have been appointed partners of **Haines Lundberg Waehler** .... *Energy Economics and Building Design*, a new book by **William T. Meyer,** has been published by McGraw-Hill .... **John Ciardullo** will speak at a seminar on "Cutting Hard Costs in Rehab/Recycling" during the 15th Annual Multi-Housing World Conference in Atlanta (April 10-13) .... **Attia & Perkins** are architects for an apartment and office building complex at the site of the railroad station in New Rochelle, New York .... A four-week course on **Traditional Chinese Architecture** is being offered by Quinghua University in Beijing, the People's Republic of China (June

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(Photos: Stan Ries: ESTO)



Settling into new Chapter Headquarters.

OCULUS NYC/AIA APR 83

Oculus *welcomes information for the calendar pertaining to public events about architecture and the other design professions. It is due by the 7th of the month for the following month's issue. Because of the time lag between information received and printed, final details of events are likely to change. It is recommended, therefore, that events be checked with the sponsoring institutions before attending.*

Send Oculus Calendar information to: New York Chapter/AIA, 457 Madison Avenue, N.Y. 10022.

CONTINUING EVENTS

BLANK WALLS: THE NEW FACE OF DOWNTOWN
Exhibition. The Municipal Art Society at the Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave. 935-3960. Closes April 6.

BUILDINGS IN PROGRESS IV: LOWER MANHATTAN
Exhibition. The Municipal Art Society at the Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave. 935-3960. Closes April 6.

URBOLOGY
Six Urban Projects by Vitorio Giorgini Group. National Institute for Architectural Education, 30 W. 22 St. 924-7000. Closes April 15.

KOLOMAN MOSER
Work by the Austrian designer. The Austrian Institute, 11 E. 52 St. 759-5165. Closes April 15.

CARNEGIE MANSION EMBELLISHMENTS
Exhibition. Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 2 E. 91 St. 860-6868. Closes May 1.

DESIGN FOR THEATER: DRAWINGS AND PRINTS
Exhibition. Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 2 E. 91 St. 860-6868.CLoses May 1.

THE VATICAN COLLECTIONS
Exhibition. Metropolitan Museum. Tickets through TELE-TRON 947-5850. Closes June 2.

THE GREAT EAST RIVER BRIDGE
Exhibition celebrating the centennial of the Brooklyn Bridge. The Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, 638-5000. Closes June 19.

MONDAY 4

THE CITY TRANSFORMED II
Lecture on "Chicago Alternatives to the Wall Street Skyscraper" in the Municipal Art Society's spring semester. 3 W. 51 St., 2nd floor, 6-7:30 pm. 935-3960.

IS THIS POST-MODERN?
Lecture by John Burgee. 6:30 pm. The Architecture League at the Urban Center, 457 Madison. 743-1722.

TUESDAY 5

EMERGING VOICES 1983
Michael Rotondi and Tom Mayne of Morphosis, and Peter Waldman. 6:30 pm. Architectural League, 457 Madison. 753-1722.

ARCHITECTURE HISTORY
"A New Style of Living: The formation of Manhattan's Neighborhoods". 6 pm. New York Historical Society. 873-3400.

YALE LECTURE SERIES
Rem Koolhaas. 8 pm. A & A Building, New Haven. 203-436-0853.

WEDNESDAY 6

FORUM ON FORM
Ralph Caplan on his book, *By Design: Why There are No Locks on the Bathroom Doors in the Hotel Louis XIV and Other Object Lessons.* Introduction by Niels Diffrient. Urban Center Books, 457 Madison Ave. 12:30 pm. 935-3595.

NANCY TROY
Lecture. 6 pm. Wood Auditorium, Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning, Columbia University. 280-3414.

THURSDAY 7

ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN
Diana Balmori: Jeckyll and Ferrand and the Arts and Crafts Movement in Landscape Design, sponsored by NYC/AIA and *Metropolis*. 6 pm. The Urban Center, 457 Madison. 838-9670.

NYC/AIA INTERIORS COMMITTEE
Meeting followed by panel on fees and contracts. 6 pm. Urban Center.

CHARLES JENCKS
"The New Abstraction, The New Representation." Pratt, Higgins Hall, Brooklyn. 6 pm.

FRIDAY 1

LIGHTING DESIGN TRENDS
Workshop conducted by Abe H. Feder. 1-5 pm. $95 Information and registration: Lighting by Feder, 15 W. 38 St. Suite 1205. 840-1471.

WALKING TOUR ON SUNDAY, APRIL 3
"Tribeca: An Architectural Grand Tour," sponsored by the 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. $6.50. Advance registration necessary. 427-6000. ext. 179.

MONDAY 11

LIVING WITH THE ZONING RESOLUTION
First of a 6-session course chaired by Sylvia Deutsch of the NYC Board of Standards and Appeals. Speakers include John Zuccotti; Marvin Mitzner, specialist in land-use law; Philip Howard of Community Board 6. Mondays 7:45-9:30 pm. Center for New York City Affairs, The New School. $80. 741-5690.

TUESDAY 12

EMERGING VOICES 1983
Presentations by Guy Martin and David Jones, and Anthony Ames. 6:30 pm. The Architectural League, 457 Madison. 753-1722.

RENAISSANCE OF NEW YORK
First of 7-Tuesday lecture series. 6-8 p.m. Pratt Manhattan Center, 160 Lexington. 685-3754 or 636-3453.

APA PANEL ON OFFICE SPACE
With Aarons, Cooper, Lapp, Scanlon, Schulman. 6 p.m. 20 W 40. 838-9670.

WEDNESDAY 13

FORUMS ON FORM
Norman Diekman on *Drawing Interior Architecture: A Guide to Rendering and Presentation* (co-authored by John Pile). Introduction by Stephen Kliment. Urban Center Books, 457 Madison Ave. 12:30 pm. 935-3595.

THURSDAY 14

AYMONINO, PORTOGHESI, ROSSI
"The Architect and the City" in visiting lecture series at Pratt, Higgins Hall, St. James Place & Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn. 6 pm.

YALE LECTURE SERIES
Milka Bliznakov, Virginia Polytechnic Institute teacher. 8 pm. Hastings Hall, A&A Building, 180 York St., New Haven. 203-436-0853.

FRIDAY 8

THE BOROUGH, THE BRIDGE, AND THE CITY
Slide lecture by Barry Lewis on New York and the Bridge, in Municipal Art Society series. 6-7:30 pm. or 8-9:30 pm. $5 members, $10 nonmembers. The Urban Center, 457 Madison. 935-3960.

LIGHTING DESIGN TRENDS
Workshop conducted by Abe H. Feder. 1-5 pm. $95 Information and registration: Lighting by Feder, 15 W. 38 St., Suite 1205, 840-1471.

FRIDAY 15

PRESERVATION CONFERENCE
Weekend conference sponsored by the Preservation League of New York State at Tarrytown. 518-462-5658.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN: A TOTAL APPROACH TO HEALTH FACILITY RENOVATION
Seminar. Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York. Information: 754-1080.

MONDAY 18

A LEGACY IN CLAY
Slide lecture by Susan Tunick on history, factory techniques, and current importance of American terra cotta. 8 pm. 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. 427-6000, ext. 172.

THE CITY TRANSFORMED II
"Art Deco: The European Roots 1900-1910" in the Municipal Art Society's spring semester. 3 W. 51 St., 2nd floor, 6-7:30 pm. 935-3960.

TUESDAY 19

COMPUTER AIDED ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN
Seminar. Pratt Manhattan Center at ComputerVision, Edison, N.J. 1-4 pm. 685-3754.

EMERGING VOICES 1983
Richard Oliver and Peter Wilson. 6:30 pm. Arch. League, 753-1722.

YALE LECTURE SERIES
J.B. Jackson, editor of *Landscape.* 8 pm. A&A Building, 203-436-0853.

ARATA ISOZAKI
Lecture sponsored by IBD. 7-9 pm. Engineering Societies Auditorium. Reservations 421-1950.

WEDNESDAY 20

FORUMS ON FORM
Henry Hope Reed on his book, *The Library of Congress, Its Architecture and Decorations.* Introduction by Arthur Ross. Urban Center Books, 457 Madison Ave. 12:30 pm. 935-3595.

COUNTRY HOUSE COLLECTIONS
Lecture. 6 pm. The Royal Oak Foundation, 41 E. 72 St. 861-0529.

THURSDAY 21

ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN
Chien Chung Pei: The Peking Hotel, in lecture series sponsored by NYC/AIA *Metropolis* Magazine. 6 pm. The Urban Center, 457 Madison. 838-9670.

GREAT DRAWINGS FROM RIBA
Exhibition. The Drawing Center, 137 Greene St. 982-5266.

AMERICAN ARCHITECTURE
3-day symposium to inaugurate Columbia's new Center for the Study of American Architecture. 280-5122.

FRIDAY 22

LIGHTING DESIGN TRENDS
Workshop conducted by Abe H. Feder. 1-5 pm. $95. Information and registration: Lighting by Feder, 15 W. 38 St., Suite 1205. 840-1471.

TERRA COTTA WALKING TOUR ON SUNDAY APRIL 24
Terra Cotta Treasures of Mid-Town Manhattan conducted by Susan Tunick. Tour begins at information booth in Grand Central Station. 11 am-1 pm. Tickets must be purchased in advance from Education Dept., 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington. 427-6000, ext. 172.

MONDAY 25

LIGHTING WORLD II
International Advanced Illumination Exposition and Conference (April 25-27) New York Hilton Hotel. Information: Robert A. Weissman 391-9111.

THE CITY TRANSFORMED II
"Art Deco: The European Roots 1910-1925" in the Municipal Art Society's spring semester. 3 W. 51 St., 2nd floor, 6-7:30 pm. 935-3960.

TUESDAY 26

NYC/AIA
Energy Conservation: A Developer's Expectations from Architects and Engineers. Co-sponsored by the Chapter's Energy Committee and ASHRAE. The Chemists Club, 52 East 41 Street. Cocktails 5:30, Dinner 6:15. NYC/AIA 838-9670.

LUMEN AWARDS
Presentation Dinner, Grand Trianon Room, New York Hilton. 705-7926.

EMERGING VOICES 1983
6:30 pm. Arch. League, Urban Center.

NY APT. LIVING: 1860-1905
Elizabeth C. Cromley. 6 pm. The New York Historical Society.

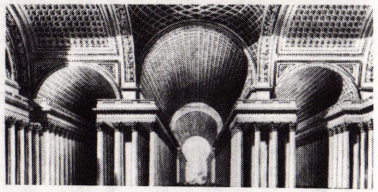
WEDNESDAY 27

FORUMS ON FORM
Nory Miller and Michael Sorkin on their book *California Counterpoint.* Introduction by Joseph Gionvannini. Urban Center Books, 457 Madison Ave. 12:30 pm. 935-3595.

COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY
Sweet's 2-day seminar on CAD Applications in The Engineering Office. New York Hilton. $475. To enroll: 800-257-9406.

THURSDAY 28

SPRING SEMINAR SERIES
Tician Papachristou, Partner in MBA (formerly Marcel Breuer & Associates), will present a commentary on "The Demise of the Modern Movement. NYC/AIA. 6 pm. The Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave. 838-9670.



FRIDAY 29

LIGHTING DESIGN TRENDS
Workshop conducted by Abe H. Feder. 1-5 pm. $95. Information and registration: Lighting by Feder, 15 W. 38 St., Suite 1205. 840-1471.

MAS WALKING TOUR ON SUNDAY MAY 1
"Downtown Development," in the Municipal Art Society's spring semester of The City Transformed Part II. Information: Judith Bloch 935-3960.

MONDAY 2 MAY

KEVIN ROCHE
"Work Completed/Work in Progress" in visiting lecture series at Pratt, Higgins Hall, St. James Place & Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn. 6 pm.

TUESDAY 3 MAY



WEDNESDAY 4 MAY

FORUMS ON FORM
James Guiton on his book, *The Ideas of Le Corbusier on Architecture and Urban Planning.* Introduction by G.E. Kidder Smith. Urban Center Books, 457 Madison Ave. 12:30 pm. 935-3595.

THE BOROUGH, THE BRIDGE, AND THE CITY
Slide lecture by Barry Lewis on "Building the Bridge" in Municipal Art Society series. 6-7:30 pm. or 8-9:30 pm. $5 members, $10 nonmembers. The Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave. 935-3960.

THURSDAY 5 MAY

ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN
"The Architecture of the Printed Page"—a panel on the design of design magazines with the editors and art directors of several well-known publications, in spring lecture series sponsored by NYC/AIA and *Metropolis* Magazine. 6 pm. The Urban Center, 457 Madison Ave. 838-9670.

COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY
Sweet's 2-day seminar on Computer Facilities Management/Space Planning: How The Computer Can Help. New York Hilton. $475. To enroll: 800-257-9406.

FRIDAY 6 MAY

LIGHTING DESIGN TRENDS
Workshop conducted by Abe H. Feder. 1-5 pm. $95. Information and registration: Lighting by Feder, 15 W. 38 St., Suite 1205. 840-1471.

WALKING TOUR ON SUNDAY, APRIL 3
"Tribeca: An Architectural Grand Tour," sponsored by the 92nd Street Y, 1395 Lexington Ave. $6.50. 427-6000, ext. 179. Advance registration necessary.

Letters

Re: Local Law 10

Dear Editor:
In his letter in the March 83 *Oculus*, Mr. Fruchtman reiterates the official reasoning behind Local Law 10, without addressing the important aesthetic and legal problems that the law raises—namely the inherent incentive for the stripping of architectural ornament and the unfair burden on design professionals, if they try to certify that existing ornament is safe. While he refers to my January article in *Oculus* as "narrow," he takes the narrowest possible view.

The ex-commissioner belittles the problems by calling the article "inaccurate" and unresearched," although he can find direct fault with only a quoted conjecture on the large number of buildings affected by the law—himself seeming to admit that the Department of Buildings may have indeed underestimated.

Mr. Fruchtman *attempts* to address the aesthetic issue, only by saying that enforced maintenance will save ornament in the future. This is correct, but pressing "precise requirements" on building owners and their professional consultants, before accessible technologies and economic incentives for preservation are in place, ensures that very little future ornament will be left.

He states: "No one I have discussed this issue with sees indiscriminant stripping of ornamental features as a major problem." This is hardly research about the present, and it is inaccurate about the past. Among others, John Belle, Alan Swartzman, and I, representing the AIA, met with him about the aesthetic and legal dangers. There were subsequent statements by both the AIA and the Municipal Arts Society. I am told that Mr. Fruchtman has been among the more sensitive Department of Buildings commissioners, which makes his letter doubly disappointing.

No one is questioning the need to support a law designed to save lives—just the workability of *this* law, as it currently stands.

Charles K. Hoyt, AIA
Chairman, Historic Buildings Committee
Associate Editor, *Architectural Record*

Re: Lever House

Dear Editor:
Re: Vol. 46 No. 6 Feb 83:
1) The absurd assertion that "*almost every* New Yorker" knows Lever House by name bespeaks lamentable parochialism, ignorance, and careless hyperbole. Try polling 1000 or so New Yorkers at randomly selected locations in each of NYC's five boros—1000 per boro, that is.
2) On a Park Avenue stretching from 34 to 130 Street, how does a 20-block strip in midtown become "upper" Park Avenue?
3) What latent and unacknowledged prejudices and biases may inadvertently be indicated by an automatic, heedless, and thoughtless use of the word "black" (as in black paper) as a perjorative?
4) Holding abeyant for the moment the subjective and highly debatable matter of height, street line, and context (!), pictures 1, 3, and 6 show the "slivers" are *no uglier* than existing neighbors.

John Durant Cooke

(Ed: In our culture, "black" is also the unbiased color for funerals.)

Re: Lever House

Dear Editor:
Not many reading *Oculus* will disagree with the point, now quite widely made, that Lever House should be preserved as a landmark, even if this means one less source of profit for a developer and one less architectural "surprise" by one of our colleagues in crowded Midtown.

The regrettable "White Paper," in attempting to prove that the building is of no "special historical or aesthetic interest or value," raises issues that are easy targets. The massing, so unique for its time and so instructive, does in fact hold the Park Avenue line in both its horizontal and vertical elements. And this is done while still providing a welcome break for the grid-bound pedestrian in its walk-through ground space—not a vast fountain-bedecked plaza, but never intended to be.

How to put a building behind it in midblock, at once respecting the Lever House integrity and relating to its massing? A challenge perhaps too great for the presently involved or any other architect. But if the perfect solution appeared in someone's dream, and the investors, as a gesture to the City, added a few small millions to the budget for properly redoing that 31-year-old curtainwall, Allah might well be praised!—and Lever House would be beautiful and safe for another generation or two.

Roy Harlow, AIA

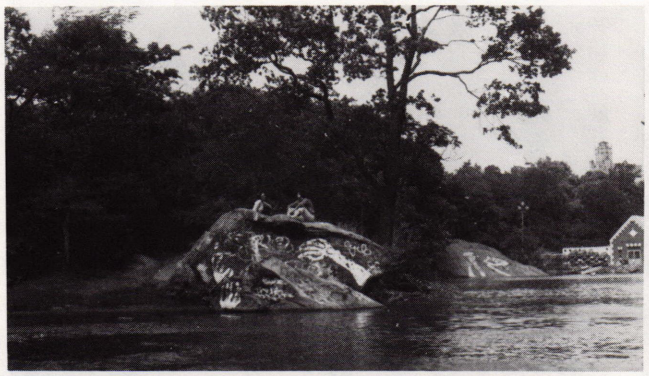
Names and News

cont'd. from p. 7

27-July 23), for which information may be had at Special People, 250 W. 57 Street, Room 1517 . . . . **Rogers, Butler, Shahine & Deschler** are architects for a proposed addition and alterations at the Northern Westchester Hospital Center in Mt. Kisco, New York . . . . **Frederick D. Nichols** of the University of Virginia will speak on "Thomas Jefferson, the Architect" at the New York Historical Society on April 21. . . . . **Frank Stasiowski** and **David Vurstein** are authors of *Project Management for the Design Professional* recently published by Whitney Library of Design . . . . **Thomas Fowler IV** is among 70 outstanding students at New York Institute of Technology elected to appear in the 1983 edition of *Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges.*

Central Park

"The Point" on The Lake, which is the principal scenic view from Bethesda Fountain, has been restored by Bruce Kelly and Philip N. Winslow—replacing 8 ft. of soil that had eroded, (formerly exposing the rock to graffiti artists) and replanting thousands of plants on the 5-acre site. Environmentally sensitive, because of the vast warbler bird population there, the construction was carried on without heavy equipment and in-house staff. (Photo: Central Park Conservancy)





cont'd. from p. 6

some did not, and you have to relate to the maps to find out which. Third, in rocky, steep, and hilly places there should be woods, thickets of very "mazy," to use Olmsted's word, plantings. So we have to do a lot of interpreting. We have what we call the Horticultural Historic Intentions Map, and we try to figure out what Olmsted was intending to do. But with horticulture there is no absolute.

Not just here but anywhere?

Well I suppose there are if you are dealing with a boxwood parterre garden, which is a static thing in a geometric pattern. But when you are dealing with a built landscape in the naturalistic style, which is meant to evolve and change and look like nature did it, there is no static point.

There are, however, specific components in Central Park that are definite. We know, for instance, that from 102nd Street to 72nd Street on the west side there was a Winter Drive, where it was intended to have things that were interesting to look at in winter, mostly conifers, of course, which have almost completely disappeared from Central Park.

Why?

The rumor for many years was that they wouldn't withstand polution, and that may have been true at the turn of the century when Samuel Parsons was in the Park and wrote that. But now we have found they withstand it very well. Maybe it's because we don't have any real coal soot or things of that sort. There were more incinerators, more soot in the air. But for whatever reason conifers are doing very well under the Central Park horticulturist Geraldine Weinstein, who is careful about picking the best sites and the most hardy types.

Geraldine Weinstein is not a planner; she is a person who is in the Park every day directing what goes on. Another specific component of the Park, in addition to the Winter Drive, is the Ramble, which was supposed to be a horticultural display. We know, too, that there was meant to be a place called the Briars at the northern end, which was to be a tangled, rambling kind of briar patch in a very natural style. Then there were more formal areas, such as the Mall, bordered by rows of elm trees. There is quite a lot we do know in specific horticultural terms. There are also lists of plants they used, but we have trouble with them from a taxonomical point of view, since the names have changed. They call something a name we have never heard of. Then if we discover what it is, things have been so hybridized and we are a hundred years down the line, that that plant no longer exists. Also the environment has changed so much that it won't live here anyway. So those original plant lists are not particularly valuable to us. That doesn't apply to trees, mainly to shrubs and herbaceous plants. Most of the trees are very much the same.

Olmsted's favorite tree was the American elm, which we continue to use. We have the greatest stand of American elm in America we think. The oldest tree in Central Park is an elm. It was planted by the Prince of Wales in 1864. He planted an oak and an elm just west of the Mall. The oak is gone.

Didn't the Dutch elm blight affect the Central Park elms?

When the blight hit in the 1920s, we had already lost the first stand of trees in Central Park, so our elms were such babies they were not affected. The blight wiped out most of the elms in New York City but not those in Central Park. We speculate that it might be because the Park is an island surrounded by a city instead of a forest, but more than that, the elms were small trees. Now we have more mature elms than any place in the world.

Do elms still get the blight?

Some varities of elm do better than others, but the elm blight is not a finished problem by any stretch of the imagination. We still lose trees in Central Park yearly. All of our trees are in jeopardy. It's one of the interesting questions we have to face in the master plan. The wonderful row of elm trees in the Mall is about 100 years old—what if they all die? Do we put back the trees that are historically accurate—elms—and face the possibility of that happening again, or do we choose a totally different tree although it will have a completely different character and never have that cathedral effect again?

Central Park

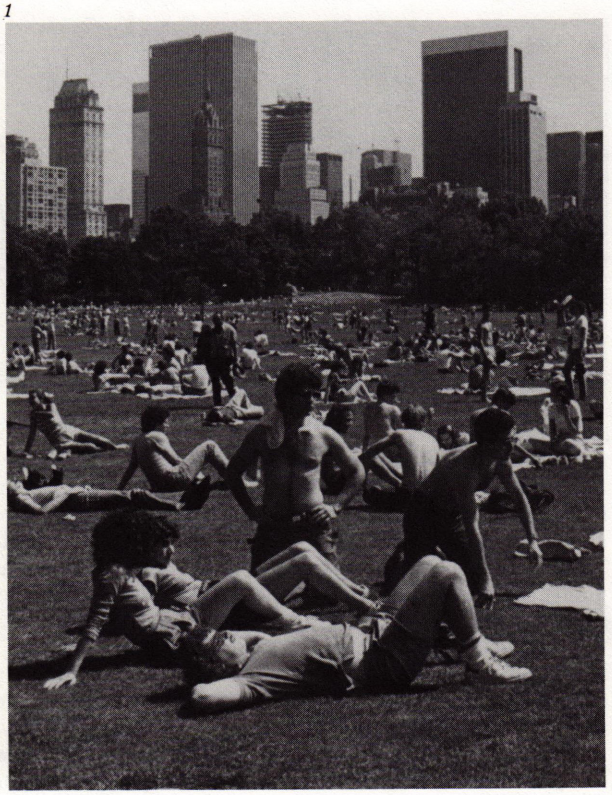
SYSTEMS	HISTORY	STRUCT.	VEGETA.	SOILS	HYDROL.	WILDLIFE	CIRC.	USE	SECURITY	MANAGE
HISTORY										
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SYSTEMS INTERRELATIONSHIPS MATRIX DECEMBER 22, 1980

1



2



3

Ten categories are listed on the Conservancy's "Systems Interrelationships Matrix"—history, structures, vegetation, soils, hydrology, wildlife, circulation, use, security, management—could you say something about that Matrix?

In each of those categories, there is an expert studying the Park with that one thing in mind, then thinking how that category relates to all the others. In this way, everyone is coordinating with everyone else.

Structures

Structures means buildings; it also means sculpture, the benches, any kind of structure. They had very specialized benches of many different kinds. But most of the seating areas were in architectural settings—gazebos, shelters of some sort. Then there were random benches in the Park that looked mass produced. Only in the Mall were there lines of benches.

Soils

Soil is an extremely important category. In spite of the fact that the topography is pretty much intact in Central Park, the soil is constantly moving. You have to look at soils from two points of view—the chemical properties and the physical properties. The chemical properties simply tell you that it has the right components to sustain viable plant life. The physical properties have to do with whether it is compacted, eroded, and what the elements are doing to it. The bottom line being whether the soil can support plants. We intend to get all of this into a computer—where the soil has been and where it is going. The slopes were much steeper in the beginning.

Olmsted created very steep slopes, to the minds of most modern landscape architects, so the top of the hill is now at the bottom. It simply eroded away and Central Park is becoming more mellow, more flattened as we go on.

The bodies of water are silting in. One body of water in the northern end—the Loch—has totally disappeared. Every body of water in Central Park has been dredged more than once.

Hydrology

All of the ten categories are hydrology related. With hydrology we are looking at the quality of water that exists in Central Park and also at how hydrology relates to history. Central Park was largely the site of a swamp. It is not charted and we want to know where the streams that run through the Park are now. Most of them are gone, but where? Also we have water popping up in the Park. We don't know if it is from broken pipes, from swamps coming out, or what is going on. But we will need to know, and that is what hydrology is about. We have had infra-red photographs and they really don't give as much information as we hoped.

1. The Matrix—fully named "The Central Park Restoration Plan's Systems Interrelationships Matrix"—has been developed by landscape architects Marianne Cramer and Judith Heintz to check on the impact of one restoration system upon another.

2,3. The Sheep Meadow, west of the Mall, had been trampled bare by 1980 and was completely regraded, resoiled, irrigated, and resodded by the Design Division of the Parks Department. It is now provided with a management plan for use that will preserve its bucolic character. (Photo: Central Park Conservancy)

4. The Conservatory Garden, at Fifth Avenue and 105th Street, was designed in the 1920s, as one of the few formal areas in the Park, when the original glass-and-metal conservatory built around the turn of the century came down. The plumbing of the fountains has been restored and the landscape is being restored by horticulturist Geraldine Weinstein. (Photo: Erilyn Riley)

5. One of four cast iron bridges in the Park, Bridge No. 27, which crosses the bridle path near the Reservoir, was restored by the Design Division of the Parks Department from the working drawings, probably by Vaux. The iron pieces were recast. It is one of 50 bridges and arches in the Park that are in line for restoration. (Photo: Department of Parks)

6. An underpass in Central Park, probably designed by Calvert Vaux. (Photo: Stan Ries)



4



5



6

Wildlife

It is really surprising how much wildlife there is in Central Park. I'm not sure if it is actually wildlife but it is animal life, at least. The wildlife expert, John Hecklau, has looked at all the mammals, fish, reptiles, and birds, and we have made a list of all of them. We are missing insects but that's a whole world in itself.
There is not so much to restore, but we very much needed this wildlife specialist to direct us to what we could and could not do in the restoration and still maintain the very valuable bird population. He has given us very firm information about the best way to maintain this special bird sanctuary in the Ramble, which is a major wildlife area.

Circulation

First of all we are looking at the condition of the existing circulation system and also the direction in which people want to walk. Often people don't stay on paths because they want to walk in a straight line. One of the major circulation routes in all of Central Park is from the entrance gate at West 72nd Street right across to Grand Army Plaza at 59th Street and Fifth. There's not a path that does that, but if you look you will see that people have cut an absolute diagonal across the Park. We need to deal with this. We need to give people a way of getting there, one hopes in an Olmsted fashion, without it looking like a highway.

Circulation is complicated because people want to claim the roadway, which is one of the most heavily used parts of Central Park. Bicyclists, joggers, roller skaters, and automobiles all are claiming this relatively little part of the Park as their own.

Use

The Use study has been fascinating. This also is computerized. We know exactly how many people are using the Park, the demographics are similar to those of the City of New York—12% black, 19% hispanic, and 77% white. Basically Central Park is a mixed meeting ground more than anything else. The majority of Park users go there for relaxation; the most popular activities are jogging, bicycling, sitting, just meeting friends, and enjoying nature. Mind you, these uses overlap. One person can claim many of these things at the same time. We know exactly what gates people are coming in, where they are going.

The most popular elements in the Park are the Zoo and the Sheep Meadow. The man who did the study, Dr. William Kornblum, took a random sample of Park users and asked them various specific questions, such as are there parts of Central Park where you won't go, what is your favorite part of Central Park, where have you been today, where did you come in and where will you leave, how many times do you use the Park, have you ever been harassed in Central Park?

Central Park



The new Central Park Lamps have been designed by Gerald Allen and Kent Bloomer to fit on the original lamp posts designed by Henry Bacon in 1892. (Top photo: Gerald Allen) (Bottom photo: Timothy Hursley/Korab)



From that study we can get an astonishing wealth of knowledge by balancing one thing against another. We know a great deal about the wants, desires, and needs of the Central Park user in 1983. Since we are projecting our master plan into the next hundred years, it is hard to know what future users will want, but we certainly know what people want right now.

How is that influencing the Master Plan?

More than anything else it gives us specific data that we can work with. If we know the Zoo is the most popular place in the Park, that at least justifies the current restoration of the Zoo (see *Oculus* November 1982). If we know there are areas of the Park where people are afraid to go, we at least know we have a psychological barrier to overcome so people will be comfortable wherever they go in the Park. Some places are more dangerous than others, and some places are psychologically disturbing to people. People don't like to go places when they can't see where they are going, where it's dark, or in heavily planted areas. As it turns out the Ramble is a high crime area. The northern end is very thickly planted, but I have heard it was very popular before the second World War.

Security

The security studies deal with where crime does exist, how we can do away with it, and how we can secure our restorations. How do we secure Belvedere Castle, which is in the middle of the Park, not easy to get to by police cars, and not particularly accessible by pedestrians? How can we keep this very valuable restoration from getting into the derelict condition it was in before? We are having to investigate all kinds of mechanical systems, from electronic fences to guard dogs and personnel.

Management

Management is really the thing that ties it all together and makes the restoration make sense. Once we have studied all the other systems, we can know *how* to restore the Park, but it is the management that is going to *keep* it restored. This really has everything to do with maintenance. How are we going to program sports facilities or sports games in Central Park, for instance, so that the school kids don't come in and trample a lawn to death, that it then starts to erode and fills up the drainage system and the pipes burst and the overflow kills all the plants, which is exactly what has been going on for years.

That doesn't mean we are going to stop people from playing, but we are going to have to program it, so that there can be a balance between active ballplaying and sedentary sunbathing. The Administrator's Office has been very successful in lawn management so far. Management also has a lot to do with removing a dead tree, replacing it, and how a tree is to be maintained. The bird watchers of Central Park, for instance, don't like the removal of dead wood from trees because there are certain kinds of insects that live in it and those insects attract woodpeckers and other birds. But horticulturists are very concerned with removing dead wood because it causes holes in trees and holes kill trees, so it is impossible to have a tree live four or five hundred years as it should. Those are all managerial kinds of questions. Also, where are we going to get the dollars and cents to maintain these things?

Conclusion: What is the next step?

The above information, which has been gathered by this large team of experts from many disciplines, concludes the first phase of the Master Plan. In the next phase, Cramer, Heintz, Winslow, and I, with the direction of Betsy Barlow, will analyze the material and prepare a text and plans that will become the actual Master Plan. This will be the blueprint for Central Parks' future through the end of this century. I am happy to be a part of it.



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